New Leader of North Korea:

Comparative Coverage of Kim Jong Un by U.S., Chinese, and Japanese Newspapers

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Abstract

Comparative analysis on coverage of North Korea's new leader Kim Jong Un in the *New York Times*, the *China Daily*, and the *Japan Times*, based on communication theories of framing, press nationalism, and propaganda, identifies that each newspaper's government interests and foreign policies exert important impacts on the construction of coverage of Kim who was viewed as a notorious or friendly leader.

Introduction

North Korea, where bloodlines determine the next successor to the throne, welcomed its new "supreme" leader Kim Jong Un after his father Kim Jong Il's death in December 2011. The country, which has been considered dangerous not only to its people but also to global citizens, is in the world's spotlight as the least-known young leader invokes doubts and curiosities from the world. Although many speculations about North Korea's changes were generated in western media coverage such as a rapid collapse, a new war, and a disbarment of the nuclear weapons program, Kim seems to smoothly succeed in taking the reigns from his late father by duplicating the same autocratic repertoire: propagating his invincible images of supreme military commander, flaunting his diplomatic ability of using nuclear weapons program, and stirring fears of a war on the Korean peninsula.

About two months after Kim rose to power, North Korea announced a willingness for a powerful retaliatory strike against South Korea if the United Sates and South Korea would not halt the joint military drills, adding that the new leader will wage a "sacred war" (The Associated Press, February, 2012). The threat was made a couple of days after Washington agreed to provide 240,000 metric tons of food aid in exchange for a freeze on North Korea's nuclear development. (The Associated Press). The new leader's ruse of dealing with the United States and the U.S. allies is derived from Kim Jong Il's legacy of military exercise threat and false promises for talks; the like father, like son phrase fits.

Yet the international community is likely to expect some changes in North Korea, as the new leader is unlikely to control the poor and isolated country without international aid. While international security concerns and negotiations exist, North Korea under the new regime offers a heady challenge to foreign countries about how to respond to the new leader's behavior and temerity in the context of global security and economy issues, perceived from diverse political/economic systems. For example, as the countries of the six-party talks operate different administrative systems – communism (China, North Korea), democracy (The U.S., South Korea), constitutional monarchy (Japan), and federal republic (Russia) – the North Korea's new leader and the country's future can be perceived and projected according to each country's economic and foreign policy.

Drawing upon different political and economic systems at the international level, this study focuses on three countries that not only represent the three largest economies on earth, but also maintain different political relations with North Korea: the United States, China, and Japan. While all three countries are concerned with North Korea's nuclear activities and social changes under the new leader, their political and social interests in dealing with him and his country could be different. How do the three countries perceive and identify Kim Jong Un in pursuit of their national interests and global security? This study seeks to answer that question through a content analysis of three newspapers' coverage: that of the *New York Times*, the *China Daily*, and the *Japan Times*. More specifically, this study looks at how newspapers reflect or correspond to their countries' foreign policies, which are embedded in national interest.

Literature Review

To discuss how the three newspapers covered Kim Jong Un, including forecasts of North Korea's future, a wide range of media studies such as press nationalism, propaganda model, and framing need to be examination.

Press Nationalism

With respect to the effects of government foreign policy on media, many studies suggest that media coverage of a certain country of "mine" toward a foreign country of "others" favor "my" country's foreign policy. In other words, national interest is the fundamental impetus for directing media coverage and tone, often regarded as bias. Such bias embedded in media coverage is widely called press nationalism although it is uncertain who coined the term and when it began to be accepted among media study scholars. However, it is important to note that since nationalism refers to a country's superior political ideology that is spontaneously used to protect a homeland from other countries' intentional cruelty, press nationalism advocating the national identification of culture and societal order offers a common excusable sense for media employees to be susceptible to national interest, manufactured and guided by government. Thus press nationalism is associated with foreign policy reporters' congruent surrender to official speeches and press conference answers keeping up with national interest (Cohen, 1963).

Yang (2003) argued that Chinese and U.S. newspaper coverage of the NATO air strikes on Kosovo in 1999 was echoed by each government's stands in nearly all aspects of national interest. Yang (2003) concluded that a significant influence of national interest on media coverage outweighs other journalistic factors such as objectivity, fairness, and balance. A similar viewpoint was found in a host of other studies, such as Chang (1989) and Lee and Yang (1995). Chang found that when the Reagan administration shifted its attitude toward the Chinese government from hostility to hospitality, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* published a heavy volume of positive articles for U.S. – China relations. Lee and Yang also noted that the Associated Press coverage of the Tiananmen Square Movement or Revolt in 1989 reflected the U.S. ideological interest by portraying it as an inevitable fight for democracy, whereas the Kyodo News Agency of Japan depicted it as a request for better economic opportunity for a young Chinese generation. Then-President George H.W. Bush said in a conference:

> "The demonstrators in Tiananmen Square were advocating basic human rights, including the freedom of expression, freedom of press, freedom of association…These are freedoms that are enshrined in both the U.S. Constitution and the Chinese Constitution…Throughout the world, we stand with those who seek greater freedom and democracy" (Bush, 1989).

Drawing on such studies on press nationalism, it is worth noting that the ways that media report international events tend to succumb to national interest. More important, the term *press nationalism* can be defined as an unwritten compliance of the press to the government's foreign policy in which a reciprocal relationship between the government and the press is presented in an unwritten concurrence.

The reciprocal relationship implies mutually agreeable cooperation in terms of source selection. Press nationalism studies investigate how press coverage of a country, overwhelmingly the United States, tends to comply with changes in the country's foreign policy. In order for the studies to measure the tendency, examining sources used for news articles seems to be a promising means of explaining government interest and influence on press coverage. Sigal (1973) summarized the importance of news source selection: "For the reporter, in short, most news is not what has happened, but what someone says has happened" (p. 69). Sigal's remark epitomizes that the use of official sources mostly from government and

social elite is likely to influence media coverage. For example, the tone of U.S. media coverage on a certain international event, whether or not it corresponds to U.S. interest, is to be determined by the government's foreign policy information, disseminated by officials the press heavily depends on as news sources. For reporters, relying on official sources – rather than making voluntary efforts to gain information from a wide variety of different research – is to be more effective and safer in producing an article in the competitive press environment. Succumbing to the routine of government officials can be understood as a customary practice among journalists as Bennett pointed out that journalists "tend to 'index' their coverage to reflect the range of views that exists within the government" (1990, p. 124).

In a similar sense, Gans (1979) argued that U.S. media were reflective of U.S. foreign policy and government interest in relation to news coverage, meaning that the press and nationalism built a close tie with distinctive national standpoints. Hence, there is less doubt that journalists prefer to use sources armed with enough information, reliability, suitability, and authority; government officials not only fall into the category of the most suitable candidates for news sources, but also are capable of defining the parameters of media coverage, especially regarding international affairs.

Propaganda

The propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky (1988) in *Manufacturing Consent* is widely used to explain why the U.S. media were subordinate to the interest of the government and social elites. The model suggested that the U.S. media were likely to cover foreign events or international conflicts through the processes that can slant foreign news according to U.S. foreign policy. These processes are: (1) selecting and highlighting media sources providing easier access to journalists; (2) reducing investigative expense by using credible sources from government and corporations; (3) avoiding potential criticisms of bias and the threat of libel suits; (4) in return, allowing routine news sources to have privileged access to influencing the media coverage that can manipulate viewpoints of the media on a specific agenda and framework constructed through the distribution of the sources' intended opinion and information (pp. 19-23). There are experts and highly respectable sources who can create government agenda in shaping media coverage, so their objectivity is less likely to meet the journalistic objectivity standard since their opinions are skewed in favor of government's interest.

There is plenty of evidence that such processes indeed limit the openness of the media, and the media serve interests of elite and government. Herman and Chomsky pinpointed the susceptible tendency of the media to structural economic conditions as the main reason why the media failed to fulfill their fourth-estate role of defending public interest. Further, the U.S. ideology of anti-communism fueled a compelling news filter process for determining international news coverage, which divided the world into two communities: communism and anti-communism (pp.28-31). Although the ideological separation dominating the U.S. news coverage of international events ended in light of the collapse of the Soviet Union for a while, the ideology game surfaced in media coverage in line with the emphasis on anti-terrorism ideology since 9/11; then-President George W. Bush declared the war on terrorism, and the voice for freedom of the press was silenced by the government control in the name of patriotism or nationalism (Webster, 2011).

Herman and Chomsky reassured in the second edition of *Manufacturing Consent* (2001) that anti-communism was part of "a broader agenda of free market rhetoric, U.S. economic access and massive state subsidies to private corporations" (pp. vii-viii). The agenda after 9/11 evolved into the ideology of global terrorism, which helps the government to continue the ideological filter related to U.S. foreign policy in the era of globalization. Gans (2004) argued that the mutual interest between the U.S. government and media met on some middle ground to manufacture a foreign event as a national issue. Their favorite issue to fulfill the both sides' interest is "the excess of dictatorship, mainly on the violation of American political values by dictators, illustrating once more the extent to which American ideas and values dominate the reporting of foreign news" (p.38).

Journalistic values are weakened by government's systemic and political dichotomization condoned by the media's reliance on official sources, derived from domestic realities. According to Bennett (1990), media reliance on officials and elites of their business sector is rooted in three types of journalistic norms: the professional virtues of objectivity and balance; the obligation to provide some degree of democratic accountability; and the economic realities of the news business. In sum, it is overt that the last norm gains more powerful ground than the others.

Framing

In reporting international events, the media are capable of determining and highlighting particular aspects of reality in line with government voices. Similarly, hundreds of research studies have showed that the media are able to frame international events, supporting foreign policy of the government. Media framing takes on larger roles in media studies to explain how media select and promote a particular issue with their own interpretation and evaluation if the issue had special meaning to society. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) referred to frame as the internal structure in media discourses and the central idea for making sense of events and suggesting what is in the issue; three determinants produce a framing package: cultural resonances, sponsor activities, and media practices. Along the same line, framing is realized through the four framing functions specified by Entman (1993): "a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p.52).

Two international cases are frequently referred to as framing classics. The first is downing of a Korean airliner (KAL) in 1983 by the Soviet Union, and the second is that of an Iranian aircraft (Iran Air) in 1988 by the United States. The U.S. media framed the KAL incident as alleged criminality, whereas the Iran Air case was framed as a tragedy of technological mishap. In other words, the U.S. media tend to hold different attitudes and contrasting frames toward similar issues for cultural and political reasons (Entman, 1991). Likewise, an attempt to connect structural and cultural forces with framing analysis was made by Gamson and Modigliani (1989) who developed a "media package" presenting the keywords and common language that identify a particular frame. The media package recognized not only framing devices but also reasoning devices: the former include depiction, catchphrase, and metaphors while the latter correspond to Entman's four framing functions such as defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments and suggesting remedies (Dai and Hyun, 2010).

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) argued that the media package approach to measuring media frames would offer "a number of different condensing symbols that suggest the core frame and positions in short hand, making it possible to display the package as a whole with a deft metaphor, catchphrase or other symbolic device" (p.3). In other words, through framing, the media highlight and create international issues by using language that interprets and dramatizes such issues.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study examines how news coverage of Kim Jong Un from three different countries' English-language newspapers reflects their governments' foreign policies that incorporate national interest, concern, and stance into the matter of global and economic security. It is noteworthy to mention that the United States, China, and Japan were ranked the world's top three economies by GDP, according to Japanese figures released in February 2011.Thus it is assumed that the three largest economies' opinions on the new North Korea's leader can manifest a global security concern and international cooperation; moreover, each nation's distinguished newspaper is likely to mirror each government's political stance on foreign countries. Drawing on press nationalism, the propaganda model, and framing theory, this study seeks to answer the following questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: What are the primary frames of the news coverage regarding

Kim Jong Un's rise to power in North Korea, used by the three newspapers,

namely the *New York Times*, the *China Daily*, and the *Japan Times*?

H1: News coverage of Kim by the *New York Times* will be more likely to be

critical about Kim's sudden rise to power, whereas the *China Daily* will be

more likely to be supportive of Kim's power, and the *Japan Times* will carry

neutral coverage of Kim's power.

It can be hypothesized that the overall political orientations of news outlets such as the view of the publisher and news reporter affect the frame building process in which the outlets inextricably take into account government's stance and policy. For example, the Obama administration characterizes North Korea not only as a threat to regional and global security but also as a human rights violator (the Department of State, 2011). The Chinese government, in contrast, sees North Korea as the closest ally and plays the largest role in providing food, fuel, and industry machinery (Nanto and Manyin, 2010). In this regard, these newspapers would be keenly aware of the importance of maintaining or defending the same viewpoints of their governments. The Japanese government, on the other hand, seems to position itself between the United States and China in the matter of North Korea. Since the beginning of the so-called Six-Party Talks about North Korea's denuclearization in 2003, Japan that used to provide economic aid to North Korea identifies North Korea as a potential and credible military threat to the country, but the Japanese government still allows not only trade with

North Korea through unofficial channels but also North Koreans living in Japan to send money to their relatives (Berkofsky, 2010). The Japanese newspaper, therefore, may likely take an ambivalent approach to North Korea's affairs.

RQ2: What are the primary news topics related to the new leader's emergence in North Korea?

H1: The *New York Times* will increasingly shed light on North Korea's social failures such as famine, nuclear weapons program, and social instability whereas the *China Daily* will emphasize cooperation and friendship. And the *Japan Times* will refer to all of them.

RQ3: What are the major sources of the news coverage regarding Kim's regime? Will the newspapers be more likely to depend on sources from their countries to support their point of view?

H1: Each newspaper will dominantly use its country's government/agency sources.

Further, it needs to be examined if the coverage of North Korea's future under the new leader's reins were covered in a positive or negative light. If the coverage of these newspapers were different from each other, the assumption that each government's foreign policies will lead to the opinionated coverage would be valid. To address this issue, the following question is raised:

RQ4: What is the overall slant toward North Korea's future in the news coverage in terms of its prosperity and global peace?

Methodology

This analysis included news stories published in the *New York Times*, the *China Daily*, and the *Japan Times* between December 19, 2011 and January 18, 2012. The one-month time period resulted in a certain volume of reports on Kim Jong Un as the death of his father Kim Jong Il was first announced on December 19, 2011.

In the theoretical context of framing, propaganda and press nationalism, this study employed a content analysis to examine the coverage of Kim Jong Un and projection of North Korea's

future in three newspapers, one from each country – the *New York Times*, the *China Daily*, and the *Japan Times*. The first was selected because of its reputation as a U.S. elite or leading newspaper. The *Times* is also known as a left-leaning media outlet supposed to play a submissive role in spreading foreign policy philosophy of the Obama administration. The second is – with no doubt – famous for reflecting central communist party thinking of China as the biggest English newspaper in the country. The last was selected because of its independence from other Japanese newspaper giants such as *Yomiuri Shimbun* (conservative) and *Asahi Shimbun* (liberal), and it is the largest English newspaper in the country.

The actual news stories of the *New York Times* and *Japan Times* for this study were retrieved from a keyword search of the *LexisNexis* database. Stories of the *China Daily* were downloaded from its website archive as it was not available on any database. Using the keyword "Kim Jong Un," the search yielded a total of 93 news articles – 39 articles from the *New York Times*, 41 articles from the *China Daily*, and 13 articles from the *Japan Times*. Since the news story was the unit of analysis, editorials, columns, op-ed, and stories of fewer than 100 words were eliminated.

For each story, the date of publication, words of story, primary topics, dateline, main theme, slant toward the projection of North Korea's future, and sources were developed for coding. This study formulated a total of 10 variables (see the coding sheet); ten primary story topics ranging from North Korea's social failure, resumption of six-party talks, instability, and to world peace were developed; six datelines were noted: the United States, North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, and other; the main theme and portrayal of Kim Jong Un were developed; the overall slant whether the future of the new regime and the country is considered positive or negative or mixed was examined; and sources were largely categorized into six groups: South Korean, Chinese, North Korean, U.S., Japanese, and other sources. Each group was specified further into government officials/agencies, news media/agencies, academicians, and others (military officers, non-government organizations/civic groups, businesses/corporations, citizens).

Finally, three independent coders – two graduate students from a medium-sized university in the Midwest and one with a bachelor's degree in finance from the same university – conducted an inter-coder reliability test with 10 articles in proportion to the total number (about 10% of the entire articles: N=93): four each from the *New York Times* and the *China*

Daily and two from the *Japan Times*. Inter-coder reliability was based on percentage of agreement.

Complete agreement was achieved on the variables of publication date, newspaper, dateline, and length of articles. The lowest rate of agreement for "portrayal of Kim Jong Un" was 81% due to the fine distinction between "young leader" and "inexperienced leader." Further, the agreements on sources and main theme of the story were 94% and 93%. The agreements for slant and prime topics were 87% and 88%. The overall agreement in coding was 93.5% in this study.

Findings

Comparing the coverage of Kim Jong Un by *the New York Times*, the *China Daily*, and the *Japan Times*, a total of 93 news stories were analyzed. This study first of all identified the length of articles during the very first month for Kim Jong Un to be acknowledged as North Korea's new leader. As shown in Table 1, the average number of words per news story about Kim ranged from 398.88 to 866. The *New York Times* preferred a lengthy article compared to the *China Daily*'s and the *Japan Times'* relatively half-lengthy article.

Table 1: Length of Article about Kim Jong Un

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times	Total
Mean	866.00	398.88	420.23	597.75
N	39	41	13	93
SD	444.364	188.301	279.456	399.680

Another significant difference was dependent on the dateline (See Table 2). The *New York Times* filed 59% of its stories from Seoul, South Korea, whereas the *China Daily* had 39% of its stories with a Pyongyang, North Korea dateline. At the same time, 93% of stories of the *Japan Times* were datelined in Tokyo, Japan. The *New York Times* had none of its datelines from Pyongyang in its articles even though seven articles (17.1%) of the *China Daily* were produced in Seoul.

Table 2: Dateline of news stories about Kim Jong Un

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times
U.S.	7 (17.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
N.Korea	0 (0.0%)	16 (39.0%)	0 (0.0%)
China	3 (7.7%)	15 (36.6%)	1 (7.7%)
Japan	1 (2.6%)	1 (2.4%)	12 (92.3%)
S.Korea	23 (59.0%)	7 (17.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Other	5 (12.8%)	2 (4.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	**39 (100%)**	**41 (100%)**	**13 (100%)**

RQ1 asked what the primary frames of the news coverage regarding Kim's rise to power were in the three newspapers. The first hypothesis in particular examined whether each newspaper characterized and portrayed Kim differently in line with press nationalism. Table 3, 4, and 5 show that there was a clear difference in terms of identifying the North Korea's new leader among the newspapers. While the *China Daily* welcomed Kim as a "supreme" leader, the *New York Times* criticized Kim as an "inexperienced" and "untested" leader to govern the mysterious and destitute country. At the same time, the *Japan Times* was likely to accept Kim as North Korea's "new leader" (See Table 3). Hence, the concept of press nationalism is accepted. These newspapers also portrayed Kim in a different way.

Table 3: Main theme of news stories about Kim Jong Un

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times
Criticizes	20 (51.2%)	1 (2.4%)	2 (15.4%)
Supports	0 (0.0%)	23 (56.1%)	2 (15.4%)
Accepts	19 (49.8%)	17 (41.5%)	9 (69.2%)
Total	**39 (100%)**	**41 (100%)**	**13 (100%)**

The *New York Times* used some mocking words such as "replica of his grand father (Kim Il Sung)," "double chin" "full cheeks" and "overweight" to describe Kim's appearance with an

emphasis on his age mystery such as "unknown or believed to be in his late 20s." The *China Daily* in contrast refrained from portraying Kim's appearance although the term "charismatic" was used twice in the 41 articles; the *Japan Times* never used any kind of descriptive terms (See Table 4). Such a coverage pattern in the newspapers about Kim's identification and appearance reflect how they predict the future of Kim's regime.

Table 4: Portrayal of Kim Jong Un

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times
Supportive	1 (2.6%)	2 (4.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Cynical	9 (23.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Neutral	8 (20.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
None	21 (53.8%)	39 (95.1%)	13 (0.0%)
Total	**39 (100%)**	**41 (100%)**	**13 (100%)**

As Table 5 illustrates, the *China Daily* viewed the regime as China's eternal alliance/partner (51.2%) as opposed to the *New York Times* seeing the regime as a global threat to the world (41%). Another example of press nationalism is detected. The *Japan Times,* however, was reluctant to refer to the regime with either of the other papers' views, but rather categorized the regime into a mixed characterization (69.2%).

Table 5: Projection of news stories about Kim Jong Un

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times
Global Threat	16 (41.0%)	1 (2.4%)	3 (23.1%)
Alliance/partner	1 (2.6%)	21 (51.2%)	1 (7.7%)
Mixed Characterization	22 (51.4%)	19 (46.4%)	9 (69.2%)
Total	**39 (100%)**	**41 (100%)**	**13 (100%)**

Overall, the hypothesis of press nationalism was supported. While the *New York Times* was critical of Kim's sudden rise to power, the *China Daily* welcomed him as North Korea's great leader. And the *Japan Times* has yet to judge Kim's power and ability to be a potent leader.

However, all of the newspapers -- whether they like him or not -- admitted that Kim has taken the reins from the late Kim Jong Il.

RQ2 asked about the primary news topics related to the new leader's emergence in North Korea, and its hypothesis examined whether each newspaper had its own favorite topics to shed light on North Korea's status quo that can influence the foreign policy- making process of the United States, China, and Japan. As shown in Table 6, the *New York Times* preferred to underscore negative aspects of North Korea (63.5%) such as social failure (18.4%) and instability (30.5%), whereas the *China Daily* referred to North Korea related topics in a positive light (70.3%) such as cooperation partner (21.9%) and world peace (18.7%). Interestingly, the *Japan Times* carried more positive aspects (66.7%) by shedding light on cooperation (33.3%) and world peace (17.7%). While the *New York Times* mentioned North Korea's long-time social failures grounded in famine, natural disaster, and economic difficulty as the second favorite topic, North Korea's cooperation with China was picked as the *China Daily*'s second favorite topic. But the two newspapers were concerned with the Kim's capability of developing the country and whether he and his country are mired into greater instability. The *Japan Times* was more concerned with the cooperative relationship between Japan and North Korea.

None of the newspapers except for the *New York Times* made mentions of Kim's possible dictatorship which has been passed down from his father and grand father. The evidence partially, though quantitatively mixed, supported the hypothesis, showing that newspapers frame their foreign agendas in ways that correspond to governments' preference.

Table 6: Topics of news stories about Kim Jong Un

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times	Total
Positive				
Cooperation	4 (4.8%)	14 (21.9%)	7 (33.3%)	25 (14.9%)
Resumption of talks	13 (15.9%)	10 (15.6%)	1 (4.8%)	24 (14.3%)
Reunification	6 (7.3%)	3 (4.7%)	1 (4.8%)	10 (5.9%)
Friendship	2 (2.4%)	6 (9.4%)	1 (4.8%)	9 (5.4%)
World peace	5 (6.1%)	12 (18.7%)	4 (19.0%)	21 (12.7%)

Negative

Social failure	15	(18.4%)	2	(3.1%)	1	(4.8%)	18 (10.8%)
Collapse of N.Korea	6	(7.3%)	1	(1.5%)	1	(4.8%)	8 (4.8%)
Instability	25	(30.5%)	16	(25.1%)	5	(23.7%)	46 (27.5%)
Dictatorship	6	(7.3%)	0	(0.0%)	0	(0.0%)	6 (3.7%)
Total	**82**	**(100%)**	**64**	**(100%)**	**21**	**(100%)**	**167 (100%)**

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RQ3 asked what sources were used in articles in order to identify the influence of government on coverage of Kim Jong Un as newspapers are believed to depend on sources representing their governments' viewpoints. Thus a hypothesis was developed: Each newspaper will dominantly use its country's government official/agency sources. As Table 7 shows, the *New York Times* articles (N=39) used a total of 181 sources compared to the *China Daily* (N=41) which employed 123 ones. The *Japan Times* (N=13) used 32 sources to report Kim's rise to power. Interestingly, the North Korean news agencies – Korean Central News Agency, Korean Central TV, and *Rodong Sinmun* (newspaper) – were mostly used in the *New York Times* (21.5%) and the *China Daily* (33.3%) followed by each government's officials, 15.0% for the *New York Times* and 16.2% for the *China Daily*. The third major source for both newspapers were academicians, but the *New York Times* chose South Korean academicians (9.9%) while the *China Daily* cited Chinese academicians (13.8%). The *Japan Time*'s coverage in terms of using sources differed from the other two newspapers. Its three main sources were Japanese officials/agencies (40.5%), Japanese academicians (18.7%), and others (18.7%). Others include citizens, NGO workers, and business people. Thus, when it comes to using the dominant number of government officials/agencies for story sources, the hypothesis was not supported. However, it is worth noting that the special situation of Kim Jong Un's sudden rise to power in light of the unexpected death of his father in the closed country gave especially the *New York Times* little choice but to depend on the North Korean media to deliver information about the new leader and the country's status quo.

Table 7: Sources of news stories about Kim Jong Un

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times
Officials/agencies			
USA	27 (15.0%)	5 (4.0%)	1 (3.1%)
China	5 (2.7%)	20 (16.2%)	0
Japan	5 (2.7%)	2 (1.6%)	13 (40.7%)
N.Korea	8 (4.4%)	7 (5.7%)	1 (3.1%)
S.Korea	17 (9.4%)	11 (8.9%)	0
News agencies			
USA	4 (2.2%)	3 (2.4%)	0
China	4 (2.2%)	1 (0.8%)	0
Japan	5 (2.7%)	0	1 (3.1%)
N.Korea	39 (21.5%)	41 (33.3%)	2 (6.3%)
S.Korea	9 (5.0%)	4 (3.2%)	0
Academicians			
USA	15 (8.2%)	1 (0.8%)	2 (6.3%)
China	2 (1.1%)	17 (13.8%)	0
Japan	1 (0.5%)	0	6 (18.7%)
N.Korea	4 (2.2%)	0	0
S.Korea	18 (9.9%)	5 (4.0%)	0

Table 7a: Sources of news stories about Kim Jong Un

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times
Others			
USA	8 (4.4%)	1 (0.8%)	0
China	0	0	0
Japan	0	0	5 (15.6%)
N.Korea	3 (1.7%)	4 (3.2%)	1 (3.1%)

S.Korea	7	(3.9%)	1	(0.8%)	0
Total	**181**	**(100%)**	**123**	**(100%)**	**32**	**(100%)**

RQ4 asked about the overall slant if the newspapers in a particular way projected North Korea's future associated with prosperity and global peace. The percentage of positive slant exceeded that of negative slant: 53% vs. 4.9% in the *China Daily*, but conversely 2.6% vs. 28.2% in the *New York Times*, and 7.7% vs. 30.8% in the *Japan Times*. But all of the newspapers were also uncertain about the country's future as the neutral slant percentage of each newspaper was high: 46.2% for the *New York Times*, 24.4% for the *China Times*, and 30.8% for the *Japan Times* (See Table 8).

Table 8: Slant regarding North Korea's future

	NY Times	China Daily	Japan Times
Positive	1 (2.6%)	22 (53.7%)	1 (7.7%)
Negative	11 (28.2%)	2 (4.9%)	4 (30.8%)
Neutral	18 (46.2%)	10 (24.4%)	4 (30.8%)
Mixed	9 (23.1%)	7 (17.1%)	4 (30.8%)
Total	**39 (100%)**	**41 (100%)**	**13 (100%)**

Discussion

Analyzing news articles, this study explored how newspapers tend to correspond to government's foreign policy dealing with a certain foreign event, which is considered salient for national interest. More specifically, it examined how different English-language newspapers of the United States, China and Japan reported the story about Kim Jong Un when he rose to power in North Korea. It also explored media reliance on sources customarily seen as an impetus for biased coverage. This study was guided by framing theory, propaganda model, and press nationalism to see how the foreign event was understood and interpreted by the three newspapers. Resting on the coding categories of dateline, length, theme, topic, source, and slant, this study found some significant ways that influenced the news coverage of the new leader of North Korea.

The first finding is that the *New York Times* produced 23 articles (59%) out of 39 in South Korea, maintaining a solid relationship with the Obama administration enforcing sanctions on North Korea that resulted in no dateline from North Korea. The *China Daily* in contrast had 16 (39%) out of 41 articles datelined in North Korea, an indication of China's influence on North Korea, based on the strong communism relationship. Yet the *Japan Times* despite its accessibility to both Koreas filed 12 (92.3%) stories of 13 from Japan.

The second finding is how media coverage of Kim Jong Un facilitated intended multinational biases and narrowness to ensure government's stance grounded in diplomatic relations. The *New York Times* was more likely than the *China Daily* to criticize Kim's rise to power by highlighting his "overweight" appearance and "untested" ability to govern North Korea. In contrast, the *China Daily,* regarded as China's propaganda tool for foreign audiences, sent strong support for the "supreme" and "great" leader who is ready to administer the country with his "charismatic" leadership derived from his father and grandfather. Not surprisingly, the *Japan Times* merely accepted Kim as North Korea's "new" leader since the Japanese government has ambivalent feelings for North Korea. Such different attitudes led to placing Kim's regime in a global threat frame (the *New York Times*) or an alliance frame (the *China Daily*) or both (the *Japan Times*), in which each government's stance was reflected in terms of political ideologies and international relations. Press nationalism plays a critical role in supporting governments' foreign policies.

Drawing on the favorite topics of the newspapers, this study found that factors affected the newspapers' selective uses of certain frames. For example, North Korea's social failure (15 times) and its long-history of dictatorship (6 times) were mentioned in the *New York Times,* whereas friendship (6 times) and world peace (12 times) were mentioned in the *China Daily*. However, contrary to what this study expected, mentions of North Korea's instability (16 times) were significantly made in the *China Daily,* even outnumbering cooperation (14 times). There is one explanation: seven *China Daily* articles (17.1%) were filed from South Korea in which Korean sources expressed their worries about the new regime in North Korea.

It may be important to note that the place of origin for news stories could influence media coverage because newspapers tend to depend on local sources. The *China Daily* used 16.9% of South Korean sources compared to 30.8% of Chinese sources. It is assumed that the South

Korean government and academic sources were worried about the instability of North Korea, so they contributed to making the topic of instability rank in *China Daily*'s most favorite topic (25.1%). Thus source-driven framing could exist as the media are subject particularly to government sources due to the media routine (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). In this sense, the *Japan Times* which used 40.5% of government sources – compared to 15% from the *New York Times* and 16.2% of the *China Daily* – is more likely than the other newspapers to fit in the government-influenced coverage, faithfully reflecting the government's ambivalent stance on Kim.

However, the use of North Korean media for the *New York Times* and the *China Daily* dominated that of other sources in this study. It can be explained that the *New York Times*' reliance on the North Korean media sources did not reflect the U.S. government interests, but rather fulfilled journalistic principles such as objectivity and fairness meeting the newspaper's investigative reporting style, which usually generates lengthy articles. This does not necessarily mean that government would stop exerting important impacts on the construction of frames in the name of patriotic nationalism.

As a host of earlier research studies on source usage in framing found that officials and elites have a greater "merit of being recognizable and credible by their status and prestige" (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 19), newspapers in this study also were not free from echoing each government's interest. With respect to the overall slant toward the future of Kim's regime and North Korea, the *China Daily* demonstrated the influence of the government's stance, projecting a stable and sound society of North Korea in a positive light (53.7%), whereas the *New York Times* projected it in a negative (28.2%) and neutral light (46.2%). In sum, it is obvious that government foreign policy and stance associated with national interest is not only a critical factor in the pattern of framing foreign news events but also a vehicle for inducing press nationalism. To some extent, the press serves as a tool in the hands of government by abandoning the norms of objectivity and professional distance.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study has its limits. First, English-language newspapers are unable to represent a variety of views in China and Japan. Second, the one-month time period is hardly sufficient to evaluate the new leader's capability to govern the country. Third, the manual coding

introduces subjectively to the study. Future studies should include a more diverse range of newspapers. And investigating the cover of Kim Jong Un's regime a year later using the same method would be interesting.

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Content Analysis of Coverage of Kim Jong Un   **Appendix**

Headline _____   **Case #**___ ___ ___

1. Publishing Date (year-month-day):   ___ ___ ___ ___- ___ ___- ___ ___

                                                             y   *y*   *y*   *y*   *m*   *m*   *d*   *d*

2. Length of the Article (words):   ___ ___ ___ ___

3. Newspaper: ___

  1= NY Times 2= China Daily 3 = Japan Times

4. Main theme of the story: ___

      1) Criticizes Kim Jong Un

      2) Supports Kim Jong Un

      3) Accepts (neutral) Kim Jung Un

5. The Portrayal of Kim Jong Un's appearance: ___

      1) Supportive

      2) Critical

      3) Neutral

      4) None

6. Indicate each type below that appears in story: **** No=0 Yes=1**

      1) North Korea's social failure   ___

      2) Cooperation   ___

      3) Resumption of six-party talks (nuclear weapons)   ___

      4) Collapse of N. Korea   ___

      5) Military commander (great leader)   ___

      6) Instability (conflict)   ___

      7) Reunification of Koreas   ___

      8) Friendship   ___

      9) World peace   ___

      10) Dictatorship   ___

7. Is Kim Jong Un's regime projected as   ___

1) Global threat

2) Alliance/partner

3) Mixed characterization

8. Dateline: ___

1) United States

2) N. Korea

3) China

4) Japan

5) S. Korea

6) Other _____   -OVER-

9. Story Sources (hatch marks and count number for each)

1) USA government officials/agencies   ___

2) USA military officers   ___

3) USA non-government organizations/civic groups   ___

4) USA businesses/corporations   ___

5) USA news media/agencies   ___

6) USA ordinary citizens   ___

7) USA academicians   ___

8) Chinese government officials/agencies   ___

9) Chinese military officers   ___

10) Chinese non-government organizations/civic groups   ___

11) Chinese businesses/corporations   ___

12) Chinese news media/agencies   ___

13) Chinese ordinary citizens   ___

14) Chinese academicians   ___

15) Japanese government officials/agencies   ___

16) Japanese military officers   ___

17) Japanese non-government organizations/civic groups   ___

18) Japanese businesses/corporations   ___

19) Japanese news media/agencies   ___

20) Japanese ordinary citizens   ___

21) Japanese academicians   ___

22) N. Korean government officials/agencies   ___

23) N. Korean military officers   ___

24) N. Korean non-government organizations/civic groups   ___

25) N. Korean businesses/corporations   ___

26) N. Korean news media/agencies   ___

27) N. Korean ordinary citizens   ___

28) N. Korean academicians   ___

29) S. Korean government officials/agencies   ___

30) S. Korean military officers   ___

31) S. Korean non-government organizations/civic groups   ___

32) S. Korean businesses/corporations   ___

33) S. Korean news media/agencies   ___

34) S. Korean ordinary citizens   ___

35) S. Korean academicians   ___

36) Other U.S.A Sources   ___

37) Other Chinese Sources   ___

38) Other Japanese Sources   ___

39) Other N. Korean Sources   ___

40) Other S. Korean Sources   ___

10. Slant regarding North Korea's future: ___

     1) Positive: the article generally includes bright description of N.Korea's future
under Kim Jong Un's regime

     2) Negative: the article generally includes unfavorable descriptions of N.Korea's
future under Kim Jong Un's regime

     3) Neutral: the article reveals no stance

     4) Mixed: the article includes all of the above