

MEDIA COVERAGE OF SIX-PARTY TALKS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON
MEDIA CONTENT AND JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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A candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor Wayne Wanta

Professor William Benoit

Professor Stephanie Craft

Professor Byron Scott

To my family in South Korea whose love and prayer have enabled me to live in peace

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how the U.S. and South Korean media covered the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions, a negotiation process that began in 2003 and is still incomplete. It also investigated journalists' perceptions of North Korea and the multilateral nuclear talks, and how their perspectives correlate with the media content. To analyze these issues, the study conducted content analysis of U.S. and South Korean newspaper reports on the nuclear talks and administered a survey of U.S., South Korean and European journalists who covered at least one round of the six-party talks.

Results showed significant differences between U.S. and South Korean news reports in regard to source usage, attributes of North Korea, and news frames. Frequencies of sources used in the media had a significantly positive correlation with journalists' perceived source credibility, but not with source accessibility. Journalists' perceptions of attributes concerning North Korea and news frames were positively correlated with those attributes and frames mentioned in news stories. In addition, U.S., South Korean, and European journalists showed different perspectives on four attributes of North Korea in covering the six-party talks – “military threat,” “human rights abuse,” “open to peaceful negotiation,” and “essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.”

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The huge hexagonal table in the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing was again at the center of media attention in March 2007, as each participant in the six-party nuclear talks was seated on one side of the table. Diplomats from the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia gathered in Beijing for the sixth round of the multilateral talks to discuss how to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. Outside of the negotiation venue were hundreds of reporters from various countries who were covering the crucial talks. According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry, around 500 journalists both from China and other countries gathered for each round of the talks (Chinese Foreign Ministry, 2007). The reporters were striving to get comments from the diplomatic officials moving to and from the meeting place, as the talks were held behind closed doors and the officials were the only ones who could provide relevant information.

During the six rounds of the multilateral talks that have been held to date, reporters had to depend a great deal on government sources because they had no direct access to the negotiations. The reporters' difficulty in acquiring key information increased because North Korea, the world's most reclusive country, has rarely offered entry to the foreign press. Journalists covering North Korea have pointed out that access is the biggest obstacle in reporting on issues concerning the North (Kirk & Choe, 2006).

With the media's increased reliance on government sources, some government officials leaked selected information about the talks to the press and thus influenced the atmosphere of the talks (Sanger, 2003, p. A1). News outlets in different countries

sometimes received different accounts from their governments and offered rather different interpretations of the talks. For these reasons, the six-party talks serve as an excellent opportunity to explore how the government influences the media agenda in matters of foreign policy and what other factors affect media content when it comes to negotiations to which journalists have no direct access. The multilateral dialogue also offers a valuable chance to examine whether there is any difference in media coverage of the same event among different countries, and whether journalists' nationality influences their reporting.

This study adopts content analysis to examine sources, attributes and frames that U.S. and South Korean newspapers used in reporting on the six-party talks. The approach is used to find out who the main agenda-setters were and what aspects the media emphasized in covering the event. This study analyzes coverage of five rounds of the six-party nuclear talks by two newspapers each from the United States and South Korea – namely, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* of the United States, and the *Chosun Ilbo* and the *JoongAng Ilbo* of South Korea. Among the six participating countries in the multilateral nuclear talks, only the U.S. and South Korean media were selected for content analysis because they are more deeply engaged in the talks with North Korea than the other countries. Language barriers and time constraints also prevented the researcher from examining media coverage of the other countries.

The study also includes extensive surveys of U.S., South Korean, and European journalists who covered the six-party talks to analyze their perceptions of sources and attributes in regard to the talks and their perspectives on the six-party talks, North Korea, and the media's role in the multilateral negotiations. A total of 82 journalists participated

in the survey, which included both close-ended and open-ended questions. The respondents include 45 South Korean journalists, 20 U.S. journalists, and 17 European journalists. European journalists were included in the survey as a comparison group because unlike South Korea and the United States, Europe is not directly involved in the talks. Also, the researcher found that European journalists covering North Korea are more confident in completing an English-language survey than journalists from other non-English speaking countries.

Though previous studies examined the relationship between the media and foreign policy (Berry, 1990; Cohen, 1963; Graber, 2006; Herman, 1993; Malek & Wiegand, 1997; Seib, 1997), no study thus far has examined such a relationship concerning the six-party talks. This study also offers useful explanations about media practices, and contributes to explicating influences on media agenda (McCombs, 2004; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). In addition, this research points to important implications for how media outlets of different countries cover the same international event, based on the study's comparative approach to media content and surveys of journalists.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Press and Foreign Policy

The press-government relationship is an important topic in studying the media's role in foreign policy, as active interactions between the two sides have resulted in unilateral or bilateral influences (Bloch-Elkon & Lehman-Wilzig, 2005; Cohen, 1963; Malek & Wiegand, 1997). However, explicating the relationship is complicated, since it involves various factors such as the government's press management, press professionalism and public opinion (Graber, 2006; Hertog, 2000). Reflecting such complications, journalism scholars have used various terms in defining the media's role in a government's foreign policy. Cohen claimed that the media could function as observer, participant and catalyst (1963, p. 20). In comparison, Merrill regarded them as equal contender, voluntary servant, forced slave or antagonist (1974, p. 42). In fact, the media's role in foreign policy may differ in various situations, and some studies have offered useful arguments on this issue (Berry, 1990; Bloch-Elkon & Lehman-Wilzig, 2005; Seib, 1997).

Based on interviews and informal discussions with journalists and government officials, Cohen (1963) claimed that reporters hold two sets of concepts of the roles (p. 20). According to his research, one set relates to journalists remaining neutral messengers of information. In this case, the media can easily become the government's instrument because they may merely transmit what government officials say. Cohen contended that journalists are susceptible to the government's claims because government officials

become “prime sources of news merely by virtue of their positions in government” (p. 28). The other set defines journalists’ roles as active participants in the policy-making process. In this case, journalists are perceived to influence foreign policy by questioning officials and criticizing the government as representatives of the public. In this sense, the press becomes “a political actor of tremendous consequence” (p. 20).

Some studies considered political leadership or policy stages in analyzing the relationship between the media and foreign policy (Berry, 1990; Bloch-Elkon & Lehman-Wilzig, 2005; Seib, 1997). Seib (1997) argued that the media’s influence on foreign policy depends on the ability of political leaders. According to Seib, the media’s influence is reduced when political leaders present clear strategies in handling foreign affairs issues, but the media’s role is increased when political leaders fail to lay out clear objectives. In comparison, Berry (1990) argued the media’s stance on a foreign policy issue differs based on stages of a policy or an event. Examining the *New York Times*’ reports on five major U.S. foreign policy issues, Berry contended the press is usually supportive of a given policy issue during its formulation and execution stage, and the press turns critical at the outcome stage (1990, pp. 138-140).

Bloch-Elkon and Lehman-Wilzig (2005) also found that the media’s role differed according to three stages of international crisis. Based on public opinion surveys and articles in four U.S. newspapers, they claimed that the media served as a “barking watchdog” at the outset of a crisis because they focused on national security and humanitarian concerns. As the crisis escalated, the media refrained from criticizing the government, based on their own commitment to national interest – a process known as self-mobilization. In the de-escalation stage, news outlets took different positions

according to the outcome of the government's policy.

Although studies have presented varying arguments on the press-government relationship on foreign affairs issues, most research in the area has agreed that the media are vulnerable to governmental manipulation in regard to foreign affairs issues. According to Malek and Wiegand (1997), the media's limited access to information on foreign policy issues is one of the main reasons that make the members of the media generally accept the government's foreign policy line. They claimed that governments influence media coverage of foreign affairs issues through deliberate or non-deliberate leaks of information, news conferences and news briefings. They noted that "journalists have not necessarily reported about the reality of a country, but rather the perception of the American and foreign governments in power" (1997, p. 12). In the same vein, Graber (2006) argued that the media generally accept their government's designations of friend and enemy countries and interpret motives of the friends and enemies accordingly (pp. 339-341). Herman (1993) agreed that the media have functioned as the government's propaganda tool while distributing and promoting its foreign policy agenda. He contended that the U.S. media have sometimes allowed themselves to be mobilized to serve the government's agenda and foreign policy objectives, as they rely heavily on government sources and tend to trust whatever information is distributed to them. His examples include U.S. media coverage of the Gulf War in 1991.

Media Practices

Studies that examine factors influencing media practices provide useful explanations on why journalists cover a certain issue in a certain way. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) presented a five-level hierarchical model of influences on news media

content: the individual level, media routines level, organizational level, extra-media level and ideological level. According to this model, influences at higher levels restrain the scope of influences at lower levels. However, studies have shown mixed results on the degree of influence of factors at different levels (Berkowitz & Limor, 2003; Fahmy & Johnson, 2005; Plaisance & Skewes, 2003). For example, Berkowitz and Limor's study (2003) revealed that factors at the individual level, professional level, and societal level had a more significant impact on their ethical decisions than factors at the organizational level. Fahmy and Johnson (2005) also found that embedded journalists believe individual level factors such as individual values and professional norms were more influential on embedded reports than extramedia factors. Fahmy and Johnson surveyed a total of 159 embedded journalists covering the Iraq war in examining journalists' perception of their performance and factors that may have affected their framing of the war.

Some studies focused on journalists' role conceptions as a potential factor influencing their journalistic performance. Weaver and Wilhoit identified three journalistic role conceptions – interpretive function, dissemination function and adversary function (1986, pp. 137-140). The interpretive function relates to investigating government claims, analyzing complicated issues, and discussing public policies in a timely manner. According to Weaver and Wilhoit, the dissemination function refers to providing the public with information quickly while refraining from reporting stories based on unverified facts. The adversary function means journalists being critical of government officials and businesses (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, pp. 137-139).

Shoemaker and Reese (1986) argued that how journalists define their jobs will influence the content they produce (p. 80). In fact, Starck and Soloski's (1977) research

on journalism students' role conceptions and their performances is one of the empirical studies on the issue. Starck and Soloski examined how reporters' attitudes toward the functional role of the media affect the type and content of stories they produce. They found that functional orientation has an impact on their performance, as students who saw themselves as midway between the extreme neutral and the extreme participant role produced the most objective stories.

Sources and Credibility

Examining news sources has been one of the important topics in journalism research, as it helps to explicate both who influences media content and how journalists do their job. For these reasons, the present study examines sources that South Korean and U.S. media used in reporting on the six-party nuclear talks. Salwen (1995) pointed out that news coverage is largely "the sum of quotations in the news over time" (p. 827). According to Gans (1979), sources are "the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on air or who are quoted" (p. 80). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) said sources provide different information to journalists, and journalists select which information they will use.

Some studies examined news sources to analyze who influences the media agenda (Chang, 1993; Heo, 2002; Sigal, 1973). Sigal (1973) analyzed sources for national news and international news in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* for a two-week period each in five years. He found that U.S. government officials accounted for almost one-half of all the sources cited in the sample of page-one stories of the two newspapers (1973, pp. 123-125). Chang's (1993) research on U.S. media reports on China showed similar results. He found that U.S. government officials constituted about

46% of news sources cited. Heo (2002) also examined sources appearing in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in covering North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. His study found that the newspapers depended heavily on U.S. government officials in reporting on the isolationist leader.

Although many researchers examined news sources as influences on media agenda, some scholars have focused more on what factors make journalists seek out particular sources. Studies have identified source credibility, accessibility, prominence, knowledge, and deadline pressure as some of the influential factors (Flynn, 2002; Paletz and Entman, 1981; Powers & Fico, 1994; Shoemaker & Reese, 1986). In their study of variables that affect reporters' decisions on source usage, Powers and Fico (1994) found that an individual reporter's judgment was the principal influence on the media's selection of sources. Moreover, their research showed that journalists' source choices were influenced by how much sources were credible and accessible. Paletz and Entman (1981) also said that journalists prefer government sources because they are generally available.

Among the factors that are found to affect journalists' source usage, source credibility has garnered considerable attention from mass communication researchers, mainly due to its implications for improving communication in various sectors (McComas & Trumbo, 2001). Meyer (1988) found a source's credibility was largely determined by five variables: whether a source is fair, is unbiased, tells the whole story, is accurate and can be trusted. His study resulted in Meyer's Credibility Index that measures trust, accuracy, fairness, honesty, and bias.

Flynn (2002) used Meyer's Credibility Index to examine how environmental

journalists rate the credibility of environmental groups as sources of information on the global warming debate. Flynn conducted a self-administered survey of environmental journalists in the United States to study the journalists' perceptions of source credibility and the likelihood that they would use that source. The research found that source credibility affects the perceived choice of sources by journalists.

Second-level Agenda Setting and Framing

Since the seminal agenda-setting research by McCombs and Shaw (1972), more than 400 empirical studies have been implemented in the area of agenda setting (McCombs, 2004), with scholars presenting diverse terms in defining the concept. McCombs (2004) defined the agenda-setting influence of mass media as the transfer of salience from the media agenda to the public agenda. According to McQuail (2000), agenda setting is a “process by which the relative attention given to items or issues in news coverage influences the rank order of public awareness of issues and attribution of significance” (p. 426). Similarly, Jeffres (1997) explained that “the media, in the process of selecting some things and not others, construct an agenda which tells people what they should be concerned with and in what order” (p. 97). Therefore, the concept of agenda-setting has worked as a baseline for media scholars to examine how media coverage influences the public's mind.

Research into agenda setting has achieved another major development with the formation of second-level agenda setting, known also as attribute agenda setting. The concept of second level of agenda setting argues that the media can influence how the public thinks by offering them an agenda of attributes (Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004). Thus, second-level agenda setting challenged Cohen's argument that the media tell the news

audience “what to think about” but not “what to think” (Cohen, 1963).

Ghanem defined the attributes of an object as “the set of perspectives or frames that journalists and the public employ to think about each object” (1997, p. 5). In addition, most studies on second-level agenda setting have divided attributes into cognitive attributes and affective attributes (Ghanem, 1997; Golan & Wanta, 2001; Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon, 1998; McCombs, 1997). Cognitive attributes concern information about objects, issues, or personal characteristics, whereas affective attributes are defined as the way objects are described in positive, negative, or neutral terms (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001, pp. 73-74).

Some scholars have argued for the convergence of attribute agenda setting and framing research, considering similarities of the two approaches (Ghanem, 1997; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001; Weaver, Graber, McCombs & Eyal, 1981). According to Entman (1993), framing is “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation” (p. 52). Entman said frames can make certain interpretations more “discernable, comprehensible and memorable” than others (1991, p. 7). Nelson, Clawson and Oxley also said frames help the media to organize coherence in covering complicated issues (1997, p. 237). In the perspective of attribute agenda setting, framing is “the construction of an agenda with a restricted number of the thematically related attributes in order to create a coherent picture of a particular object” (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001, p. 70). According to Wanta, Williams, and Hu (1991), story frames are contingent conditions in the agenda-setting process. In particular, McCombs and Ghanem (2001) distinguished

between frames as format and as content. They said frames, in the former sense, can be explained as “attributes of communication presentations,” whereas in the latter case frames are “attributes of the objects being presented” (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001, p. 71). The present study adopts both concepts of the frames, as it aims to analyze what aspects of the six-party talks South Korean and U.S. journalists emphasized in presenting their news, and upon what attributes of North Korea they focused. While some scholars said frames and attributes can be used interchangeably (Ghanem, 1997, p. 5), this study will use the term “attribute” in referring to characteristics of North Korea and the term “frame” to explain aspects of the six-party talks.

Some important studies examined media coverage of foreign affairs issues based on attribute agenda setting or framing research (Entman, 1991; Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004; Park, 2005; Zhang, 2000; Zhang & Wan, 1998). For example, Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004) examined whether positive and negative coverage of foreign nations influences how the public evaluates the countries. Specifically, the research tested two things. The first test concerned whether media coverage of foreign countries influenced individuals’ views on the importance of those countries. The second test discussed whether positive or negative coverage of foreign counties affected individuals’ evaluations of the countries. Comparing U.S. public opinion surveys on 26 foreign nations and the U.S. network coverage of the nations, the study found that “the more media coverage a nation received, the more vital to U.S. interests the country was seen to be” (p. 371). The study also showed that negative media coverage of a nation led individuals to think negatively of the nation. However, positive coverage of a nation did not show such correlation. The approach of taking foreign countries as its object provides

a useful baseline for analyzing attributes of North Korean issues because most news reports on the Communist country have focused on its negative attributes, such as its nuclear threats and human rights violations (Seo & Lim, 2007).

As shown above, many studies examined media coverage of various foreign affairs issues, but no research has thus far analyzed how the media covered the six-party nuclear talks. Moreover, the current study is the first of its kind in surveying foreign correspondents of different countries to investigate their perceptions of North Korea issues.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Previous studies argued that the media rely heavily on government sources in covering foreign affairs issues, as they have limited access to related matters (Graber, 2006; Herman, 1993; Malek & Wiegand, 1997). In particular, some studies conducted content analysis of media reports on international issues, demonstrating that government officials were dominant sources in media reports (Chang, 1993; Heo, 2002; Sigal, 1973). Therefore, it can be hypothesized that U.S. government officials and South Korean government officials would be the most dominant sources in the U.S. media and the South Korean media, respectively, in their coverage of the six-party talks.

H1a: U.S. government officials are the most prominent sources for the U.S. media in their coverage of six-party nuclear talks.

H1b: South Korean government officials are the most prominent sources for the South Korean media in their coverage of six-party nuclear talks.

Since the introduction of the second-level agenda setting and framing, an increasing number of studies in mass communication have analyzed what attributes or frames the media used in covering an event. (Entman, 1991; Golan & Wanta, 2001; Lopez-Escobar,

Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon, 1998; Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004; Park, 2005; Zhang, 2000; Zhang & Wan, 1998). This area of research is important, considering the media's influence on how the public thinks about a certain issue. Therefore, the current study examines attributes of North Korea and news frames the U.S. and South Korean media used in reporting on the six-party talks.

RQ1: What attributes and frames did the media of the two countries emphasize in covering the six-party talks?

Some studies on media practices explored how the individual journalist's perspective can influence the media content, and there have been mixed results on this issue (Berkowitz & Limor, 2003; Fahmy & Johnson, 2005; Plaisance & Skewes, 2003; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Starck and Soloski, 1977). The current study analyzes the relationship between media content and journalists' perspectives by examining an association between media coverage of North Korea and journalists' perceptions of the country. RQ2 addresses this issue, and it is examined by comparing content analysis of U.S. and South Korean news reports on the six-party talks and a survey of U.S. and South Korean journalists who have covered the talks.

RQ2: To what degree did journalists' perceptions of sources and attributes regarding the talks correlate with sources and attributes appearing in the media?

In conjunction with RQ2, the study examines whether journalists of different countries have different perceptions of North Korea issues. The question is investigated by a survey of U.S., South Korean, and European journalists who reported on at least one round of the six-party talks.

RQ3: How are South Korean, U.S., and European journalists different in their perceptions of attributes linked to North Korea and the six-party talks, and the media's role in the six-party talks?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This study combined content analysis and an online survey to explore the hypotheses and research questions. Content analysis covered two newspapers each from the United States and South Korea, examining sources, attributes and frames used in their coverage of the six-party talks. An online survey was administered to study journalists' perceptions of sources, attributes, and frames in covering the six-party talks and their perspectives on North Korea, the nuclear talks and the media's roles in the multilateral negotiations.

Content analysis is frequently used in examining media coverage of events because it is useful in assessing the messages and meanings of media texts (Riffe, Lacy, Fico, 2005; Wimmer & Dominick, 2000; van Dijk, 1988). This approach also enables researchers to examine an issue "both from the perspective of counting topical events and from the perspective of issue attitude" (Killebrew, 1999). Moreover, content analysis is useful for comparative study in that media texts are associated with "culturally familiar symbols" (Entman, 1993, p. 53). In this study, content analysis identified the sources, attributes, and frames South Korean and U.S. journalists used in reporting on the six-party talks, and the outcome of content analysis served as a basis for survey questions.

An online survey was designed to examine journalists' perceptions on issues related to the six-party talks and identify influences on the media agenda. An online survey was appropriate for this study, as it helps overcome international boundaries and reduces costs (Dillman, 2000; Schonlau, Fricker & Elliott, 2002). Targeted journalists for

this study work in different countries – mostly, South Korea, China, the United States, Japan and Russia. One of the disadvantages of an online survey is that researchers have access to a limited number of e-mail addresses (Dillman, 2000). However, this was not a big problem in this study, since the survey defined specific targets, and the researcher could track most of them through various means as specified later.

Content Analysis

Sample and Time Frame

The study content analyzed media coverage of the six-party nuclear talks by two newspapers each from the United States and South Korea – the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* of the United States, and the *Chosun Ilbo* and the *JoongAng Ilbo* of South Korea. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* were selected because they are leading media outlets in the United States and have been shown to set the agenda for other media (Golan, 2006). The two South Korean newspapers were selected because they have the highest circulation rates in South Korea (Media Today, 2007).

This research examined news stories written between seven days before and seven days after each round of the nuclear talks. The periods were determined because the newspapers reported on predictions of the talks from several days before the negotiations started, and ran analysis pieces until a week after the talks. Specifically, the search periods were: August 20-September 5, 2003 (first round), February 18-March 6, 2004 (second round), June 16-July 1, 2004 (third round), July 19-August 14, 2005 (fourth round/ first phase), September 6-26, 2005 (fourth round/ second phase), November 2-18, 2005 (fifth round/ first phase), December 11-29, 2006 (fifth round/ second phase), February 1-20, 2007 (fifth round/ third phase).

U.S. newspaper articles were drawn from the online database Lexis-Nexis, and the Korean Integrated News Database System, or KINDS, was used to track down Korean newspaper articles. Articles of the *JoongAng Ilbo* were obtained from its own Web site, because KINDS did not provide the newspaper content. The articles were searched with the key words “North Korea” and “six-party talks.” The relevancy of the articles to the topic was examined, because some of the articles were not directly related to the talks. Editorials and columns were also excluded, as they are not aimed at reporting on certain issues and generally do not quote sources. With these considerations, 142 articles from the U.S. newspapers and 270 articles from the South Korean newspapers were selected for this content analysis.

Unit of Analysis and Coding Instrument

The unit of analysis in coding sources was source, and the unit of analysis in coding attributes and frames was the paragraph, which is widely regarded as the smallest unit of meaning in newspaper journalism (Jasperson et al., 1998). Specifically, sources used in the newspapers were classified into 19 categories: U.S. officials, U.S. private experts, U.S. media, South Korean officials, South Korean private experts, South Korean media, Chinese officials, Chinese private experts, Chinese media, North Korean officials, N.K. media, Japanese officials, Japanese private experts, Japanese media, Russian officials, Russian private experts, Russian media, officials from unspecified countries, and private experts from unspecified countries. The categories were developed based on a preliminary analysis of 10 articles each from the four newspapers. In addition, those categories were relevant because the nuclear talks involve the United States, the two Koreas, China, Japan and Russia, and thus government officials, private experts and

media of the countries have served as a source of information regarding the multilateral negotiations. It should be noted that this study analyzed original sources, as they are the ones who deliver a certain message.

In addition to sources, this study examined attributes and frames the South Korean and U.S. newspapers adopted in reporting on the six-party talks – attributes of North Korea and frames in presenting the news on the six-party talks. Seven attributes of North Korea identified in this study include “military threat,” “human rights abuse,” “illicit economic activities,” “‘axis-of-evil’ nation,” “ruled by Kim Jong-il,” “open to peaceful negotiations,” and “essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.” They were developed from a preliminary analysis of the news stories under research, as well as previous studies that examined attributes of North Korea emphasized in the media (Seo & Lim, 2007). In addition, three journalists who participated in a pre-test of the survey provided useful input in developing the attributes.

The “military threat” attribute concerns North Korea’s pursuit or exports of missile technology and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) that include nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. The attribute of “human rights abuse” is related to North Korean leaders’ suppression of their people, North Korea’s abductions of foreigners, and the hardships of North Korean defectors. The attribute of “illicit economic activities” covers North Korean money laundering and counterfeiting of U.S. currency. This attribute also concerns exports of drugs and narcotics, and smuggling operations aimed at bringing hard currency to North Korea’s moribund economy (Seo & Lim, 2007). The “evil nation” attribute covers the reference to North Korea as an “axis-of-evil” state, which was originally stated during President George W. Bush’s State of the Union

address in 2002. The attribute also covers North Korea's alleged links to terrorism. The "open to peaceful dialogue" attribute is about North Korea's readiness to engage in dialogue with the international community. The attribute of North Korea being an "essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula" relates to the discussion of unification between the two Koreas, and replacing the current 1953 armistice with a formal peace treaty.

Five frames relate to aspects journalists emphasized in presenting news about the six-party talks, and they include "attitude change," "cause and consequence," "conflict," "evaluation," and "treatment." These are largely based on framing research that explained or examined how the media framed certain issues (Entman, 1993; Luther & Zhou, 2005). They were also developed from a preliminary research on 10 articles each from the four newspapers and discussions with several journalists who covered the six-party talks. Those frames were relevant in analyzing the news stories on the six-party talks because the outcome of the talks was largely influenced by confrontations or compromises between the United States and North Korea – the two main antagonists of the nuclear standoff.

Specifically, the "attitude change" frame concerns whether or how positions of the countries participating in the six-party talks have changed. Within the frame, for example, some articles reported that the United States took a more flexible approach toward North Korea. The "cause and consequence" frame encompasses discussions of causality and responsibility for the nuclear tension, as well as the military, economic, and political impact of the nuclear standoff between Pyongyang and Washington. Within the frame, some articles criticized North Korea for escalating the nuclear tension with its

threats of nuclear tests. In comparison, some stories pointed out that the Bush administration was partly responsible for the nuclear standoff, as it failed to properly engage North Korea. The “conflict” frame encompasses confrontations between entities, often entailing competition or war-related rhetoric (Luther & Zhou, 2005). In this study, the “conflict” frame covers escalation of tension among the participating countries of the six-party talks or North Korea’s military provocations. With the “evaluation” frame, how much or little agreement the countries reached during the talks was stressed. For example, many articles said there was significant or scant progress in evaluating the outcome of the talks. The “treatment” frame is about what measures should be taken to resolve the nuclear tension. Within the frame, news stories said which country – mainly, either North Korea or the United States – should take steps to settle the prolonged standoff.

Intercoder Reliability

Two trained coders each coded the same 10% of the entire data to test intercoder reliability (Krippendorff, 2004). Forty-two articles from the total 412 were randomly selected to check levels of agreement between the two independent coders in coding sources, attributes, and frames. Before coding sources, attributes, and frames in the articles, the coders were trained in concepts of the study as well as coding categories. Intercoder reliability was determined by Krippendorff’s *alpha* formula, which is considered “the most general agreement measure with appropriate reliability interpretations in content analysis” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 221). The intercoder reliability determined by Krippendorff’s *alpha* was .98 in coding sources, .83 in coding attributes of North Korea, and .81 in coding frames.

Survey

Population and Sample

The study surveyed South Korean, U.S., and European journalists who covered at least one round of the six-party talks. European journalists are included as a comparison group, because unlike South Korea and the United States, Europe is not directly involved in the talks. Also, the researcher found that European journalists covering North Korea are more confident in completing an English-language survey than journalists from other non-English speaking countries. A list of 142 South Korean journalists and 68 U.S. journalists was compiled, generally based on the beats they were covering. The difference in the numbers of South Korean and U.S. journalists stems from the fact that a smaller number of U.S. journalists specifically cover North Korea. Then, European journalists were contacted through the Foreign Correspondents Club of China (FCCC). The journalists' organization forwarded the researcher's recruitment e-mail to its members. Though the researcher could not get the exact number of European journalists contacted through the FCCC, it is believed that the number will be smallest among the three groups.

In the case of South Korea, most of the reporters covered the Foreign Ministry or the Unification Ministry, drawn from a list of journalists who covered South Korea's Foreign Ministry between 2003 and 2007 when the five rounds of the six-party talks took place. In South Korea, Foreign Ministry correspondents are the main reporters who cover the six-party talks. Such a list was not available in the case of the U.S. journalists, so the researcher identified U.S. journalists by searching for U.S. news articles on the six-party talks. The researcher used the online database Lexis-Nexis to check major U.S. media

such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN and ABC. Then the researcher tracked down e-mail addresses of the journalists through Web sites of media organizations or by personally contacting public relations offices of major media outlets. Those whose contact information was not available were excluded from the final list. The targeted population represented a broad range of news outlets – newspapers, television, radio, wire services and online media.

Data Collection Procedure

One online survey questionnaire was created in a professional online survey Web site. Before opening the survey to all of the target journalists, a pre-test was conducted with two South Korean journalists and one U.S. journalist. They were willing to join the pre-test after receiving a researcher's e-mail to ask for participation in the pre-test. With the feedback from the three journalists, the researcher rephrased some questions and answer categories to prevent confusion that the journalists mentioned.

Personalized e-mails were sent to all of the target journalists directing them to the Web-based questionnaire. Participating respondents were guaranteed that their answers to the Web survey were totally confidential and anonymous. Once the initial e-mails were distributed, the journalists were given 10 days to respond. Then, the researcher sent a reminder e-mail in hopes of increasing the respondent rate (Schonlau, Fricker & Elliott, 2002).

Measures

South Korean journalists and U.S. and European journalists were asked to complete a Korean or an English questionnaire, respectively, that contained the same questions (See Appendix 4 for a complete version of questionnaire). The questionnaire

was designed to measure (a) their perceptions of source credibility, source accessibility, attributes of North Korea, and news frames in covering the six-party talks, (b) their work routines in reporting on the six-party talks, (c) their perspectives on North Korea, the six-party talks and the media's roles in the multilateral negotiations, and (d) general demographic information. The Web survey questionnaire included a Likert-type rating system, which enabled the researcher to examine the extent to which the nationality of the journalists influences their perspectives on North Korea, as well as correlations between journalists' perceptions of sources, attributes and frames and those appearing in the newspaper articles.

Variables

The independent variable for this research is the nationality of the journalists – whether they are from South Korea, the United States, or Europe. The dependent variables are their perceptions of sources and attributes regarding the six-party talks, and their perspectives on North Korea, the nuclear talks, and the media's role in the six-party talks. Four other variables are also examined to check their potential inclusion as covariates. The potential covariates, which the researcher hypothesized may influence journalists' perceptions of North Korea issues, are their professional experience covering North Korea, the countries where they were based, and the political orientations on North Korea of themselves and their media organizations.

Use of sources. Reporters were provided a list of 17 sources and asked to indicate on a five-point scale how often such sources were used in their news stories on the six-party talks. Reporters were also asked to rank the credibility and accessibility of the sources, as previous studies found the two factors influence reporters' source choices

(Powers & Fico, 1994; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). The sources listed in the survey were those previously identified through content analysis of media coverage, including government officials and private experts of the six countries.

Attributes and frames. Reporters indicated what attributes of North Korea and what aspects of the talks they perceived to be important in reporting on the six-party talks. To measure their perceptions of these issues, a five-point, Likert-type scale was used, where one meant not important at all and five meant very important (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). They were asked to rank the importance of the seven object attributes and five communication attributes that were identified in the content analysis of media reports.

Demographic information. Respondents indicated their nationality, the forms of media reporting they conducted, their professional experience covering North Korea, the countries where they were based, and the political orientations on North Korea of themselves and their media organizations. Their professional experience was measured by the number of the six-party meetings they covered. These questions were asked in order to better interpret and analyze their responses.

Statistical Analysis

The two parts of the first hypothesis and the first research question were tested by the frequencies of sources, attributes, or frames. The first hypothesis predicted that U.S. and South Korean government officials are the most prominent sources for the U.S. media and the South Korean media, respectively. The first research question asked what attributes and frames the U.S. and South Korean media emphasized in covering the six-party talks. A Chi-square test was used to analyze the issues.

The second research question regarding the correlations between journalists' perceptions of sources and attributes and actual sources and attributes that appeared in the news reports was explored in terms of a Spearman's *rho* correlation. The relationship between mean scores of variables from the survey of the journalists and frequencies of variables in the content analysis was analyzed.

Finally, univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was adopted to answer the third research question that asked how South Korean, U.S, and European journalists are different in their perceptions of North Korea, six-party talks, and the media's role in the multilateral talks. The univariate case of ANOVA is the appropriate statistical method for this study, as it allows simultaneous evaluation of the significance of mean differences on a dependent variable between two or more treatment conditions or groups (Agresti & Finlay, 1997; Mertler & Cannatta, 2005). The groups are defined by the various levels of the independent variable or factor in ANOVA terminology (Mertler & Cannatta, 2005). In this study, nationality of journalists, which is an independent variable, has three levels – South Korea, U.S., or Europe. A dependent variable is their perceptions of North Korea, the six-party talks and the media's role in the multilateral negotiations. These perceptions were measured on interval scales. In this analysis, correlations between the dependent variable and each potential covariate were analyzed. The four potential covariates, which the researcher hypothesized may influence journalists' perceptions of North Korea, are their experience of covering North Korea, the countries where they were based, and the political orientations on North Korea of themselves and their media organizations. Whenever a significant correlation was discovered, the covariate was included in the analysis of variance.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Content Analysis

Hypothesis 1 predicted that U.S. and South Korean government officials would be the most prominent sources for the U.S. media and the South Korean media, respectively. This hypothesis was supported. During the research periods of between one week before and one week after each round of the talks, the U.S. newspapers used 1,449 sources and the South Korean newspapers used 1,768 sources.

As shown in Table 1, U.S. government officials were the most frequently used sources in the U.S. newspapers' coverage of the nuclear talks, and South Korean government officials were the most dominant sources in the South Korean newspapers. Specifically, U.S. officials accounted for 52.1% of the sources in the U.S. newspapers, followed by North Korean officials (12.1%), Chinese officials (7.8%), U.S. private experts (6%), South Korean officials (4.4%), Japanese officials (4.4%), and Asian officials or officials from unspecified countries (4.1%). It should be noted that the proportions of South Korean, Chinese and Japanese officials may actually be higher than these figures indicate, as it is likely that they are often referred to as "Asian officials" when quoted on sensitive issues.

In comparison, the proportion of South Korean government officials in the South Korean newspapers was not as high as that of U.S. officials in the U.S. newspapers. South Korean officials accounted for 31.3%, followed by U.S. officials (22.1%), North Korean officials (11.8%), Chinese officials (5.3%), South Korean experts (4.9%), and

Russian officials (4.3%). The U.S. and South Korean newspapers showed significant differences in using sources at the level of $p < .0001$.

Table 1
Sources Used in Media Reports on Six-Party Talks

| | U.S. Media | | S. Korean Media | | Total | |
|----------------|------------|---------|-----------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Officials | 1259 | (86.8%) | 1419 | (80.3%) | 2678 | (83.2%) |
| U.S. | 755 | (52.1%) | 391 | (22.1%) | 1146 | (35.6%) |
| S. Korea | 64 | (4.4%) | 553 | (31.3%) | 617 | (19.2%) |
| China | 113 | (7.8%) | 93 | (5.3%) | 206 | (6.4%) |
| N. Korea | 176 | (12.1%) | 208 | (11.8%) | 384 | (11.9%) |
| Japan | 64 | (4.4%) | 73 | (4.1%) | 137 | (4.3%) |
| Russia | 27 | (1.9%) | 76 | (4.3%) | 103 | (3.2%) |
| Asia or others | 60 | (4.1%) | 25 | (1.4%) | 85 | (2.6%) |
| Experts | 168 | (11.6%) | 205 | (11.6%) | 373 | (11.6%) |
| U.S. | 87 | (6.0%) | 76 | (4.3%) | 163 | (5.1%) |
| S. Korea | 20 | (1.4%) | 87 | (4.9%) | 107 | (3.3%) |
| China | 22 | (1.5%) | 15 | (0.8%) | 37 | (1.2%) |
| Japan | 16 | (1.1%) | 13 | (0.7%) | 29 | (0.9%) |
| Russia | 3 | (0.2%) | 3 | (0.2%) | 6 | (0.2%) |
| Asia or others | 20 | (1.4%) | 11 | (0.6%) | 31 | (1.0%) |
| Media | 22 | (1.6%) | 144 | (8.1%) | 166 | (5.2%) |
| U.S. | 1 | (0.1%) | 69 | (3.9%) | 70 | (2.2%) |
| S. Korea | 2 | (0.1%) | 7 | (0.4%) | 9 | (0.3%) |
| China | 4 | (0.3%) | 9 | (0.5%) | 13 | (0.4%) |
| N. Korea | 11 | (0.8%) | 25 | (1.4%) | 36 | (1.1%) |
| Japan | 3 | (0.2%) | 32 | (1.8%) | 35 | (1.1%) |
| Russia | 1 | (0.1%) | 2 | (0.1%) | 3 | (0.1%) |
| Total | 1449 | (100%) | 1768 | (100%) | 3217 | (100%) |

Note. $\chi^2(1, 18) = 668.541, p < .0001$

Entries are counts with percentages in parentheses.

The first research question asked what attributes and frames the South Korean and U.S. media emphasized in covering the six-party talks. The U.S. and South Korean newspapers showed significant differences in their choices of attributes and frames at $p < .0001$. With regard to attributes of North Korea, the U.S. newspapers used a total of 1,625 attributes, and the South Korean newspapers used 2,293 attributes (Table 2). The most dominant attribute in the two sides was the “military threat” attribute, with 73.4%

for the U.S. newspapers and 66.7% for South Korean newspapers. As North Korea's nuclear ambition is the main focus of the six-party talks, both the U.S. and the South Korean newspapers most often discussed about the North's activities regarding its nuclear weapons development. The second most common attribute of North Korea in the U.S. and the South Korean media was the "open to peaceful dialogue" attribute, though with a different degree. The proportion of the attribute in the U.S. newspapers was 7.3%, compared to 11.6% in the South Korean newspapers. However, the third most dominant attribute in the U.S. newspapers was the "human rights abuse" attribute (6.7%), while it was the "essential part of peace regime on the Korean Peninsula" attribute (9.1%) in the South Korean newspapers. Therefore, the U.S. newspapers emphasized more on the North Korean leaders' suppression of their people or North Korea's abductions of foreigners, whereas the South Korean newspapers focused more on discussing the nuclear issue in a broader context of Korean unification or peace in Northeast Asia.

In the case of news frames on the six-party talks, a total of 1,860 frames were identified in the U.S. newspapers and 2,464 frames in the South Korean newspapers (Table 3). The most dominant frame in the U.S. newspapers was the "conflict" frame (25.2%), whereas it was the "attitude change" frame (32.9%) in the South Korean newspapers. The proportion of the "conflict" frame in the South Korean newspapers was 15.4%. Therefore, the U.S. newspapers focused on conflicts among the parties, in particular Washington and Pyongyang, much more than their South Korean counterparts. The other significant aspects the South Korean newspapers emphasized were how much progress the parties made – the "evaluation" frame (20.8%) – and what measures should or will be taken to resolve the nuclear tension – the "treatment" frame (17.1%).

Table 2
Attributes of North Korea Used in Media Reports on Six-Party Talks

| | U.S. media | | S. Korean media | | Total | |
|--------------------|------------|---------|-----------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Military threat | 1193 | (73.4%) | 1530 | (66.7%) | 2723 | (69.5%) |
| Human rights | 109 | (6.7%) | 155 | (6.8%) | 264 | (6.7%) |
| Illicit economic | 52 | (3.1%) | 81 | (3.6%) | 133 | (3.4%) |
| Axis of evil | 18 | (1.1%) | 10 | (0.4%) | 28 | (0.7%) |
| Ruled by Kim | 64 | (3.9%) | 42 | (1.8%) | 106 | (2.7%) |
| Open to dialogue | 119 | (7.3%) | 267 | (11.6%) | 386 | (9.9%) |
| Essential to peace | 70 | (4.3%) | 208 | (9.1%) | 278 | (7.1%) |
| Total | 1625 | (100%) | 2293 | (100%) | 3918 | (100%) |

Note. $\chi^2(1, 6) = 76.480, p < .0001$

Entries are counts with percentages in parentheses.

Table 3
News Frames Used in Media Reports on Six-Party Talks

| | U.S. media | | S. Korean media | | Total | |
|-----------------|------------|---------|-----------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Attitude change | 461 | (24.8%) | 810 | (32.9%) | 1271 | (29.4%) |
| Cause | 265 | (14.2%) | 341 | (13.8%) | 606 | (14.0%) |
| Conflict | 469 | (25.2%) | 379 | (15.4%) | 848 | (19.6%) |
| Evaluation | 370 | (19.9%) | 512 | (20.8%) | 882 | (20.4%) |
| Treatment | 295 | (15.9%) | 422 | (17.1%) | 717 | (16.6%) |
| Total | 1860 | (100%) | 2464 | (100%) | 4324 | (100%) |

Note. $\chi^2(1, 4) = 77.411, p < .0001$

Entries are counts with percentages in parentheses.

Survey

A total of 82 journalists participated in the survey, including 45 South Korean journalists, 20 U.S. journalists and 17 European journalists. The response rate was 31.7% for the South Korean journalists, and 29% for U.S. journalists. The response rate for the European journalists was not available, as the researcher could not get the total number of European journalists who were contacted through the foreign correspondents' club in China.

Demographic information about the participants is summarized in Table 10. In general, the journalists who responded to the survey can be regarded as quite experienced

in the six-party talks and North Korea, since more than 63% of them covered three or more meetings of the six-party talks. In addition, 43.2% of them regarded themselves as diplomatic correspondents. In regard to their areas of work, about 56.1% work for newspapers, 19.5% for television, 15.9% for wire service and 4.9% for radio. About 64% of South Korean journalists were based in South Korea, 15.6% in China, and 11.1% in the United States. In the case of the U.S. journalists, 52.6% were based in the United States, 36.8% in China, and 10.5% in South Korea. Most of the European journalists were based in China (94.1%), and 5.9% were based in South Korea. The majority of the respondents were males (85.2%).

The survey results were analyzed to answer the second research question about the correlations between sources, attributes, and frames appearing in the media and journalists' perceptions of them. It also relates to the third research question concerning comparisons of perceptions on North Korea issues of journalists from different countries. In regard to source credibility, U.S. officials were deemed the most credible among officials and experts of the six countries participating in the talks. Russian experts received the lowest score (Table 4). In the case of attributes on North Korea that journalists believe important in reporting on the six-party talks, the journalists most strongly agreed with the attributes concerning North Korea being a military threat and an essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. The least agreed-with attribute is North Korea being labeled as an "axis-of-evil" nation (Table 6).

To investigate the second research question, the relationship between mean scores of variables from the survey and frequencies of variables in the content analysis were examined through Spearman's *rho* correlation tests. European journalists were

excluded in this analysis, because this study analyzed only U.S. and South Korean newspapers.

In the case of the association between journalists' perceptions of source reliability and their use of a certain source, the Spearman's *rho* test indicated a positive significant moderate correlation ($r = .522, N=22, p < .05$). Therefore, the greater sense of reliability journalists have with sources, the more likely that they will use the sources in their stories. The correlation coefficient was .323 with U.S. journalists and .916 with South Korean journalists. However, such a relationship was not found between journalists' perceived accessibility of sources and their use of sources in the news stories ($r = -.041, N=22$). This indicates that journalists do not necessarily use sources because they are accessible. This analysis included government officials and private experts of the United States, South Korea, China, Japan, and Russia. North Korean government officials were also included.

Spearman's *rho* was also calculated to examine the relationship between journalists' perceptions of attributes concerning North Korea and those attributes mentioned in the news stories. The test indicated a positive significant moderate correlation ($r = .653, N=14, p < .05$). The correlation coefficient was .487 with U.S. journalists and .714 with South Korean journalists. The more journalists perceive a certain attribute is important, the more likely they will emphasize the attribute. A positive significant correlation was also found between journalists' perceptions of important aspects in presenting news about the six-party talks and the frames identified in the content analysis ($r = .685, N=10, p < .05$). The correlation coefficient was .70 with both U.S. journalists and South Korean journalists. Thus, similar to attributes of North Korea,

journalists are expected to emphasize the aspects that they think are important in framing news regarding the six-party talks.

Table 4
Journalists' Responses on Source Credibility

| | South Korea (N=45) | | U.S. (N=20) | | Europe (N=17) | | Total (N=82) | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------|----------------|------|------------------|------|-----------------|------|
| U.S. officials | 3.84 | (2) | 3.95 | (1) | 3.81 | (1) | 3.86 | (1) |
| U.S. experts | 3.27 | (5) | 3.75 | (2) | 3.44 | (4) | 3.42 | (3) |
| S. Korean officials | 4.07 | (1) | 3.55 | (4) | 3.50 | (2) | 3.83 | (2) |
| S. Korean experts | 3.29 | (4) | 3.35 | (6) | 3.20 | (7) | 3.29 | (4) |
| Chinese officials | 3.30 | (3) | 3.05 | (7) | 3.25 | (5) | 3.23 | (5) |
| Chinese experts | 2.55 | (10) | 2.95 | (8) | 3.07 | (8) | 2.75 | (10) |
| N. Korean officials | 3.23 | (6) | 2.40 | (11) | 2.75 | (11) | 2.93 | (7) |
| Japanese officials | 2.70 | (7) | 3.58 | (3) | 3.47 | (3) | 3.06 | (6) |
| Japanese experts | 2.64 | (9) | 3.37 | (5) | 3.21 | (6) | 2.92 | (8) |
| Russian officials | 2.66 | (8) | 2.89 | (9) | 2.93 | (9) | 2.77 | (9) |
| Russian experts | 2.07 | (11) | 2.84 | (10) | 2.79 | (10) | 2.39 | (11) |

Note. Entries are mean values with ranks in parentheses.
Scale: 1-> the most unreliable, 5-> the most reliable

Table 5
Journalists' Responses on Source Accessibility

| | South Korea (N=45) | | U.S. (N=20) | | Europe (N=17) | | Total (N=82) | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------|----------------|------|------------------|------|-----------------|------|
| U.S. officials | 2.42 | (5) | 4.20 | (3) | 4.06 | (1) | 3.20 | (4) |
| U.S. experts | 3.11 | (3) | 5.00 | (1) | 4.06 | (1) | 3.77 | (3) |
| S. Korean officials | 3.98 | (2) | 3.75 | (5) | 3.47 | (3) | 3.82 | (2) |
| S. Korean experts | 4.45 | (1) | 4.40 | (2) | 3.47 | (3) | 4.23 | (1) |
| Chinese officials | 1.82 | (9) | 2.30 | (10) | 2.12 | (9) | 2.00 | (9) |
| Chinese experts | 2.20 | (6) | 3.58 | (6) | 3.12 | (5) | 2.72 | (6) |
| N. Korean officials | 1.36 | (11) | 1.30 | (11) | 1.29 | (11) | 1.33 | (11) |
| Japanese officials | 2.09 | (7) | 3.37 | (7) | 2.71 | (7) | 2.52 | (7) |
| Japanese experts | 2.64 | (4) | 4.05 | (4) | 3.06 | (6) | 3.06 | (5) |
| Russian officials | 1.71 | (10) | 2.37 | (9) | 1.76 | (10) | 1.88 | (10) |
| Russian experts | 1.89 | (8) | 3.11 | (8) | 2.35 | (8) | 2.27 | (8) |

Note. Entries are mean values with ranks in parentheses.
Scale: 1->the most inaccessible, 5->the most accessible

Table 6
Journalists' Responses on Attributes of North Korea

| | South Korea (N=45) | | U.S. (N=20) | | Europe (N=17) | | Total (N=82) | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----|----------------|-----|------------------|-----|-----------------|-----|
| Military threat | 3.51 | (3) | 4.60 | (1) | 4.47 | (1) | 3.98 | (2) |
| Human rights | 2.64 | (6) | 2.60 | (6) | 3.41 | (3) | 2.79 | (6) |
| Illicit economic | 2.86 | (5) | 3.25 | (3) | 2.94 | (4) | 2.98 | (5) |
| Axis of evil | 2.47 | (7) | 2.40 | (7) | 1.94 | (7) | 2.34 | (7) |
| Ruled by Kim | 3.29 | (4) | 2.95 | (4) | 2.71 | (6) | 3.09 | (4) |
| Open to dialogue | 3.64 | (2) | 2.95 | (4) | 2.94 | (4) | 3.33 | (3) |
| Essential to peace | 4.40 | (1) | 3.30 | (2) | 3.76 | (2) | 4.00 | (1) |

Note. Entries are mean values with ranks in parentheses.
Scale: 1->not important at all, 5->very important

Table 7
Journalists' Responses on News Frames

| | South Korea (N=45) | | U.S. (N=20) | | Europe (N=17) | | Total (N=82) | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----|----------------|-----|------------------|-----|-----------------|-----|
| Attitude change | 4.89 | (1) | 4.75 | (1) | 4.65 | (1) | 4.80 | (1) |
| Cause | 3.47 | (5) | 3.35 | (5) | 3.76 | (5) | 3.50 | (5) |
| Conflict | 4.40 | (3) | 4.45 | (3) | 3.94 | (4) | 4.32 | (3) |
| Evaluation | 4.36 | (4) | 4.55 | (2) | 4.53 | (2) | 4.44 | (2) |
| Treatment | 4.49 | (2) | 3.75 | (4) | 4.12 | (3) | 4.23 | (4) |

Note. Entries are mean values with ranks in parentheses.
Scale: 1->not important at all, 5->very important

The third research question was about how journalists of different countries differ in their perceptions of North Korea, and this was answered by a series of one-way ANOVA tests on the survey results. First of all, journalists' perceptions were compared on the seven attributes of North Korea – “military threat,” “human rights abuse,” “illicit economic activities,” “axis-of-evil nation,” “ruled by Kim Jong-il,” “open to peaceful negotiations,” and “essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.” Levene's test for equal variances indicated homogeneity of variance among the groups, except for the “military threat” attribute.

The mean differences between the three groups were significant in regard to four

attributes – “military threat,” “open to peaceful negotiation,” “essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula,” and “human rights abuse” (Table 8). The differences between the three groups remained significant even after controlling for the effects of the covariates – their experience of covering North Korea, the countries where they were based, and the political orientations on North Korea of themselves and their media organizations.

In the case of “military threat” attribute, the mean differences between the three groups were significant at $F(2, 79)=10.935$, $p < .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .217$. The mean for the South Korean group was 3.51, whereas the mean for the U.S. group and the European group was 4.60 and 4.47, respectively. According to *Tukey’s* post hoc test, the mean comparisons of the South Korean group with each of the U.S. and European groups were statistically significant, but the difference was not significant between U.S. and European journalists. This shows that the Western journalists’ belief that North Korea’s military threat is an important attribute in reporting on the six-party talks was much stronger than that of their South Korean counterparts.

The mean differences among the three groups were also significant in regard to the “open to peaceful negotiation” attribute, $F(2, 79)=4.339$, $p < .05$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .10$. The mean for the South Korean journalists was 3.64, U.S. journalists, 2.95, and European journalists, 2.94. *Tukey’s* post hoc test showed the mean comparison of the South Korean journalists with U.S. journalists was statistically significant, but the other comparisons were not. Therefore, in covering the six-party talks, South Korean journalists believed it was important to emphasize that North Korea is open to peaceful negotiations to a greater extent than U.S. journalists.

The attribute concerning North Korea being an essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula was another attribute on which the three groups showed significant differences, $F(2,79)=10.413$, $p < .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .21$. The mean for the South Korean journalists was 4.40, U.S. journalists, 3.30, and European journalists, 3.76. According to *Tukey's* post hoc test, the mean comparisons of the South Korean group with each of the U.S. and European groups were statistically significant, but the difference was not significant between U.S. and European journalists. Therefore, South Korean journalists were concerned with the attribute regarding North Korea as a crucial part in realizing peace on the Korean Peninsula, to a greater extent than their U.S. or European counterparts.

The mean differences among the three groups were also significant in regard to the “human rights abuse” attribute, $F(2, 79)=3.516$, $p < .05$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .074$. The mean for the South Korean journalists was 2.64, U.S. journalists, 2.60, and European journalists, 3.41. Post hoc tests using Fisher's *least significant difference* indicated that the mean comparisons of the European group with each of the South Korean and U.S. groups were statistically significant, though *Tukey's* post hoc test did not identify such differences. Therefore, journalists from European countries were more concerned with the human rights issues of North Korea than South Korean and U.S. journalists.

In comparison, the mean differences among South Korean, U.S., and European journalists were not significantly different when it comes to the attributes of “illicit economic activities” ($F(2, 79)=1.269$, $p = .287$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .032$), “axis-of-evil” nation ($F(2, 79)=2.344$, $p = .103$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .056$) and “ruled by Kim Jong-il” ($F(2, 79)=2.339$, $p = .094$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .058$).

The journalists who participated in the survey were also asked to indicate how much they agreed on the three statements regarding the media's role in the multilateral nuclear talks. The three statements were: "Journalists are neutral messengers of information," "Journalists become participants in the process of the diplomatic negotiations," and "Journalists are vulnerable to government manipulation mainly due to their limited access to related information."

As shown in Table 9, the three groups of the journalists showed a statistically significant difference on the statement regarding journalists becoming a participant in the talks, $F(2, 79)=35.285$, $p < .001$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .472$. The mean for the South Korean journalists was 3.93, U.S. journalists, 2.35, and European journalists, 2.29. According to *Tukey's* post hoc test, the mean comparisons of the South Korean group with each of the U.S. and European groups were statistically significant, but the difference was not significant between U.S. and European journalists. Therefore, South Korean journalists believe the media can become a participant in the multilateral nuclear talks to a greater extent than their U.S. or European counterparts. However, the three groups did not show any significant difference when it comes to the statements on journalists being neutral messengers of information ($F(2, 79)=1.685$, $p = .192$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .041$) and being vulnerable to government manipulation ($F(2, 79)= .706$, $p = .496$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .018$). The total mean score for the statement on neutral messenger was 3.46, and it was 3.61 for the statement on vulnerability to government manipulation.

Table 8
Journalists' Perceptions on Attributes of North Korea

| | South Korea N=45 | | U.S. N=20 | | Europe N=17 | | Total N=82 | | F |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|---------------|---------|--------|
| **Military threat | 3.51 ^a | (1.100) | 4.60 ^b | (.821) | 4.47 ^b | (.874) | 3.98 | (1.111) | 10.935 |
| *Human rights | 2.64 ^(b) | (1.111) | 2.60 ^(b) | (1.188) | 3.41 ^(a) | (1.176) | 2.79 | (1.173) | 3.156 |
| Illicit economic | 2.86 | (.930) | 3.25 | (.910) | 2.94 | (.827) | 2.98 | (.908) | 1.269 |
| Axis of evil | 2.47 | (.842) | 2.40 | (.940) | 1.94 | (.827) | 2.34 | (.878) | 2.344 |
| Ruled by Kim | 3.29 | (.843) | 2.95 | (1.146) | 2.71 | (1.105) | 3.09 | (.996) | 2.339 |
| *Open to dialogue | 3.64 ^a | (.883) | 2.95 ^b | (1.146) | 2.94 | (1.391) | 3.33 | (1.112) | 4.339 |
| **Essential to peace | 4.40 ^a | (.751) | 3.30 ^b | (1.174) | 3.76 ^b | (1.033) | 4.00 | (1.030) | 10.413 |

Note. *p<.05, **p<.01

Entries are counts with mean values with standard deviations in parentheses.

^a and ^b indicates statistically significant mean difference by *Tukey's* post hoc test.

^(a) and ^(b) indicates statistically significant mean difference by Fisher's *LSD* post hoc test.

Table 9
Journalists' Perceptions of the Media's Role in the Six-Party Talks

| | South Korea N=45 | | U.S. N=20 | | Europe N=17 | | Total N=82 | | F |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|---------------|---------|--------|
| Neutral messenger | 3.53 | (1.057) | 3.65 | (.988) | 3.06 | (1.088) | 3.46 | (1.056) | 1.685 |
| **Participants in talks | 3.93 ^a | (.618) | 2.35 ^b | (1.137) | 2.29 ^b | (1.047) | 3.21 | (1.173) | 35.285 |
| Vulnerable to manipulation | 3.60 | (.939) | 3.45 | (1.050) | 3.82 | (.883) | 3.61 | (.953) | .706 |

Note. **p<.01

Entries are counts with mean value with standard deviation in parenthesis.

^a and ^b indicates statistically significant mean difference by *Tukey's* post hoc test.

Table 10
Demographic Information of Survey Participants

| | | S. Korea | U.S. | Europe | Total |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Area of work | Newspaper | 57.8%(26) | 50%(10) | 58.8%(10) | 56.1%(46) |
| | Television | 20%(9) | 15%(3) | 23.5%(4) | 19.5%(16) |
| | Radio | 0%(0) | 10%(2) | 11.8%(2) | 4.9%(4) |
| | Wire service | 17.8%(8) | 20%(4) | 5.9% (1) | 15.9%(13) |
| | Magazine | 0%(0) | 5%(1) | 0%(0) | 1.2%(1) |
| | Online media | 4.4% (2) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 2.4%(2) |
| | Total | 100%(45) | 100%(20) | 100%(17) | 100%(82) |
| | | S. Korea | U.S. | Europe | Total |
| Number of talks journalist covered | One or two | 42.2%(19) | 30%(6) | 29.4%(5) | 36.6%(30) |
| | Three or four | 42.2%(19) | 25%(5) | 17.6%(3) | 32.9%(27) |
| | Five or more | 15.6%(7) | 45%(9) | 52.9%(9) | 30.5%(25) |
| | Total | 100%(45) | 100%(20) | 100%(17) | 100%(82) |
| | | S. Korea | U.S. | Europe | Total |
| Diplomatic correspondent? | Yes | 51.1%(23) | 45%(9) | 18.8%(3) | 43.2%(35) |
| | No | 35.6%(16) | 40%(8) | 56.3%(9) | 40.7%(33) |
| | Don't know | 13.3%(6) | 15%(3) | 25%(4) | 16%(13) |
| | Total | 100%(45) | 100%(20) | 100%(16) | 100%(81) |
| | | S. Korea | U.S. | Europe | Total |
| Country where journalist is based | China | 15.6%(7) | 36.8%(7) | 94.1% (16) | 37%(30) |
| | U.S. | 11.1%(5) | 52.6% (10) | 0%(0) | 18.5%(15) |
| | S. Korea | 64.4%(29) | 10.5%(2) | 5.9%(1) | 39.5%(32) |
| | Japan | 2.2%(1) | 0%(0) | 0%(0) | 1.2%(1) |
| | Russia | 6.7%(3) | 0%(0) | 0%(0) | 3.7%(3) |
| | Total | 100%(45) | 100%(19) | 100%(17) | 100%(81) |
| | | S. Korea | U.S. | Europe | Total |
| Political orientation on North Korea | Very conservative | 0%(0) | 0%(0) | 0%(0) | 0%(0) |
| | Somewhat conser | 13.6%(6) | 17.6%(3) | 0%(0) | 11.7%(9) |
| | Neutral | 31.1%(14) | 58.5% (10) | 53.3%(8) | 41.6%(32) |
| | Somewhat liberal | 51.1%(23) | 23.5%(4) | 46.7%(7) | 44.2%(34) |
| | Very liberal | 4.4%(2) | 0%(0) | 0%(0) | 2.6%(2) |
| | Total | 100%(45) | 100%(17) | 100%(15) | 100%(77) |

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined how the U.S. and South Korean media covered the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions. It also investigated journalists' perceptions of North Korea and the multilateral nuclear talks, and how their perspectives correlate with the media content. Based on content analysis of media reports on the six-party talks and the survey of journalists who covered the nuclear talks, this study offers explanations of influences on media content, media sociology, and the second-level agenda setting. The comparative approach of this study also provides important implications for the questions of how media outlets of different countries cover the same international event and whether journalists' nationality can influence their perceptions of issues they cover.

Sources

The most dominant news sources for the newspapers of the United States and South Korea were government officials of the respective country. Therefore, this research supports earlier studies arguing that government officials are main agenda setters of media coverage of foreign affairs issues (Sigal, 1973; Chang, 1993; Heo, 2002). This was particularly so when it comes to the U.S. newspapers, where U.S. officials constituted 52.1% of the sources the newspapers used for covering the talks (Table 1). In the case of the South Korean newspapers, South Korean officials accounted for 31.3%, the highest percentage of any group of sources. It should be noted, however, that this does not necessarily mean that the South Korean media are less dependent on their government sources than their U.S. counterparts. In the six-party talks, the position of the U.S.

government was much more important than that of the South Korean government, because the United States was one of the two principle antagonists in the talks with North Korea. The success or failure of the talks mainly hinged on the United States and North Korea, giving significant weight to the statements of U.S. government officials in coverage of the talks. South Korea played an important but nevertheless limited role in the talks. Probably for these reasons, U.S. government officials were the second-most important sources for the South Korean newspapers. The South Korean newspapers relied on U.S. government briefings, interviews with U.S. officials or the U.S. media reports to directly or indirectly quote U.S. officials involved in the talks.

In all, government officials of any country accounted for 86.8% of sources for the U.S. newspapers and 80.3% for the South Korean newspapers (Table 1). Private experts constituted only 11.6% for both the U.S. and South Korean media. This may indicate that the media tried to balance their stories by quoting government officials of the other participating countries, as the officials also had direct access to the talks. With no such access to the talks, the roles of private experts to the media were confined to offering interpretations regarding the outcome of the talks.

The examination of the sources in the newspapers also indicated the possibility of inter-media agenda setting on the international level (Golan, 2006; Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998). With limited access to the talks and government officials involved in the talks, the media outlets sometimes quoted news media of other countries to report on stances of the negotiation participants. In particular, U.S. media accounted for 3.9% of the sources used in the South Korean newspapers (Table 1).

Another important finding regarding the media's source usage is that frequencies

of sources used in the newspapers had a significantly positive correlation with the journalists' perceived source credibility, but not with source accessibility. Previous studies identified source credibility or accessibility as important factors that determine journalists' use of sources (Flynn, 2002; Powers & Fico, 1994; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). The special situation of the six-party talks may explain the finding. During the six-party talks, journalists do not have direct access to the negotiations, and they largely deal with second-hand information. Therefore, they would depend on sources who they believe could provide trustworthy information regarding the behind-closed-door discussions. For example, the journalists who participated in the survey responded that private experts were more accessible than government officials, but they said government officials were more reliable in terms of providing information about the negotiations. Only government officials were directly involved in the talks, and, as discussed above, they were the most dominant sources in the news reports.

It is also interesting to note that U.S. and South Korean journalists gave the most credibility to government officials of their own country (Table 4). This may result from reporters' close interactions with their government officials and subsequent trust built in them. European journalists that were included as a comparison group said U.S. officials were the most reliable in covering the six-party talks. This issue may require examinations of five variables that Meyer (1988) proposed as the factors that influence a source's credibility – whether a source is fair, is unbiased, tells the whole story, is accurate, and can be trusted.

Attributes and Frames

The U.S. and South Korean newspapers showed significant differences in their use of attributes on North Korea. The most dominant attribute in the two sides was the “military threat” attribute. This seems logical because the main purpose of the six-party talks is to defuse tension over North Korea’s nuclear ambitions. However, the proportion of the “military threat” attribute in the U.S. newspapers was slightly higher than that in the South Korean newspapers. This may be because the United States often conflicted with North Korea over its nuclear ambitions, and the U.S. government emphasized North Korea’s military provocations. In comparison, the South Korean newspapers were concerned with North Korea being open to peaceful dialogue and an essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula to a greater extent than the U.S. newspapers. This can be partly explained by the fact that South Korean officials, who were the most dominant sources in the South Korean media, emphasized the need to engage in dialogue with North Korea and linked the nuclear issue with a broader concern of Korean unification.

The media of the two countries also showed significant differences in their use of news frames. The three most common frames in the U.S. media were the “conflict” frame, the “attitude change” frame, and the “evaluation” frame (Table 3). In the case of the South Korean media, the three most dominant frames were the “attitude change” frame, the “evaluation” frame, and the “treatment” frame. The reason for the high proportion of the “conflict” frame in the U.S. media may be that Washington was often involved in confrontations with Pyongyang over its nuclear ambition. In comparison, the South Korean media focused more on whether Washington or Pyongyang changed its stance so

that the talks could produce any tangible agreement. The South Korean newspapers also paid much attention to the question of what the South Korean government would do to resolve the nuclear talks, which was a major concern of South Korea. For example, the South Korean government pledged during the talks to provide energy to impoverished North Korea to induce it to abandon its nuclear ambitions. South Korean newspapers handled this issue mainly by adopting the “treatment” frame.

In regard to attributes of North Korea and news frames, it should be noted that Spearman’s *rho* correlation test indicated that journalists’ perceptions of attributes concerning North Korea and news frames are positively correlated with those attributes and frames mentioned in the news stories. Therefore, it can be argued that journalists emphasize the attributes or frames that they perceive important in covering North Korea and the six-party talks. With the findings, this study supports or advances earlier research that contend individual journalists’ perceptions influence media content they produce (Berkowitz & Limor, 2003; Fahmy & Johnson, 2005; Plaisance & Skewes, 2003; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Journalists’ Perceptions

The study found that journalists of different countries have different perspectives on four attributes of North Korea in covering the six-party talks – “military threat,” “open to peaceful negotiation,” “essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula,” and “human rights abuse.” The differences between the groups remained significant even after controlling for the effects of their experience of covering North Korea, the countries where they are based, and the political orientations on North Korea of themselves and their media organizations. In regard to the three attributes of “military threat,” “open to

peaceful negotiation,” and “essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula,” South Korean journalists showed different perceptions than their U.S. and European counterparts. When it comes to the “human rights abuse” attribute of North Korea, the difference was significant between the European journalists and each of the South Korean and U.S. groups. There are some plausible explanations on this phenomenon.

First of all, though the six-party talks are basically about North Korea’s nuclear threat, South Korean journalists may think that it is important to focus on solutions while accepting North Korea as a dialogue partner. Since the eruption of the ongoing nuclear standoff in 2002, no breakthrough has been made to defuse the tension despite five rounds of nuclear negotiations. The participating countries reached a major agreement in February 2007, but they still have a long way to go to implement the agreement. Living in a country bordering with North Korea, South Korean journalists may feel it is urgent to settle the nuclear dispute and to discuss the nuclear issue in a broader context of an ultimate peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. In fact, this issue has been broached during the latest rounds of the six-party talks.

Second, journalists’ interactions with sources may explain the finding. Previous studies have shown that journalists rely heavily on their government officials in covering foreign affairs issues due to their limited access to related issues (Berry, 1990; Cohen, 1963; Graber, 2006; Herman, 1993; Malek & Wiegand, 1997). It is possible that South Korean government officials conveyed more positive aspects on North Korea and the six-party talks, whereas Western government officials, in particular U.S. sources, presented negative aspects on related issues. The current South Korean administration has supported the policy of engaging North Korea, but the Bush administration has largely

taken a hard-line policy stance toward North Korea. In fact, the content analysis of the South Korean and U.S. media coverage of six-party talks found that government officials of their own country were the dominant sources for news stories (Table 1). In addition, journalists responded in the survey that their news sources have a great influence on their judgment on newsworthiness, with an average mean score of 4.01 on a scale of 1 to 5. Therefore, it can be argued that journalists' stances may reflect those of their government officials.

Third, journalists' political orientations on North Korea may be another factor that influences their perceptions of North Korea and related issues. Though generalizations on this issue may not be possible, it can be assumed that South Korean journalists have a more liberal stance on North Korea than U.S. or European journalists. In fact, this survey asked journalists to identify their political orientation regarding North Korea, and around 55% of the South Korean journalists identified themselves as liberal (Table 10), which was the highest proportion among the three groups. In the case of the U.S. journalists, 58.8% regarded themselves as neutral on North Korea issues, 23.5% said they were somewhat liberal, and 17.6% identified themselves as somewhat conservative. Around 47% of the European journalists said they were somewhat liberal on North Korea issues, and 53% said they were neutral on North Korea issues. However, this study found no significant correlation between journalists' nationality and their political orientation regarding North Korea issues.

Fourth, it is also possible that South Koreans in general regard North Korea as less of a threat than other nationals think. South Koreans have lived under on-and-off tensions with North Korea for more than half a century, and many opinion polls have shown that

South Koreans do not regard North Korea as a major threat (Park et al., 2005). In contrast, most U.S. citizens regard North Korea as a threat to their country (CNN/Gallup, 2002). In particular, a public opinion poll by the Korea Institute for National Unification (Park, et al., 2005) showed that 64.9% of the South Koreans surveyed regarded North Korea as a country with which South Korea should cooperate and to which South Korea should provide aid. In comparison, only 10.2% of the South Koreans responded that North Korea is a hostile country and only 20.9% said South Korea should be wary of North Korea. In regard to North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons, only 14.8% said North Korea is pursuing nuclear capability in order to threaten the South. About 40% said Pyongyang's purpose is to secure its regime or to enhance its bargaining position in negotiations with Washington.

Finally, the above mentioned reasons may also explain why South Korean journalists and U.S. journalists showed their most significant difference. The two countries are major participants in the six-party talks, and thus journalists of the two countries may generally engage more deeply in the related issues and have stronger perspectives on them than their European counterparts.

When it comes to the "human rights abuse" attribute, the European journalists showed different perceptions than their South Korean and U.S. counterparts. This seems to be in line with European countries' general emphasis on human rights. During the six-party talks, North Korea's human rights abuse was largely broached by Japan which has been at loggerheads with the North over its abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. Other issues concerning North Korea's human rights abuse include North Korean leaders' suppression of their people and an increasing number of North Koreans

seeking asylum in other countries.

Conclusion

The current research constitutes the first examination of the media coverage of the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Also, no study has thus far examined how journalists of different countries differ in their perceptions of North Korea, the six-party talks and the media's role in the multilateral talks. With the findings, the study advances earlier studies on media's source choice, the second-level agenda setting and media sociology.

In the area of research on media sources, the study supports previous research that government officials have much influence on media coverage of foreign affairs issues (Berry, 1990; Cohen, 1963; Graber, 2006; Herman, 1993; Malek & Wiegand, 1997). The study found that government officials were predominant sources in the media's coverage of the six-party talks (Table 1). It can be assumed that the high dependence on government sources stemmed from the fact that journalists had no direct access to the nuclear talks and government officials of the six countries were the only ones who could provide first-hand accounts. However, this raises the important issue of the media's vulnerability to government deception or manipulation.

Moreover, the examination of correlations between the media content and survey results offers important implications on how journalists do their work. The study found a positive correlation between attributes of North Korea and news frames in the media reports and journalists' perceptions of those attribute and frames. This advances earlier arguments that journalists' perspective is one of the important factors that influence the media coverage (Berkowitz & Limor, 2003; Fahmy & Johnson, 2005; Plaisance &

Skewes, 2003; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Starck and Soloski, 1977).

The study also contributes to advancing the second-level agenda setting, as it demonstrated that the concept is useful in analyzing what characteristics of a news object or event the media emphasize. The study also showed that journalists' perceptions of attributes on North Korea are reflected in their news coverage, which can be explained as the transfer of attribute salience from individual journalists' agenda to the media agenda. Moreover, if the study is complemented with an analysis of public opinions on North Korea and the six-party talks, it can be established whether the news reports influence the way the public thinks about North Korea. This will then explain the transfer of attribute salience from individual journalists' agenda to the media agenda and to public agenda (Ghanem, 1997; McCombs, 2004; Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004).

CHAPTER SIX

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

As discussed above, the study offers important implications for mass communication research, in particular media sociology and the second-level agenda setting. However, the study has its own limitations and future research should consider the following issues. First, the study examined only U.S. and South Korean media in examining how different countries covered the same international event. In order to generalize the findings, it is necessary to conduct content analysis of media reports from the other four countries that participated in the talks: North Korea, China, Japan and Russia. In the same vein, the study could be expanded by surveying Japanese, Chinese and Russian journalists who covered the six-party talks.

Second, the U.S. and South Korean newspapers under this study may not necessarily represent the media of the two countries when it comes to North Korea issues. Though previous studies showed that the newspapers influence the agenda of the other media in their respective country or have the highest circulation rate (Golan, 2006; Media Today, 2007), it is possible that they may not lead issues concerning North Korea. In addition, one can argue against the comparison of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* with the *Chosun Ilbo* and the *JoongAng Ilbo*, saying the two U.S. newspapers have largely been regarded as liberal whereas the South Korean newspapers, in particular the *Chosun Ilbo*, have been regarded as conservative. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine whether their alleged political orientation actually influenced their reporting on North Korea. Also, previous studies have found that media

outlets of the same country covered same issues in a very similar manner (Dearing & Rogers, 1992).

Third, the sample size for the survey is relatively small. This issue was hard to overcome, as the number of journalists who covered the six-party talks is small. However, the research can be further enriched if it is triangulated with focused interviews with journalists who covered the talks to find out what influenced their decisions to use certain sources, attributes and frames in covering the multilateral talks (Jankowski & Wester, 1991; Newcomb, 1991). This would also help better explain the differences between journalists of different countries on their perceptions of North Korea issues.

Finally, it should be noted that the journalists surveyed were not identical to the journalists who wrote the news stories that were examined through the content analysis. This is one of the weaknesses of the study, as it investigated a correlation between the outcome of the content analysis and the survey results. However, as mentioned above, past research showed a high degree of similarity not only in news reports of a same country but also in professional values among journalists in a same country (Dearing & Rogers, 1992).

Despite these limitations, the study provides useful implications for future research in the areas of media sociology and agenda setting as mentioned earlier. Future studies can examine media coverage from the other countries while analyzing diverse news reports within a country. In regard to media practices in covering the six-party talks, it will be useful to have in-depth interviews with journalists. Additionally, examination of public perceptions of North Korea and the six-party talks will enable the study to analyze the media's agenda-setting influence on the public.

Appendix 1. Recruitment Email.

Dear

I am a researcher at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and I also work as a producer for the Global Journalist radio program of KBIA, National Public Radio member station in Missouri. Before coming to the United States, I covered North Korea for a South Korean newspaper, making 12 reporting trips to North Korea and covering the first two rounds of the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

I am conducting a survey of journalists who have reported on North Korea. The study is designed to compare how journalists of different countries have covered the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons development as well as their perspectives on North Korea, the six-party talks, and the media's role in the multilateral negotiations. My partner in this study is Professor Wayne Wanta, president of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

For this study, we have put together a short Web-based questionnaire that will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. We will be grateful if you can complete the survey by March 21. Your participation in this survey is crucial for the completion of this study, which we hope will serve as a useful resource for journalists covering North Korea. All the information you provide here is anonymous and confidential. Also, if you'd like us to send you a summary of the results, please let us know.

You will find the survey at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=380323397470>. Before answering survey questions, please type in the following password at the bottom of the first page of the Web survey.

Password:

With your assistance, we expect that this study will offer useful explanations about media practices and influences on media agenda.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and consideration.

Best regards,
Hyunjin Seo
Graduate Student, School of Journalism at University of Missouri-Columbia
Producer, Global Journalist
Hjs6vf@mizzou.edu

Wayne Wanta
Professor, School of Journalism at University of Missouri-Columbia
President, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
wantaw@missouri.edu

Appendix 2. Reminder Email.

Dear

My research partner and I at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia are grateful for the many journalists who have participated in the survey despite their hectic schedules. However, we still need more responses to get meaningful results. We apologize for repeating our earlier e-mail and will most grateful if you can join our survey by April 7. For more information, please refer to the following message that we sent earlier:

I am a researcher at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Before coming to the United States, I covered North Korea for a South Korean newspaper, making 12 reporting trips to North Korea and covering the first two rounds of the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

I am conducting a survey of journalists who have reported on North Korea. The study is designed to compare how journalists of different countries have covered the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons development as well as their perspectives on North Korea, the six-party talks, and the media's role in the multilateral negotiations. My partner in this study is Professor Wayne Wanta, president of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

For this study, we have put together a short Web-based questionnaire that will take no more than 15 minutes to complete. We will be grateful if you can complete the survey by April 7. Your participation in this survey is crucial for the completion of this study, which we hope will serve as a useful resource for journalists covering North Korea. All the information you provide here is anonymous and confidential. Also, if you'd like us to send you a summary of the results, please let us know.

You will find the survey at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=380323397470>. You can click on the link or paste it into your browser. Before answering survey questions, please type in the following password at the bottom of the first page of the Web survey.

Password:

With your assistance, we expect that this study will offer useful explanations about media practices and influences on media agenda.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and consideration.

Appendix 3. Consent Page.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

If you consent to participate in this survey, please enter the password the researchers provided in the e-mail, and then go to the next page.

The study is designed to compare how journalists of different countries have covered the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons development as well as their perspectives on North Korea, the six-party talks, and the media's role in the multilateral negotiations. The survey questions are in four sections – sources and frames; work routines and media practices; the media's roles in the multilateral talks; and demographic information.

Your participation is absolutely voluntary, and all the information you provide here is confidential. You may decline to answer any question or withdraw at any time if you don't feel comfortable with it. This survey will take you no more than 15 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the survey, feel free to email the researchers, Hyunjin Seo at hjs6vf@mizzou.edu or Professor Wayne Wanta at wantaw@missouri.edu. You can also contact the University of Missouri-Columbia campus IRB, which approved this research, at 573-882-9585, or email to umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu in case you have any questions regarding rights, concerns and complaints about the study.

Hyunjin Seo
Graduate Student, School of Journalism at University of Missouri-Columbia
Producer, Global Journalist

Wayne Wanta
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- 2.16. Russian private experts
- 2.17. Russian media

3. How accessible are the following as your sources for information on the six-party talks? (Please use a scale from one to five, where one means very inaccessible and five means very accessible.)

Very inaccessible Very accessible
 1 2 3 4 5

- 3.1. U.S. government officials
- 3.2. U.S. private experts
- 3.3. U.S. media
- 3.4. South Korean government officials
- 3.5. South Korean private experts
- 3.6. South Korean media
- 3.7. Chinese officials
- 3.8. Chinese private experts
- 3.9. Chinese media
- 3.10. North Korean officials
- 3.11. North Korean media
- 3.12. Japanese officials
- 3.13. Japanese private experts
- 3.14. Japanese media
- 3.15. Russian officials
- 3.16. Russian private experts
- 3.17. Russian media

4. When you write news reports, how important are the following aspects of the six-party talks? (Please use a scale from one to five, where one means not important at all, and five means very important.)

Not important at all Very important
 1 2 3 4 5

- 4.1. How the attitude or stance of a participating country has changed
- 4.2. Conflict among the parties
- 4.3. How much or little progress the parties made
- 4.4. Which country (or countries) is responsible for the tension
- 4.5. What measures should be taken to resolve the problem

5. When you report on the six-party talks, how important are the following attributes of North Korea? (Please use a scale from one to five, where one means not important at all, and five means very important.)

Not important at all Very important
 1 2 3 4 5

- 5.1. Military threat: ambitions to develop WMDs
- 5.2. Human rights abuse
- 5.3. Illicit economic activities
- 5.4. "Axis-of-evil" nation

9. Here are some statements about the press-government relationship and the media's role in the six-party talks. (Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with these statements, with a scale from one to five where one means strongly disagree and five means strongly agree.)

Strongly disagree Strongly agree
1 2 3 4 5

- 9.1. Journalists are neutral messengers of information.
- 9.2. Journalists become participants in the process of the diplomatic negotiations.
- 9.3. Journalists are vulnerable to government manipulation mainly due to their limited access to related information.

Part III. Journalists' Assessment

10. How much do you approve or disapprove of the way U.S. President George W. Bush has recently handled the situation with North Korea, for example, the agreement reached at the six-party talks on February 13, 2007?

Strongly disapprove Strongly approve
1 2 3 4 5

11. How much do you approve or disapprove of the way South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun is handling the situation with North Korea?

Strongly disapprove Strongly approve
1 2 3 4 5

12. How likely is it that the nuclear problem will be solved through the six-party talks?

Very unlikely Very likely
1 2 3 4 5

13. When do you think the Korean Peninsula can be reunified?

- 1) Within 10 years
- 2) Within 11-20 years
- 3) Within 21-30 years
- 4) More than 30 years
- 5) Not likely to be reunified

14. How effective are the following measures in handling North Korea's nuclear issue? (Please use a scale from one to five, where one means not effective at all, and five means very effective.)

Not effective at all Very effective
1 2 3 4 5

- 14.1. Diplomacy via the six-party talks
- 14.2. Bilateral talks between the United States and North Korea
- 14.3. Escalating economic and legal sanctions on the North Korean regime
- 14.4. Military attack

14.5. Regime change by non-military means

Part IV. Demographic Information

15. In what area of journalism do you work?

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Television
- Radio
- Wire service
- Online media
- Others

16. Do regard yourself as a diplomatic correspondent?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

17. Of the eight gatherings (counting different phases) for the six-party talks so far, how many rounds have you covered?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- More than 5

18. Please mark the rounds of the talks you have covered.

- 1st round (27 Aug—29 Aug 2003)
- 2nd round (25 Feb—28 Feb 2004)
- 3rd round (23 Jun—25 Jun 2004)
- 4th round, 1st phase (26 Jul—7 Aug 2005)
- 4th round, 2nd phase (13 Sep—19 Sep 2005)
- 5th round, 1st phase (9 Nov—11 Nov 2005)
- 5th round, 2nd phase (18 Dec—22 Dec 2006)
- 5th round, 3rd phase (8 Feb— 13 Feb 2007)

19. Where were you based primarily in reporting on the six-party talks?

- China
- U.S.
- South Korea
- Japan
- Russia
- North Korea
- Others

20. On North Korea issues, how would you characterize your political orientation? (Please use a scale from one to five where one means very conservative and five means very liberal.)

Very conservative Very liberal
1 2 3 4 5

21. On North Korea issues, how would you characterize the political orientation of your media organization? (Please use a scale from one to five where one means very conservative and five means very liberal.)

Very conservative Very liberal
1 2 3 4 5

22. What is your nationality?

- American
- South Korean
- Others (please specify)

23. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix 5. Content Analysis Codebook

1. *Sources*. The coding unit is the source. Sources are classified into 19 categories as specified below. Original sources are coded, as they are the ones who deliver a main message. For example, in an article that reads, “North Korean officials accused the United States of ‘spoiling the atmosphere’ of the negotiations because the Treasury Department imposed penalties on a bank in the Chinese territory of Macao, a senior American official said,” a North Korean official is coded as the source. Dateline of each article should be carefully examined as sources are often described as “local experts” or “officials here.” The sources are referred to in the following variations:

- 1) U.S. government officials: U.S. officials, Bush administration officials, the U.S. government, the White House
 - 2) U.S. private experts: U.S. experts, experts in Washington, former U.S. government officials
 - 3) U.S. media
 - 4) South Korean government officials: South Korean (Seoul) officials, officials in Seoul, the South Korea (Seoul) government, the Roh Moo-hyun administration
 - 5) South Korean private experts: South Korean experts, experts in Seoul, former South Korean government officials
 - 6) South Korean media
 - 7) Chinese government officials: Chinese officials, Beijing officials, the Chinese government
 - 8) Chinese private experts: Chinese experts, experts in Beijing
 - 9) Chinese media
 - 10) North Korean government officials: North Korean officials, Pyongyang officials
 - 11) N.K. media
 - 12) Japanese government officials: Japanese officials, officials in Tokyo
 - 13) Japanese private experts: Japanese experts, experts in Tokyo
 - 14) Japanese media
 - 15) Russian government officials: Russian officials, the Moscow government
 - 16) Russian private experts: Russian experts, experts in Russia or Moscow
 - 17) Russian media
 - 18) Government officials from unspecified countries: Asian diplomats, diplomats of some participating countries
 - 19) Private experts from unspecified countries: Experts in Asia, experts close to the talks
2. *Attributes of North Korea*. The coding unit is the paragraph. When a paragraph includes multiple attributes, the most dominant attribute is coded.

- 1) Military threat: North Korea’s pursuit or exports of missile technology and weapons of mass destruction. (e.g. North Korea said in April that it might sell its nuclear weapons to other nations.)
- 2) Human rights abuse: North Korean leaders’ suppression of their people, North Korea’s abductions of foreigners and the hardships of North Korean defectors in China. (e.g. Many in Japan are outraged over North Korea’s abduction of scores of Japanese citizens in the 1970’s and 80’s.)

- 3) Illicit economic activities: Money laundering, counterfeiting of U.S. currency, exports of drugs and narcotics, or smuggling operations aimed at bringing hard currency to the moribund economy. (e.g. The United States, contending that North Korea engages in dollar counterfeiting and money laundering, last year barred financial transactions with Macao-based Banco Delta Asia, a hub of the North's international financial activity.)
- 4) "Axis of evil" nation: Reference to North Korea as an "axis-of-evil" state, which was originally mentioned during President George W. Bush's State of the Union address in 2002, or North Korea's alleged links to terrorism. (e.g. The agreement with North Korea, they said, provides President Bush with a way to forestall, at least for now, a confrontation with another member of what he once famously termed "the axis of evil.")
- 5) Ruled by Kim Jong-il: Mentioning of Kim Jong-il as a dictatorial leader in North Korea or discussion of regime change in North Korea. (e.g. John R. Bolton, the under secretary of state for arms control, recently said North Korea was a "hellish nightmare" in the grip of a tyrant.)
- 6) Open to peaceful dialogue: North Korea's readiness to engage in dialogue with the international community or suggestions for Washington's bilateral talks with Pyongyang. (e.g. Chinese and South Korean officials praised North Koreans for showing flexibility and offered a detailed proposal at the talks.)
- 7) Essential part of any peace regime on the Korean Peninsula: Discussion of the nuclear issue in a broader context of peace on the Korean Peninsula or in Northeast Asia or mentioning of unification between the two Koreas. (e.g. The South Korean unification minister said it is necessary to discuss during the six-party talks a permanent peace treaty that will replace the 1953 armistice treaty.)

3. *News frames*. The coding unit is the paragraph. When a paragraph includes multiple frames, the most dominant frame is coded.

- 1) Attitude change: Whether or how positions of the countries participating in the six-party talks have changed. (e.g. The U.S. proposal indicates a significant change in the Bush administration's approach toward North Korea.)
- 2) Cause and consequence: Discussions of causality and responsibility for the nuclear tension, as well as the military, economic, and political impact of the nuclear standoff between Pyongyang and Washington. (e.g. A Chinese official said the United States is the main obstacle to settling the nuclear issue peacefully.)
- 3) Conflict: Escalation of tension among the participating countries of the six-party talks or North Korea's military provocations. (e.g. Experts have expected that the parties will clash over the implementation of the agreement.)
- 4) Evaluation: How much the participants narrowed down their differences or moved toward any agreement. (e.g. The countries made little progress during the talks.)
- 5) Treatment: What measures should be taken to resolve the nuclear tension, or which country would or should do what to resolve the nuclear talks. (e.g. The South Korean government pledged during the talks to provide energy to impoverished North Korea to induce it to abandon its nuclear ambitions.)

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