

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

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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.”