Media Discourse on Peacebuilding in North Korea: The Media Framing Effects of South Korea on the Peacebuilding Process in the Context of North Korean Nuclear Programme
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Abstract

Media discourses regarding the North Korean nuclear weapons programme and peacebuilding are underdeveloped in the literature and represent a significant literature gap. This study explores the media's framing of the North Korean nuclear programme and determines the subsequent impact on peacebuilding. A negative impact on peacebuilding would imply an increase in the number of nuclear or similar military actions, as well as the withdrawal of open communication for peace negotiations. Conversely, a positive impact would entail a willingness to cooperate, uphold the signed agreements, and improve inter-Korean relations.

To test the hypotheses, a qualitative content analysis of two major South Korean media outlets was conducted. Articles were categorised in the frames of either 'war' or 'peace', and how the type of frame impacted the peacebuilding on the Korean Peninsula was analysed. The results demonstrate that media discourse impacts peacebuilding twofold: although media can instigate violence and war, it also possesses the capability to initiate peace processes. Future studies can confirm and build upon these findings, but they must consider the limited time span of the study.

Contents

Introduction

Media coverage of North Korea, one of the most totalitarian regimes in the world, often comprises a confusing and exaggerated process; reports on any topic related to the dictatorship and regime are presented within various frameworks by foreign media (Curran & Gibson, 2019). The lack of mass media in North Korea and the strict control of any foreign or local media, except for the regulated state media, feeds the growing misrepresentation of North Korea abroad (The Borgen Project, 2019). These media regulations create a figurative wall separating the North Korean community from the rest of the world; the news is reported via secondary agents, often neighbouring states such as China or South Korea.

The impacts of media coverage by the aforementioned states are significantly more prominent than those of European state media outlets. A certain degree of interwoven relationships with the solitary state can be explained by geography and the extremely heightened wariness of the Western sphere and its ideology (The Borgen Project, 2019). The goal of media coverage is to provide information and report real-life news from an objective perspective to ensure a non-biased influx of knowledge for media consumers; however, media framing is inevitable.

In recent decades, media has transformed and developed as a powerful tool for covering events, such as conflicts, the rise of social movements, and the sharing of 'fake news'. Together with these challenges, the new media technological era has also advanced in contributing to a transnational interconnection via online and real-life updates of information through accessible platforms, a regulated space for internet users to share, report, and discuss, or initiate and coordinate participation and activities. As such, the actions of a state are no longer contained within its geographical boundaries; they also influence international relations with regional or global powers and international organisations. The role of media in mediating disputes and

peacebuilding is to distribute information to create a balanced environment of divergent perspectives (Koven, 2014, as cited in Kuusik, 2010).

North Korea is a high-profile case study; it is one of the most dangerous states in the world due to its nuclear programme and the existence of a totalitarian regime post-Cold War (Silberstein, 2010). The relationship between South and North Korea has been extremely complex and unstable since the Korean War, which split the Korean nation into two states with different ideologies. Since then, the peace process between these two states has been ongoing, and the media is used by both North and South Korea to communicate how the peace negotiations are progressing. The societal relevance of exploring the pathway between media framing and peacebuilding in North Korea hence comprises the analysis of the effects of media framing on outcomes and the anticipation of obstacles in peacebuilding for other regional and global powers engaged in peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The Western media depicts North Korea and its associated nuclear plans as adversarial; this general media framing can often be traced back to the alien political and cultural environment in comparison to its Western standards (Rohn, 2019). In her book *Cultural Barriers to the Success of Foreign Media Content* (2019), Ulrike Rohn explains that culture plays a role in media production and consumption, as culture can present barriers to understanding media content. Western media is thus predominantly focused on the 'Western national context' (Hardy, 2010). Foreign policy towards the totalitarian state of North Korea represents incompatible stances which can be traced back to cultural barriers, as well as the Western national context. However, the media framing of South Korea is highly significant because of the country's position as a regional power and direct involvement in the peacebuilding process, which can potentially be echoed by Western media.

This paper aims to address the media framing of peacebuilding in North Korea in the context of the nuclear programme by examining the following question: 'To what extent does the South Korean media discourse on the nuclear programme influence peacebuilding in North Korea?'

To answer this question, qualitative content analysis is conducted to analyse how media framing influences peacebuilding in North Korea, based on the theories of framing, cultural relativism, and constructivism. The main hypothesis is that peacebuilding is influenced by the media framework of war and peace, as well as geopolitical and cultural backgrounds. It is expected that peacebuilding is positively framed by South Korea if peacebuilding aligns with the priorities and objectives of the regime and that, conversely, peacebuilding is negatively framed if peacebuilding contradicts the goals of the regime.

Literature Review

Skewed media coverage for armed conflicts and wars, in comparison to peace processes, via the periodic and significant depiction of conflicts, is a recurring phenomenon; here, peace can be assumed to be less fascinating to report on than the consequences of a conflict on society and can be presumed to have become normalised in the West, less intriguing for media consumers, since the rise of international cooperation between states in the 19th century. As such, media consumers are more likely to be invested in controversial news than any achievement of peace in a state besides their own. Whether peace talks will be covered in the media could be explained by several key factors, such as the political and national significance of media coverage, including geography (Harvey, 2012).

The pathway to peace is under-researched, and the influence of media framing on peace negotiations remains ambiguous, especially in non-Western democratic states. Evidence exists for media framing instigating armed conflict, violence, or war in scholars' reports to determine causal relationships in the media's role in instigating violence (Wolfsfeld, 2004; Bratiæ, 2006). If evidence exists of the media being able to instigate violence, the reverse might also be true. An example of such a case is the 'Arab Spring' political uprising, instigated by the social media platform Facebook. In other words, it might hence be possible for the media to instigate peace, contrary to the previous findings of inciting violence (Bratiæ, 2006). Sufficient empirical evidence does not currently exist to confirm this claim of the power of the media to influence peaceful outcomes to peace processes (Schoemaker & Stremlau, 2014).

North Korea has received a great amount of media coverage in both Western and non-Western media on the controversial topic of nuclear weapons (Chung et al., 2014; Curran & Gibson, 2019). Early findings on North Korean media framing regarding the first nuclear test in 2006

show that the incident was significantly covered and contrastingly framed within six states, all involved in the negotiation talks with North Korea for a peaceful solution (Chung et al., 2014). The five other states involved in the six-party talks were the United States, China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia; each country's media covered the first North Korean nuclear testing within the two weeks after the initial test, primarily for its domestic citizens, using two frames: war and peace journalism.

War and peace journalism are identified as competing frames; Galtung, who developed framing theory, categorised peace journalism as the alternative to war journalism (Chung et al., 2014). A qualitative content analysis of media framing was conducted on the single event of the North Korean nuclear test, using native-language newspapers within the five states. The result of the examination of all of the articles was that the peace journalism framework was more frequently covered than war, even when neutral articles were excluded (Chung, et al., 2014). As such, the South Korean distribution of the war and peace journalism is intriguing, with the dominant war framework representing 45.9%, compared to 34.7% for peace journalism, and the maintenance of the highest percentage of neutral framing within the five states, at 19.4% (Chung et al., 2014).

The previous findings are acknowledged by a recent study on the media framing of North Korea's national image in the early 2000s (Choi, 2018). The framing results for South Korea can be explained and identified based on the portrayal of events in traditional media outlets (Choi, 2018). However, the media framing concerning North Korea by Western states can be categorised as a 'negative and adversarial' orientation (Dalton et al., 2016). This can be traced back to the past relationship between North and South Korea, since the Korean sentiment and cultural understandings of each other, and the potential for unification, could have played a role in the framing of North Korea's national image. However, South Korea's stance has changed

as North Korea's nuclear programme has progressed more intensely in recent decades. In particular, advanced missile tests have caused a change in the media not limited to regional states; global powers and the international community have begun to scrutinise North Korea's nuclear actions (Chung et al., 2014; Gusterson, 2008).

The relevance of exploring South Korea's media framing of the North Korean nuclear programme and the peacebuilding process is stressed by the research of Gusterson (2008). The freezing and dismantling of North Korean nuclear weapons was initiated by the 1994 Agreed Framework between the United States and the North Korean state. However, North Korea was accused of not complying with the set of rules for the dismantling of the nuclear programme, which caused the discontinuation of the agreement. When this occurred, mainstream U.S. print media negatively framed North Korea at fault, strengthening the negative sentiment towards the totalitarian regime and affecting the peacebuilding process by inaccurately framing the event for its domestic audiences (Gusterson, 2008). As such, Gusterson (2008) argues for a more nuanced, accurate, and diversified view of North Korea's nuclear programme, with the inclusion of regional powers, which were ignored during previous research. Data on North Korea's nuclear programme and other statistical information used by South Korean analysts would be a valuable addition to future research.

The media framing of North Korea with the support of this additional data would hence be extremely useful in the peacebuilding process, but even within a state, a single event can be framed differently by different media. Curran and Gibson (2019) conducted a content analysis of five major American news websites in 2016 regarding how North Korea is framed, as well as, notably, whether South Korea is central in the media framing of North Korea. Nonetheless, the authors lacked robust research on how media framing of the North Korean nuclear

programme influences the peacebuilding process. As such, the primary objective of this paper is to explain how media discourse on the North Korean nuclear programme is likely to play a constructive role in the peacebuilding process.

Theoretical Framework

To assess the relationship between media discourse on the nuclear programme of North Korea and peacebuilding, a set of theories and concepts must be formulated. The concept of peacebuilding can be traced back to the 1970s and the onset of peace studies. Johan Galtung, the founder of the discipline of peace and conflict, coined the term 'peacebuilding' in 1975: 'Peace has a structure different from, perhaps over and above, peacekeeping and ad hoc peace-making… The mechanisms that peace is based on should built into structure and be present as a reservoir for the system itself to draw up… More specifically, structures must be found that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur' (Galtung, 1976). To apply the notion of peacebuilding in different contexts, the expansion of the concept was naturally followed by the need to address the activities and structures for identifying and maintaining peace. Following more research, the term 'peacebuilding' was continuously reformed, as new challenges and objectives of the United Nations (UN) were aligned with approaches to address violent conflicts (Tschirgi, 2015).

Thus, the concept of peacebuilding has been continuously reformed to address new objectives of scholars and political actors. A challenge for the operationalisation of the concept is that peacebuilding is not only limited to post-conflict periods; it encompasses functions across sectors and is related to security, justice, the rule of law, and state- and nation-building. It is thus necessary to clarify how the term 'peacebuilding' is used in this paper: it can be described herein as the process of actions which occur after the termination of armed hostilities, as well as the process of commitment and efforts by engaged actors to create a state and society that sustains peace (Call & Cousens, 2008). The foreign actors engaged in the peacebuilding process can be determined by the financial and human resources used by these actors to support the provision of tools to sustain peacebuilding and peace. Hence, the operationalisation of

peacebuilding is the provision of security and order and the establishment of a political and institutional framework to maintain and sustain peace. Lastly, diplomatic aid and sanctions determine the quantifiable factors of peacebuilding, such as the number of peace talks, peace treaties, or negotiations.

Post-conflict peacebuilding focuses on the restoration of peace and stability within a society ravaged by armed conflicts, wars, or any other factors that spurred the onset of the conflict. The actors who are part of the peacebuilding process are often categorised as the state, institutions, international and local actors, military, civil society, non-governmental organisations, and even social groups, such as organised church groups (Paffenholz, 2009).

The 1968 Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was the first agreement between major nuclear and non-nuclear powers to prevent proliferation. This international treaty was instituted to prevent future nuclear weapons programmes, encourage cooperation, spur the cessation of any nuclear arms races, and complete nuclear disarmament (Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2021). Shortly after North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT in 2003, the nation conducted nuclear tests, which were criticised by the international community for defiance and the continuation of this illicit behaviour.

The primary theory for this research is framing theory, which is theorised and applied to the case study. Erving Goffman (1974) created framing theory, known as the 'frame analysis', to explain how events or experiences are framed and interpreted by an individual's own primary framework, depending on the natural and social framework as a perspective lens on the matter. In short, the natural framework entails the natural laws found in biology, physics, and chemistry, in which events occur unguided and 'purely physically'. The social frame can be understood as

an intentional, 'guided doing', meaning that the actions are done by the will and aim of the human being themselves (Goffman, 1974:22). An example of the natural and social frame in the context of nuclear weapons, also known as 'bomb talk', follows: the energy released by a nuclear weapon can be referred to by the law of physics and Einstein's equation, $E=mc^2$ and ascribed to the natural frame. In the social frame, however, the dropping of an atom bomb on Hiroshima, Japan during World War II is a case of intentional guided doing (Hill, 2014).

Goffman's work is continued by scholars Gamson and Modigliani (1987), who define a frame as 'a central organising idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. … The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue' (Cacciatore et al., 2016). The concept of media framing is multiplex; it implies that the media is not in control of the influx and distribution of information. It can be questioned how media, in fact, cover and frame national or foreign affairs in their desired frames.

Academics have investigated and elaborated on the framing of this news. Accordingly, Entman (1991) describes the approach of defining framing as follows: 'News frames are constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasised in a news narrative'. As such, the interpretation of affairs is based on frames of preferences. Also, news framing to present a different image of an affair has been prevalent in multiple cases, such as campaigns, movements, conflicts, and violence (Abbas, 2020). In short, media framing influences the perceptions of the people by constructing or framing a topic in a certain way to convey the information and incentivise the recipient to consider this issue.

The competing peace and war frameworks aforementioned in the study by Chung et al. (2014) can be categorised in the coverage of the North Korean nuclear programme. Academic work on

peace journalism aims to describe a peace-orientated framework to cover conflicts through peace initiatives and the promotion of resolutions for undergoing conflict (Chung et al., 2014; Gavilán, 2011). In this regard, peace journalism provides an in-depth and balanced account of a conflict by including all factors, actors, and causes. Moreover, it tends to focus on shared interests rather than discord and focuses positive perspectives on peace proposals (McGoldrick, 2007, as cited in, Gavilán, 2011). Although journalism should only pursue truth by presenting both the positive and negative sides of the parties, war journalism is more orientated to violence and war by focusing on the influential actors rather than giving voice to all actors, as in the peace framework. The orientation of war is characterised by the media coverage of the effects of war, such as civilian and soldier casualties, economic status, and the supply of arms (Chung et al., 2014; Gavilán, 2011). Moreover, war journalism tends to explore a zero-sum game on the victory of one party and the loss of others (Galtung, 2002, as cited in Gavilán, 2011).

Hypotheses

This study assumes that the North Korean nuclear programme can be placed in either a peace or war media frame by the South Korean media. The coverage of the articles in the context of North Korean nuclear weapons is designated and can impact peacebuilding twofold, either positively or negatively. As such, the first hypothesis is that North Korea's nuclear programme negatively impacts peacebuilding when the 'war' media frame is used, and the second is that North Korea's nuclear programme positively impacts peacebuilding when the 'peace' media frame is used. The impact on peacebuilding is dependent on the framing of articles, as this reflects the general perspective of South Korean society. In summary,

H1: The 'war' media framings of North Korea's nuclear programme negatively impact peacebuilding.

H2: The 'peace' media framings of North Korea's nuclear programme positively impact peacebuilding.

Research Design

To address these questions, a qualitative case study is conducted by researching the media discourse on North Korea's nuclear programme and how media framing impacts peacebuilding. The context of media framing is limited to the Republic of South Korea and media companies located therein. A case study on North Korean peacebuilding allows for a more in-depth, detailed study of peacebuilding within an authoritarian state, which is less generalisable than a similar case with a democratic regime. I first select and collect raw data from news articles on the nuclear programme in North Korea and recent reports of missile tests and military capacities, in addition to news articles by heads of state and the ministers of foreign affairs. Secondly, I test my theory based on the currently existing framing theory mentioned in the theoretical framework (Abbas, 2020; Chung et al., 2014; Entman, 1991; Gavilán, 2011; Goffman, 1974). Media coverage of North Korea's nuclear programme and peacebuilding is collected from two major Korean media outlets and reports, and content analysis is executed by the hand-coding of themes of frameworks and a list of keywords (Chung et al., 2014; Curran and Gibson, 2019; Gusterson, 2008).

List of Keywords

North Korea	South Korea	Nuclear war	Nuclear missile	Inter-Korean talks	Peace negotiations
NK	SK	Nuclearisation	Nuclear weapons	Peacebuilding	Peace talks
DDK	Republic of Korea	Nuclear Programme	NPT	Cooperation	Reunification

Table 1. List of Keywords

The two selected Korean media outlets are Chosun and Hankyoreh Sinmon; both are very popular media outlets due to massive, committed user bases and their long-standing traditions of reports (Frank et al., 2009). Chosun is the largest and oldest newspaper company in South Korea, established in the 1900s; this outlet was infamous for its resistance and critical stance towards the Japanese government during colonial times. Moreover, it received multiple threats and criticism from North Korea due to its sceptical view on foreign policies directed towards its northern neighbour (Hoare, 2015). The Hankyoreh Sinmon media outlet has also a long history in South Korea as a liberal daily paper. Moreover, it has been found to be an alternative media, independent from Korean political elites (Frank et al., 2009).

Case Selection

The restricted media communication with North Korea and the lack of mass media outlets there precludes open communication and gives rise to the misrepresentation of North Korea; a closed regime is often misrepresented or distorted in the media (The Borgen Project, 2019). Moreover, it is also interesting to see how media frames function in a closed or authoritarian context where complete control of the media can occur. Since this case study of media framing effects on peacebuilding is highly limited in scope by the concept of peacebuilding with an authoritarian state and the nuclear programme as a critical factor, the case selection suitable for addressing the research question is demarcated to authoritarian states linked with post-conflict peacebuilding. Besides the selection criteria limiting the scope for research, a single case study was the most feasible and suitable research design; each peacebuilding process of authoritarian states differs in context, objectives, treaties, and the anticipated involvement of third-party states. The selection of North Korean peacebuilding as the case study here has been shaped by the prevalent long-continued phenomenon of peacebuilding in the aftermath of the Korean War, as well as the engagement of the UN as the most powerful international institution to intervene

in the Korean War (Naidu, 1995). Moreover, the highly contested issue of nuclear weapons has heightened the peace negotiations, since the denuclearisation has failed and the international community has condemned North Korea's continuance of nuclear tests.

Methods of Data Collection

The selection of data is determined by a list of keywords often used in the peace and war journalism frameworks (Chung et al., 2014; Curran and Gibson, 2019): these include nuclearisation, nuclear programme, North Korea, South Korea, peacebuilding, DDK, missile tests, and reunification. Moreover, the use of foreign policy reports and presidential statements by global and regional powers is analysed to explore how the media discourse impacts peacebuilding in North Korea. The reasons for choosing four-month longitudinal research are to investigate how the trend of media framing affects the process and to ensure enough samples of media framing coverage are gathered concerning the North Korean nuclear programme and peacebuilding. The choice of four months of articles covered in the news is due to the great number of similar articles on the topic. Due to the long sampling timeframe and large dataset of articles and reports, articles are only included if at least two keywords are present, consistent with the concept of peacebuilding and post-conflict peace negotiations.

Methods of Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is a research method to subjectively interpret the content of text material by systematically collecting, coding, and identifying certain themes or patterns within the texts (Neuendorf, 2016; Schreider, 2012). The collected data used in the content analysis are written texts; in this research, this includes written messages in the traditional media, news articles, and reports.

For the data analysis in this paper, a content analysis of the media framing use of peacebuilding in the case study of North Korea is conducted, by comparing the media coverage of Korean media companies in foreign policy reports by governments, and presidential speeches of Korean presidents on the North Korea nuclear programme and peacebuilding matter in the peace and war frameworks. After the initial sampling and coding by the use of the compiled list of keywords relating to North Korea's nuclear programme and peacebuilding with South Korea, the collected data are analysed by executing a content analysis (Choi, 2018; Chung et al., 2014; Curran and Gibson, 2019). The articles, reports, presidential speeches, and other relevant materials are coded into distinct themes, including peacebuilding, peace and war frameworks, geopolitical and cultural factors, construction, and effectiveness.

The operationalisation of the 'war' and 'peace' media frames' impacts on peacebuilding can be distinguished by the number of nuclear actions and the willingness to communicate regarding peace talks. As such the negative impact of peacebuilding means an increase in nuclear practices and missile tests and cutting off communication between the two Korean states or any other involved state actors, whilst the positive impact of peacebuilding is more encompassing, since it is no longer limited to the absence of war or the end of an indefinite armistice post-Korean War. It requires open peace negotiation talks to establish a peace treaty, reduce threats of nuclear usage, and strengthen engagement and cooperation for the fragile inter-Korean relations. Moreover, peacebuilding also covers other aspects of economic and political integration, but the focus of the outcome is the complete dismantling of the operational nuclear arsenal and, as an additional option, reunification.

Analysis – War Media Framework

The results of the analysis of the divergent frameworks are presented as follows. The major South Korean media outlet Chosun included more war media framing articles than the other media outlet, Hankyoreh Sinmon; the latter covered more topics using the peace frame compared to other media.

MEDIA OUTLET FRAME	CHOSUN	HANKYOREH SINMON
WAR MEDIA FRAME	20	15

Table 2. Overview 'war' media frame

Firstly, the war media framing of North Korea's nuclear programme negatively impacts peacebuilding. This can be found in small fragments of the South Korean articles regarding the nuclear programme and peacebuilding context. An example of a war media frame is the administration of military resources and practices on the North Korean nuclear programme: 'North Korea promoted

– miniaturisation of nuclear weapons and tactical weaponisation

– production of super-large nuclear warheads

– improvement of strike accuracy within a range of 15,000 km

– development and introduction of hypersonic glide combat unit

– development of underwater and ground solid-state intercontinental ballistic rockets

– nuclear possession of submarine and underwater-launched nuclear strategic weapons, operation of military reconnaissance satellites, and development of 500 km unmanned reconnaissance aircraft were presented as strategic goals for national defence development'.

The advancement of military resources in North Korea in turn negatively affects peace, which reflects the findings of Pamp et al. (2018). One of the findings is that weapons import was related to an increased likelihood of armed conflict. Furthermore, the identified relationship was 21% more significant in high-risk countries, compared to the less than a 1% increase within low-risk countries (Pamp et al., 2018). The characterisation of high-risk states was based on, for example, the type of regime, regime instability, and lack of popular control on political power. North Korea can be characterised as a high-risk country with its autocratic regime and political instability. For this reason, the spread of weapons, including nuclear weapons, is severely detrimental to peacebuilding in the case of North Korea. Therefore, the first fragment reflects the negative impact of peacebuilding by the increase of nuclear armistice.

Hence, the framing of weapons resources in North Korea by Chosun negatively impacts peacebuilding, reflecting the rise of conflicts and arms. Above all, the focus on peacebuilding has been overtaken by articles on the continuous North Korean missile tests and the framed perspective towards the preparation and supply of war resources. Moreover, the continued developments in the nuclear aspect risk narrowing the opportunity for diplomatic talks and peacebuilding. It can be concluded that the threats of using nuclear weapons have caused a decrease in the positive prospect of future peacebuilding. The tensions and unpredictability of war between the Koreas can be escalated by these war frameworks. The unpredictability and potential escalation of war are framed by the fragment: 'It is very dangerous in the sense that a pre-emptive nuclear attack is possible at any time depending on Kim Jong-un's mood and arbitrary judgement' (M.S. Kim, 2022c). Whilst it is not mentioned in the war media frame article of Chosun, the behaviour of the North Korean president Kim is high risk in terms of the series of actions of failures to have open communication and willingness to proceed with peace negotiations (Hong, 2017), as well as the sharply increased patterns of missile tests and nuclear

activities during Kim's administration, compared to his predecessors. In 2017, the nuclear situation escalated during a Twitter exchange of insults with former U.S. President Trump. Although a real nuclear attack was avoided by both leaders, the provocation of Kim is a dangerous case for future world leaders and powers.

Another fragment confirms the negative impact of the war framework on peacebuilding. 'North Korea, which has completed its nuclear force by buying time with disguised peace offensives and lies for denuclearisation, is now taking off its mask of denuclearisation and is constantly threatening nuclear weapons' (M.S. Kim, 2022c). This fragment underlines the distrust toward North Korea and how this negatively impacts peacebuilding as these peace offensives are masked to deceive. Bruce Klingner (2012), a specialist in the field of the intelligence community at The Heritage Foundation's Asian Studies Center, in his article 'Deny, deceive, and delay–North Korea's nuclear negotiating strategy', affirms the above theoretical argument that the deception of North Korea negatively impacts peacebuilding. North Korea had never intended to abandon its nuclear arsenal. Moreover, it was able to obscure its true intentions with a refined negotiation strategy to continue nuclear development, whilst using ambiguity to interfere with any prevention of it (Klingner, 2012). As such, peacebuilding cannot be continued on this basis and is thus negatively impacted. For example, with each failed negotiation, the vicious cycle of heightened levels of the security dilemma and tensions is increased, and the usage of nuclear weapons as a deterrent becomes less intimidating.

Moreover, the worsened negative impact on peacebuilding is likely to be caused by the latest war media framing report that 'North Korea has publicly announced the possibility of using nuclear weapons against South Korea' (J.A. Kim, 2022). This has caused another negative wave of media framing on peacebuilding by the South Korean Chosun media outlet. In the fragments

'it is a hostage to the North Korean nuclear programme' and 'nuclear issue as a "stumbling block" in inter-Korean relations', peacebuilding has undergone another negative impact (M.S. Kim, 2022a; Lee, 2022). Moreover, the response of the South Koreans to the threats of 'pre-emptively' using nuclear weapons caused an alarming wave amongst the public and cause newly elected South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol at his inauguration to promise to 'strengthen his nation's defences' (Davies, 2022). Within a week after Yoon Suk Yeol took office as South Korean president, North Korea launched several missiles over the East Sea (M.J. Kim, 2022). Foreign Minister Candidate Park condemned these actions with the following statement 'For North Korea to elevate the security situation on the Korean Peninsula like this is contrary to the security, peace and stability of the Korean Penisula' (Son, 2022). The newly appointed unification minister Kwon Young Se drew a similar stance on the North Korean actions by stating that 'I think it is difficult to normalize inter-Korean relations in a situation where North Korea has nuclear weapons and continues to advance its nuclear development' (Kim, 2022a). As a counterreaction to the 8 fired missiles by North Korea, the U.S. and South Korea have fired a similar number of missiles to assert their position to respond decisively and sternly to any provocations from North Korea (Kwon, 2022).

The trend of threatening and the tactical use of nuclear weapons has overcome the 'Cold War paradox', characterized by the fear of nuclear war during the Cold War (Moon, 2022). This fear was previously used to construct a nuclear deterrence strategy and nuclear disarmament negotiations. The Russian invasion and threats of nuclear weapons in Ukraine deter Western interventions and opened the pandora's box of nuclear taboo. According to Jeong In Moon, the president of Sejong Research Institute, the Ukraine crisis can potentially cause a nuclear domino effect in Northeast Asia (Moon, 2022). President Putin's statement of 'we can use nuclear weapons if there is a threat to our country's existence' has influenced the war framework of

North Korea's nuclear programme, and the South Korean security institution has become more of a realistic threat to North Korea (Moon, 2022). Ironically, the perception of nuclear programmes for state survival, a trend adhered by North Korea, was strengthened by earlier crises such as the Iraq war and the Libyan crisis. The current Ukraine crisis reinforces this trend of nuclear armament since the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, in which Ukraine agreed to relinquish its nuclear arsenal for assuring Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity (Borda, 2022). But the current crisis is exemplary for portraying the consequences for the future of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and questions whether such assurances are reliable to ensure long-term security and safety.

Analysis – Peace Media Framework

The following chapter presents the analysis of the peace media framework on nuclear programmes and peacebuilding. Compared to the war media framework, the South Korean media outlets Chosun and Hankyoreh Sinmon contains fewer peace media frames. The articles relevant for the analysis are chosen based on keywords such as peacebuilding, cooperation, inter-Korean relations, and unification. The result of the analysis is that peace-framing articles indeed positively impact peacebuilding.

MEDIA OUTLET	CHOSUN	HANKYOREH SINMON
PEACE MEDIA FRAME	3	5

Table 3. Overview 'peace' media frame

The pathway that the peace media frame positively impacts peacebuilding can be established by the following fragments from different actors in the South Korean society. One of the first fragments framed in Hankyoreh Sinmon was the recent Korea-U.S. Summit Response Action rally by civil society groups, such as the Solidarity for Participation and the National People's Action Committee (Jang, 2022). These civil groups were protesting the meeting of the two presidents in May 2022, which had objectives other than peacebuilding. According to these civil groups, this presidential meeting can be identified in the war frame: 'The goal of today's Korea-U.S. summit is to intensify military cooperation between South Korea, the United States, and Japan in East Asia and promote a war crisis in East Asia, so it's very wrong' (Jang, 2022). However, these civil groups' perspectives on the case can be analysed in the peace media frame by the following statement: 'We need to end the armistice system and go to a peace agreement system, starting with respecting and implementing the spirit that was agreed upon in the joint

declaration (inter-Korean summit) with global expectations in 2018' (Jang, 2022). The Panmunjom Declaration, also known as the third inter-Korean summit in Panmunjom, can be perceived to be similar to the previous inter-Korean accords, in showing willingness to cooperate for peacebuilding. The implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration is a key milestone for inter-Korean relations; both Koreas have agreed to take active measures and fully implement all agreements and declarations (Klingner, 2018). Moreover, the Declaration has the objectives of ceasing hostile acts along the borders and building a 'permanent peace regime'; in conclusion, 'South and North Korea confirmed the common goal of realising, through complete denuclearisation, a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula' (Jonsson, 2018). As such, civil society groups proclaiming the return of the Panmunjom Declaration in 2018 suggests the inclination to continue peacebuilding and the positive impacts of doing so.

However, this positive impact on peacebuilding is likely to be diminished by the newly appointed presidents of the United States and the Republic of South Korea. Presidents Biden and Moon stated jointly that 'Diplomacy and dialogue based on existing inter-Korean and North Korea–U.S. commitments, such as the 2018 Panmunjom Declaration and the Singapore Joint Statement, will not lead to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. It reaffirmed our shared belief that it is essential to the establishment of a lasting peace' (Jeong, 2022). Hence, this statement indicates to the North Koreans that the negotiations will continue based on the prevailing agreement to ensure denuclearisation as a final objective. However, the current presidents Biden and Yoon omitted this similar declaration, whilst stressing the implementation of countermeasures by the UN Security Council against the North's threats.

There is a trend of decline in peace-framing articles and a rise in war framing articles. The peace framework is less prevalent when the topic concerns nuclear weapons. In recent decades, the

nuclear programme has advanced, whilst communications between the two Koreas were frequently halted for a time (Kuhn, 2021). The view of the South Koreans on reunification has been constant across administrations, in the sense that the unification policy is consistent and gradual whilst also peaceful and functional (Park, 2014). However, the current South Korean societal view on reunification and the national security discourse has changed in the relentless security threats of North Korean nuclear arsenals. The result of a poll by the Carnegie Foundation and the Chicago Council on International Affairs, has found that the public opinion on the domestic acquisition of nuclear weapons is supported by 71% of the respondents (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2022; Moon, 2022). Moreover, the public attitude is favourable, preferring domestic nuclear weapon programmes to the return of stationing U.S. nuclear weapons in South Korea, which had 67% support, in comparison to 9% for U.S. deployment (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2022). The underlying preference for a domestic nuclear weapons programme could be theoretically argued for by the South Korean willingness to be more independent from U.S. military assistance. The same poll results showed that more than 80% of respondents thought it was 'very unlikely that North Korea would give up its nuclear arsenal, therefore developing a nuclear programme for self-defence is a rational choice' (Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2022).

The other South Korean news outlet, Chosun, highlights the peace media frame by using fragments, such as 'In order to create changes in inter-Korean relations, we need to look at it from the framework of socio-cultural approaches such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, rather than economic- and political-orientated relations improvement frameworks' (Kim, 2022b) and 'It is important for the new government to first declare its positive will for non-political exchanges' (Kim, 2022b). The constant references to cooperation and inter-Korean relations contributes to the peace media framing and seems to affirm that peacebuilding is

positively affected by peaceful media framing. The analysis of the available peace-framed articles does support the hypothesis of a peace media frame positively impacting peacebuilding. By stressing the need for reinforcing inter-Korean talks and reunification, the gradual process of peacebuilding can be reset, as the increase in peace media frames can be seen to incentivise a stronger call for peacebuilding. However, the limited number of articles on peacebuilding in the context of North Korean nuclear programme in the last four months could cause an optimistic analysis on the pathway of media inciting peace.

Conclusion

This research has aimed to identify the impacts on peacebuilding of the media framing of the North Korean nuclear programme by examining the following question: 'To what extent does the South Korean media discourse on the nuclear programme influence peacebuilding in North Korea?' It can be concluded that pathways between media framing and peacebuilding exist. By performing a qualitative content analysis of media articles and editorial opinion pieces in two divergent South Korean media outlets in the timespan of four months, this thesis has shown has media framing can directly impact peacebuilding, both positively and negatively. The results indicate that media articles regarding the North Korean nuclear programme within the 'war' media frame do negatively impact peacebuilding, whilst the opposite is true in the case of the 'peace' media frame. This research clearly illustrates the pathway of the media frame and the impact of peacebuilding by the chosen research design. Qualitative content analysis allows more diversified data to be collected, in this case via research of two different South Korean media outlets with distinctive origins (Neuendorf, 2016; Schreider, 2012). The timespan of four months for research seems rather short, as peacebuilding and the North Korean nuclear programme has been ongoing for decades. Moreover, in the last four months, a rise in tension on the Korean Peninsula has caused a major influx of 'war' framed articles regarding the launches of missiles by North Korea. On the other hand, 'peace' media frame articles were subsequently insufficient in the number of media articles. As such, to better understand the implications of these results, future studies should address a longer period to build upon and enrich these conclusions.

The collected data from media articles and fragments of presidential statements from two media outlets were sufficient to confirm the impacts of media frames; however, the enormous number of articles in the 'war' media frame could exert a bias towards war and conflict. The

measurement of the 'war' frame is adequate in terms of its current operationalisation, but the addition of control factors will be needed in future studies to reproduce similar outcomes on a larger scale. In the 'peace' media frame, the examined articles do affirm the causality of peaceful media framing in terms of a positive effect on peacebuilding. However, the low number of quality articles utilising a peaceful framework compared to the war framework is significant; this discourse on the peace media frame positively impacting peace may be highly optimistic.

In conclusion, this thesis has addressed the importance of the media framing discourse on the North Korean nuclear weapons programme and its impact on peacebuilding. The outcomes of this research are valuable; media discourse in totalitarian states outside the typical Western democratic states was previously under-researched and ambiguous regarding controversial issues, such as a nuclear arsenal. This new information on the power of media to impact, either negatively or positively, processes such as peacebuilding suggests a need for future studies on these new pathways.

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