

Media Management of International Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of News Coverage of Dokdo Island

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Abstract

This study examines how the print media responds to an ongoing international conflict between South Korea and Japan. The media of each country are assumed to construct conflicting frames of reference reflecting the interests of their nations with regard to the issue of Dokdo island. The major purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the ways this unsettled issue has been used to mobilize both domestic and international political support. Content analysis was undertaken to capture and present the differences in the newspapers produced by both the South Korean and Japanese press. This study suggests that a propaganda framework operates in the news coverage of Dokdo island. Both nations reproduced and reinforced stereotypes of the opponent nation, and served to stimulate further mutual misunderstanding and antagonism through the news coverage of the disputed island. The study concludes that the international conflict between the two nations is managed by the news media which aligns with the foreign policy objectives of the respective home governments.

Keywords: news frame, propaganda framework, Dokdo island, international conflict.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to develop a framework for analyzing the news coverage of international conflicts, to further the understanding of the role of mass media in international conflicts. This study will focus on the way in which the conflict over the sovereignty over Dokdo (Takeshima in Japanese) island has been portrayed by the South Korean and the Japanese media. The central question to be raised is how the news coverage of Dokdo island differs between the two nations and what the implications of the coverage are for the diplomatic relationship between them.

The media are not objective messengers of information but active participants in the formation of international relations. As channels of international information flow, the media are affected by and affect conflict, and are thus part of the diplomatic process between nations. Politicians and government officials actually derive their information from and send signals through the media to their foreign counterparts, especially when nations are involved in conflict. In addition to actual dialogue and negotiation between nations, the media provide an important means through which government officials from different nations communicate with each other.

The news coverage of international conflicts contributes to the shaping of the image of a nation by providing information and symbols which can be used to change or reinforce attitudes toward that nation. International conflict is often beyond the personal experience of average people who depend on the media to inform them of what is going on outside their country. As Lippmann (1922) put it, "The world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported and imagined." Because most people tend to unquestioningly accept what the domestic news media reports about foreign affairs, it is not difficult for the media to distort the international reality and to manipulate public opinion.

The conflict over Dokdo has been one of the most controversial issues throughout the modern history of diplomacy between South

Korea and Japan. Both nations have seen this territorial dispute as critical to their national interests, and argued for decades that the island belonged to their own territory. News media of each country have actively participated in the diplomatic friction by strongly supporting the position of the home government and harshly criticizing the other. The mutual portrayals of South Korea and Japan by their presses reflected the mutual antagonism rooted in their historical experiences.

In this paper, I will examine how the international conflict over the Dokdo issue has affected the nature of the news that the two countries have received about each other. Two questions must be raised at this point. First, in what respect did the South Korean press and the Japanese press evaluate the Dokdo issue differently? Second, how did the different types of newspapers in both nations vary in their coverage of Dokdo? Through this analysis, I shall investigate whether there are any internal variations in the way that events are portrayed in the newspapers published in each country.

Background of the Territorial Conflict over Dokdo Island

Dokdo island, called Takeshima by the Japanese, consists of two islets with a combined area of 0.18 square kilometers. It is located 92 kilometers from South Korea's Ulleung Island, and 160 kilometers from Japan's nearest island of Oki. It was first named Dokdo in 1881. The South Korean government proclaimed its sovereignty over the island on 18 January 1962 and has dispatched policemen to the island as guards since 1956.

The dispute between Japan and South Korea over the island is nearly a century old. Both nations have raised the jurisdiction issue, deteriorating the bilateral relationship between the two governments and diverting the public's attention outward, away from domestic issues.

The dispute flared up again in January 1996 when South Korea and Japan were reported to be undertaking preparations to claim a

200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) on the basis of the United Nations maritime treaty. On 1 February 1996, the Japanese government reportedly notified the South Korean government of its decision to promulgate the 200 mile EEZ, which would include the disputed island. In response to this move, South Korea made a firm decision to construct docking facilities on the island.

Japanese Foreign Minister Ikeda Euikihiko alleged that the island was a part of Japan's territory and the construction of docking facilities would be an infringement of Japan's sovereignty. But the spokesperson for the South Korean government responded by claiming that the construction of docking facilities was a legitimate exercise of Korea's sovereignty. While Japan criticized South Korea for violating its sovereignty, South Korea chided Japan for intervening in its domestic affairs. South Korea argued that the island could not be the subject bargaining between the two nations because it clearly belonged to South Korea on the grounds of historical evidence and international law that supported South Korea's position. It was also pointed out that a contingent of South Korean security guards had been posted on the island since 1956, implying that Japan has no claim.

On the other hand, Japan, relying on historical materials and its own interpretation of international law, demanded that South Korea withdraw all personnel and remove installations from the island. Japan continued to routinely dispatch Coast Guard ships to the nearby waters of Dokdo in a demonstration of its sovereignty. As both sides made conflicting claims over Dokdo, their diplomatic relationship deteriorated. The territorial issue often turned into a major diplomatic war between the two nations.

It was not until the South Korean government's announcement of the construction of docking facilities on the island that the Japanese press increased its news coverage of the Dokdo issue. The first story on this issue was carried by *the Sankei Shimbun* on the basis of reports by the Yonhap News Agency in South Korea. The article said that South Korean workers had begun the construction of a harbor on Takeshima in accordance with the South Korean government's instruction. Sankei urged the Japanese government to take a strong

stand against South Korea and to make an announcement protesting the “act of invasion of sovereign territory.”

Other Japanese newspapers followed suit. This report must have provoked Japanese readers and some Japanese politicians who did not even know that South Korean guards had lived on Takeshima for decades. Reflecting public opinion demanding strong reaction to counter South Korea, the Japanese government raised the tone of the dispute by referring to the construction of the harbor on the island as an “unforgivable act.” Exchanges of harsh criticism of each other by newspapers of both nations followed, and the conflict reached a climax in February 1996.

Despite the suggestion by the South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs that the public should not be overly sensitive to this issue since South Koreans had been residing on the island, which put South Korea in a much more advantageous position in the territorial dispute, President Kim Young-sam outspokenly expressed his anger toward Japan. Canceling a meeting with a group of Japanese politicians who were scheduled to visit the presidential office, he phoned the commander of the garrison stationed on the island to encourage him and his men. The South Korean news media understood very well the meaning of this symbolic gesture by President Kim. Following the propaganda campaign criticizing Japan, they did not hesitate in reinforcing the anti-Japanese news frame.

International Conflicts and News Frames

Many studies dealing with the newsmaking process conclude that news media, far from conveying “value-free” or “ideology-free” objective reality, actively help to construct and reconstruct social reality by presenting a particular news frame. News frames are defined as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual” (Gitlin 1980). Gitlin (1980) also comments that “media frames, large-

ly unspoken and unacknowledged, organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports.” The concept of news frames has been employed by many media sociologists who have examined the process of news-making from the perspective of the social construction of reality well described by Berger and Luckman (1967). The construction and the existence of media frames (or news frames) can be explained at various levels.

Reporters unconsciously rely on their own values in writing news stories and absorb assumptions of the social world in which news is embedded (White 1950; Snider 1967; Hackett 1984). Gans (1979) notes that there is a set of common enduring values generally held by members of the American news media. The enduring values that intervene in news judgment are ethnocentrism, altruistic democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism and so on. Anti-Japanese ideology is one of the enduring values shared by South Korean journalists. The same may be said of Japanese journalists in their view of Korea although perhaps to a lesser degree. This leads to mutual negative news coverage of disputed events between South Korea and Japan.

Not only the journalist’s political disposition but also the organizational routine has much to do with the construction of a news frame. Even the journalistic conventions of news writing such as “objective reporting,” function as strategic rituals that reinforce the existing power structure by favoring power institutions (Tuchman 1978). Newsmaking is not random but patterned activities of reporters relying on news sources for a continuous supply of information (Sigal 1973). Since the media seeks efficient news sources that are authoritative and credible, they need to depend on government bureaucracies for news gathering and diffusing information that favor the government’s position.

Fishman (1980) describes the “bureaucratic subsidization of the news” in which the media are gatherers of news produced by government organizations. The government may withhold information and distort reality to meet public relations objectives. And reporters also

need to establish good working relationships with government officials. There is an incentive to avoid publishing information that would aggravate the source and thus threaten the symbiotic source-reporter relationship. In these ways, news is shaped to become more supportive of the government. Thus the information which finds its way to the media is generally harmonious with the position of the government in power. The beat system, which most media subscribe to in one form or another, is generally organized along the lines of government offices.

This is particularly so when news media report of an international conflict which involve national interest. A good deal of the information about international conflicts used by the news media comes from outputs generated by foreign policy officials whose primary job is to promote the news frame suitable for realizing the government's foreign policy interests. Herman (1985) states that the functional bottom line of the "propaganda framework" in the United States is the mobilization of public support for the policies and actions of the American government. Herman charges that the officials in the Reagan administration decided how to best use international events to their advantage and ignored facts that might cast the Soviet Union in a positive light. In a similar context, Yoon (1989) suggests that the South Korean newspapers continued to adopt the anticommunist news frame whenever they covered the conflict between South Korea and North Korea.

As long as journalists can easily reach a consensus on what is good for the home country and who the enemy is, they tend to offer a reflection of the government's interpretation of news events even without the government's attempt to control them. The press coverage of Dokdo is a case in point. Journalists in both South Korea and Japan, who share views on this diplomatic conflict with their home governments, do not think it unfair to advocate the home country's position or to criticize the other side. Therefore, the news media of both nations supported official government positions which fit well with the existing news frames that have portrayed the other side negatively for many decades. The media tends to define international

conflict by attempting to fit incoming information into the existing frame that is culturally and ideologically familiar. Contradictory information is either ignored or rejected.

A news frame on a rival nation may shift as international political conditions vary over time. When the home government tries to improve its relationship with another nation, the news media may employ a less antagonistic frame. News media with varying political and cultural bases may react differently to the government's efforts to construct and reconstruct international reality, although they accept the assumptions of the existing frame. The flexibility of a news frame has been illustrated by Wolfsfeld (1997), who analyzed the structural and cultural competition over the definition of news events occurring in the process of political conflict.

The inter-organizational relationship between the press and the government may affect the nature of the news coverage of international conflicts. The government-press relationship depends on how closely the press is connected with the government. Some newspapers are more closely linked with the government than others. There is an incentive for the government to grant favors to pro-government newspapers while discriminating against antigovernment newspapers. Given that the news is the product of the interaction of two bureaucracies—one composed of journalists and the other of government news sources—differences in news coverage can be found between pro-government and opposition news papers.

Despite the existence of organizational imperatives which require reporters to rely on government sources, news media maintain a relative autonomy in constructing a news frame, tailoring their own ideological or political position to the extent that it does not challenge the core tenets of foreign policy. While the foreign policy interest agreed upon by officials and journalists draws a boundary of what is permissible to publish, different newspapers may present diverse ideas and strategies to maximize the foreign policy interest.

For example, as far as the Dokdo issue is concerned, the South Korean press will never criticize the anti-Japanese posture of the South Korean government nor attempt to challenge the diplomatic

authorities. The press will contribute to the maintenance of consent associated with the anti-Japanese ideology. But there may be room for news organizations to present their own perspectives insofar as the basic principles of foreign policy are not challenged. Although anti-Japanese ideology will be dominant in South Korean newspaper's coverage of the Dokdo issue, there may be a certain amount of variation in news frames across different newspapers. The same thing can be expected in the Japanese case. What is interesting is to see which nation allows a greater degree of variation in the news frame of the Dokdo related conflict across newspapers.

Management of International Conflict and Mobilization of Public Opinion

Media coverage of an international event influences the public perception of that event, because the media are the principal source of information for the public. Many international conflicts center on disputes over news frames as each nation attempts to communicate its own ideas or interpretation of the conflict to the national and international public. Thus the conflict between two nations accompanies the competition over news frames which represent the national interest of each nation. Chang (1988) analyzes political symbols used in the news coverage in leading U.S. newspapers, and suggests that the dynamics of international conflict affects the symbolic representation of China in the coverage of U.S.-China policy.

When two nations engaging conflict the media portray their own state's policy or action in a positive light and the enemy state's policy or action in a negative one. Thus the mutual perception of the two adversarial nations tends to be similar in that negative stereotypes are held by citizens of both nations.

Uri Bronfenbrenner (1961) observed that the perceptions of the United States and the Soviet Union held by Americans were quite similar to those held by Soviet citizens, only in "mirror-image." He proposed five images constructed by citizens of both nations. First,

the other is the aggressor; second, the other government exploits and deludes the people; third, the masses of the other people are not really sympathetic to the regime; fourth, the other cannot be trusted; fifth, the other policies verge on madness.

These observations can be applied to other contexts where mutual antagonism has developed between two nations. The conflict over Dokdo represents an excellent example in which the news media enthusiastically adopt a news frame reflecting the home country's foreign policy interest. Following the "propaganda framework" set by the home government, the news media of South Korea and Japan played an important role in mobilizing patriotism, reinforcing the mutual antagonism which already existed between the two nations. As the news media continued to support the argument that the island belongs to each nation's territory, the conflict between the two deepened.

Whenever it comes to the coverage of the Dokdo issue, the news frame adopted by the South Korean press was contradictory to that of the Japanese press. They criticized one another for distorting the historical and judicial aspects of the island. Since the press coverage of each nation on the issue of Dokdo has been based on the national public consensus, there has been little controversy among politicians and readers of the home country. As a result, it has been relatively easy for both governments to manipulate perceptions of the conflict.

One of the important functions of international conflict is to strengthen national unity. By creating news events that reinforce the existence of an external threat, the government can shift news agenda away from domestic political strife to an international conflict directly related to national interest. The ability to shift the news agenda thus works favorably in the government's interest to increase internal solidarity. Coser's proposition (1956) that conflict with an external group increases internal group cohesion supports the premise that international conflict will help a nation achieve a greater degree of national unity.

One important point here is that the ruling government is in a situation to manipulate the news agenda by creating news events

that easily lead to international conflict, which is effective for strengthening social unity and political stability. This is particularly so in both South Korea and Japan where the symbiosis between reporters and government sources takes a unique form. The role of reporters' clubs attached to each government agency is important in understanding the general pattern of news gathering in both nations. The reporters' club in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs works as an important news gathering mechanism by ensuring that government information related to the Dokdo issue is transmitted quickly to beat reporters. Reporters are supplied newsworthy information through reporters' clubs by government sources who also try to use them as public relations instruments.

Public opinion toward the opponent nation in a conflict can thus be mobilized by the government's management of news. The negative portrayal of the opposing nation by the home media can be widely diffused through the report of official statements issued by home government. This raises the question of whether these processes are simultaneously occurring in both of the nations in conflict and what the consequences are for international relations. With this question in mind, I examine news coverage of the Dokdo issue by South Korean and Japanese newspapers for evidence of this type of mutual construction of international images and perceptions.

Method

This study analyzes the news content of newspapers in South Korea and Japan. Four newspapers from each nation were analyzed: *Seoul Shinmun* (now *The Korea Daily News*), *Dong-a Ilbo*, *Chosun Ilbo*, and *The Hankyoreh* from South Korea, and *Mainich Daily News*, *The Sankei Shimbun*, *The Daily Yomiuri* and *Asahi Shimbun*. They were selected because of their different relationship with the government and different ownership patterns. *Seoul Shinmun* is a government-owned paper that has been loyal to the policy line of the ruling government. *Dong-a Ilbo* and *Chosun Ilbo* are the two most popular and

influential commercial newspapers and adopt a more market-oriented strategy. *The Hankyoreh*, founded in 1988 by a group of antigovernment journalists, maintains a critical stance toward the government. Among the four Japanese newspapers, *Asahi Shimbun* is seen as the most critical of the Japanese government while *The Sankei Shimbun* is the least critical.

A quantitative content analysis was conducted to compare how the Dokdo island issue was reported by different newspapers in the two nations. News stories analyzed here were published from 1 January to 30 June 1996 when the conflict over the island reached a peak. Since this study attempts to find any changes in the news frame as the conflict unfolded, all the stories that mentioned Dokdo were downloaded from the data bases for analysis.

Eight hundred forty-four news stories from South Korean newspapers and 365 stories from Japanese newspapers were analyzed. The unit of analysis was each news story. Besides the descriptive nature of the coverage, various dimensions of the news frame that I tried to identify were: origin of the news story, news source, news channel, types of evidence, editorial stance and evaluation of the conflict. Categories for each coding unit were obtained based on a pilot study. In the pilot study, a substantial degree of inter-coder agreement was achieved for the application of the coding scheme, which was developed to investigate how each newspaper framed news stories on the topics related to the Dokdo conflict.

The coding procedure was divided into two phases. Four coders, two for South Korean newspapers and two for Japanese newspapers, were permitted to discuss the coding procedure with one another in order to resolve major coding disagreements. Through this process, the coding guide was modified so that it could be applied to the newspapers of both nations. Then each coder independently evaluated the news stories on the Dokdo.

Results of Content Analysis

Quantity of News Coverage

The eight newspapers examined in this study differed in the intensity of their coverage of the Dokdo conflict. The number of news stories published by the *Chosun Ilbo* (241) exceeded that of other South Korean newspapers, which suggests that the *Chosun Ilbo* placed the highest news value on this issue.

The amount of coverage by *The Sankei Shimbun* (142) was almost twice that of the other three Japanese newspapers. Table 1 shows that about 40 percent of the stories covered by the four Japanese newspapers were supplied by *The Sankei Shimbun*. This suggests that *The Sankei Shimbun*, the most conservative newspaper in Japan, most actively participated in making the Dokdo issue a public agenda. As seen in Table 1, most of the stories (90 percent) were published in February and March 1996 when the conflict between the two nations reached a peak. The number of stories has decreased rapidly since May 1996, as both governments agree that it is undesirable to aggravate the conflict between them.

The fact that the South Korean newspapers covered this event frequently and more extensively than the Japanese newspapers suggests that the South Korean press placed greater emphasis on this issue than the Japanese press. It can thus be concluded that the Dokdo issue was comparatively less important to Japanese readers. However, because the Dokdo issue reminded the South Korean people of the humiliation of Japanese colonial rule over Korea, South Korean readers were deeply concerned about the territorial dispute with Japan. Thus the extensive press coverage with a great deal of criticism against Japan was considered by South Korean readers as a natural and justifiable response.

Table 1. Distribution of News Stories Analyzed

Country Month	Korea				Japan				Total
	Chosun Ilbo	Dong-a Ilbo	Seoul Shinmun	The Hankyoreh	Asahi Shimbun	The Daily Yomiuri	Mainichi Daily News	The Sankei Shimbun	
January	8 (3.3)	4 (2.0)	6 (2.7)	5 (2.7)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)	2 (1.4)	4 (1.1)
February	120 (49.8)	93 (47.4)	116 (52.5)	104 (55.9)	43 (61.4)	52 (69.3)	44 (56.4)	79 (55.6)	218 (59.7)
March	55 (22.8)	54 (27.6)	55 (24.9)	38 (20.4)	18 (25.7)	16 (21.3)	13 (16.7)	30 (21.1)	77 (21.1)
April	22 (9.1)	22 (11.2)	12 (5.4)	11 (5.9)	5 (7.1)	2 (2.7)	14 (18.0)	12 (8.5)	33 (9.0)
May	17 (7.1)	11 (5.6)	10 (4.5)	9 (4.8)	2 (2.9)	3 (4.0)	5 (6.4)	8 (5.6)	18 (4.9)
June	19 (7.9)	12 (6.1)	22 (10.0)	19 (10.2)	2 (2.9)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)	11 (7.8)	15 (4.1)
Total	241 (100)	196 (100)	221 (100)	186 (100)	70 (100)	75 (100)	78 (100)	142 (100)	365 (100)

Unit: Number (percentage)

Types of News Stories

The comparison of news story types across the eight newspapers reveals differences within and between the two nations. Stories published by the South Korean newspapers tend to be scattered across various types such as straight news (46.4%), editorials and columns (11.3%), background news (26.8%), and letters to the editor (7.5%). The *Chosun Ilbo* accounts for more than half of the total number of letters to the editor.

Japanese newspapers were heavily dependent on straight news (71.8%), while carrying a relatively small number of background news (9.6%). One of the interesting results was that the South Korean newspapers carried a large number (63, 7.5%) of letters to the editor, while the Japanese newspapers published only 18 (4.9%). This suggests that the climate of negative opinions toward the other side was more extensive and profound in South Korea. *The Sankei Shimbun* carried 16 editorials, and other Japanese newspapers wrote less than 10 editorials on the Dokdo issue.

Table 2 suggests that the South Korean press was more active in problematizing the Dokdo issue, and more aggressive in molding public opinion than the Japanese press. Providing more opinion and background news, the South Korean press tried to make this conflict an important agenda attracting readers' attention. The significant discrepancy in the percentage of straight news between the two nations also reveals that the Japanese press, unlike the South Korean press often relying on anti-Japanese public sentiment, was more inclined to write factual reports on the dispute. One reason for this discrepancy may be that while the South Korean press could easily mobilize the anti-Japanese public feeling stemming from the Japanese colonial rule, the Japanese press tried to justify the position of the Japanese government by focusing on the facts derived from its bureaucratic sources.

Table 2. Types of News Stories

Country News Type	Korea				Japan				Total	Unit: Number (percentage)
	<i>Chosun Ilbo</i>	<i>Dong-a Ilbo</i>	<i>Seoul Shinmun</i>	<i>The Hankyoreh</i>	<i>Asahi Shimbun</i>	<i>The Daily Yomiuri</i>	<i>Mainichi Daily News</i>	<i>The Sankei Shimbun</i>		
Straight News	104 (43.3)	107 (54.6)	94 (42.7)	86 (46.0)	55 (78.6)	54 (72.0)	52 (66.7)	101 (71.1)	262 (71.8)	
Editorial And Columns	34 (14.2)	15 (7.7)	28 (12.8)	18 (9.6)	5 (7.1)	8 (10.7)	9 (11.5)	16 (11.3)	38 (10.4)	
Background News	53 (22.1)	49 (25.0)	70 (31.9)	54 (28.8)	5 (7.2)	10 (13.3)	8 (10.3)	12 (8.5)	35 (9.6)	
Letters To the Editor	37 (15.4)	8 (4.1)	8 (3.6)	10 (5.3)	34 (5.7)	1 (1.3)	4 (5.1)	9 (6.3)	18 (4.9)	
Interviews	6 (2.5)	5 (2.6)	4 (1.8)	11 (5.9)		2 (2.7)	2 (2.6)		4 (1.1)	
Others	6 (2.5)	12 (6.1)	16 (6.9)	8 (4.3)	1 (1.4)		3 (3.8)	4 (2.8)	8 (2.2)	
Total	240 (100)	196 (100)	220 (100)	187 (100)	70 (100)	75 (100)	78 (100)	142 (100)	365 (100)	

Origins of News Stories

It is important to know whether the news event was explained from the home nation's perspective or from the opponent nation's perspective. As shown in Table 3, more than a half (59 percent) of the total number of stories in South Korean newspapers were supplied by their own domestic reporters. Only 19.2 percent of stories came from foreign correspondents. For the Japanese newspapers, 51.2 percent of stories were covered by domestic reporters, and 32.5 percent were written by foreign correspondents. It is an interesting finding that the Japanese press relied more heavily on their own foreign correspondents than the South Korean press did. The fact that about half of the 130 foreign correspondents in Seoul are from Japanese news organizations explains how the Japanese press could publish so many stories written by correspondents.

As shown in Table 4, important differences in the newspapers' use of news sources were found. Sixty-three and six-tenths percent of Japanese stories used the Japanese government as a major source, while 43.5 percent of South Korean stories relied on home government sources. Most of the stories using government officials as sources supported the home governments' official positions toward the Dokdo issue. Among the four South Korean newspapers, the government-owned *Seoul Shinmun* (50.1%) relied on government sources most heavily. As for the Japanese press, *The Sankei Shimbun* (65.5%) was most dependent on government sources. *Seoul Shinmun* and *The Sankei Shimbun*, more active than others in using government sources in their stories, maintained a news frame reflecting the foreign policy interest of their respective governments.

Another interesting result was that the South Korean press was highly dependent on sources from the civil sector (39.0 percent) such as academic organizations, social movement groups and citizens, whereas the Japanese press was much less so (7.1 percent). Since South Korean readers could easily reach a consensus supporting national sovereignty over Dokdo, South Korean newspapers did not have to restrict news sources to government circles. The South Kore-

Table 3. Origins of News Stories

Country	Korea				Japan				Unit: Number (percentage)	
	Chosun Ilbo	Dong-a Ilbo	Seoul Shinmun	The Han-kyoreh	Asahi Shimbun	The Daily Yomiuri	Mainichi Daily News	The Sankei Shimbun		Total
Origins										
Reporter News	88 (52.4)	82 (57.7)	107 (65.7)	86 (60.5)	33 (48.5)	38 (55.0)	33 (55.0)	75 (54.0)	178 (51.2)	
Correspondent	28 (16.7)	33 (23.2)	31 (19.1)	26 (18.3)	27 (40.9)	27 (39.1)	26 (35.1)	33 (23.7)	113 (32.5)	
Foreign Press	8 (4.8)	9 (6.3)	11 (6.8)	13 (9.1)	1 (1.5)	3 (4.3)	8 (10.8)	17 (12.2)	29 (8.3)	
Others	44 (26.4)	18 (12.6)	14 (8.6)	17 (11.9)	6 (9.1)	1 (1.4)	7 (9.5)	14 (10.4)	28 (8.1)	
Total	168 (100)	142 (100)	163 (100)	142 (100)	66 (100)	69 (100)	74 (100)	139 (100)	348 (100)	

Table 4. Types of News Source

Country	Korea					Japan					Unit: Number (percentage)
	Chosun Ilbo	Dong-a Ilbo	Seoul Shinmun	The Han-kyoreh	Total	Asahi Shimbun	The Daily Yomiuri	Mainich Daily News	The Sankei Shimbun	Total	
Government Officials	58 (39.5)	48 (41.3)	71 (50.1)	51 (41.1)	228 (43.5)	37 (75.7)	29 (54.7)	38 (58.4)	74 (65.5)	178 (63.6)	
Party/ Politician	10 (6.8)	9 (7.8)	15 (10.8)	20 (16.1)	54 (10.3)	9 (18.4)	13 (24.5)	12 (18.5)	16 (14.2)	50 (17.9)	
Civic Organization	69 (40.7)	52 (44.9)	41 (29.5)	43 (34.7)	205 (39.0)	1 (2.0)	2 (3.8)	6 (9.2)	11 (9.7)	20 (7.1)	
The Press	4 (2.7)	4 (3.4)	7 (5.0)	7 (5.6)	22 (4.1)	1 (2.0)	8 (15.1)	7 (10.8)	10 (8.8)	26 (9.3)	
Others	6 (4.1)	3 (2.6)	5 (3.6)	3 (2.4)	17 (3.1)	1 (2.0)	1 (1.9)	2 (3.0)	2 (1.8)	6 (2.1)	
Total	147 (100)	116 (100)	139 (100)	124 (100)	526 (100)	49 (100)	53 (100)	65 (100)	113 (100)	280 (100)	

an press often interviewed protest groups that launched anti-Japanese rallies.

On the other hand, the lack of dependence on civic groups by the Japanese press suggests that the opinions of average citizens were neglected in the Japanese news coverage of the Dokdo issue. This can be interpreted as an effort of the Japanese press to manufacture the public opinion supportive of the Japanese government's official position.

The use of media organizations as news sources was more visible in South Korean press coverage. This finding implies that the South Korean press actively sought news stories from foreign media that viewed this issue from perspectives favorable to South Korea.

News Channels

A related approach to examining the diversity of news sources is to investigate the channels of news. News channels defined as the paths by which information reaches reporters are classified into three categories (Sigal 1973). Routine channels include official proceedings, and informal channels include nongovernmental proceedings such as leaks, background briefings and news from nongovernment organizations (citizens). Enterprise channels include interviews conducted at the reporter's initiative, independent research involving books, historical data and statistical data.

The dominance of routine channels was more apparent in the South Korean newspapers than in the Japanese newspapers. *Seoul Shinmun* and *The Hankyoreh* reported more than 60 percent of the Dokdo island-related stories through routine channels, while the other two newspapers reported less than 50 percent through routine channels. Informal news channels were rarely utilized by both the South Korean (2.3 percent) and Japanese press (9.0 percent). In the use of enterprise channels, the Japanese press was more active than the South Korean press, and with *The Sankei Shimbun* in the again.

Table 5. Use of Different News Channels

Country News Channel	Korea					Japan					Unit: Number (percentage)
	<i>Chosun Ilbo</i>	<i>Dong-a Ilbo</i>	<i>Seoul Shinmun</i>	<i>The Han-kyoreh</i>	Total	<i>Asahi Shimbun</i>	<i>The Yomiuri Daily</i>	<i>Mainichi Daily News</i>	<i>The Sankei Shimbun</i>	Total	
Routine	62 (42.5)	55 (47.4)	85 (60.7)	77 (62.1)	279 (53.0)	18 (36.7)	22 (41.5)	26 (40.0)	49 (40.5)	115 (39.9)	
Informal Politician	3 (2.1)	2 (1.7)	4 (2.9)	3 (2.4)	12 (2.3)	6 (12.2)	6 (11.3)	3 (4.6)	11 (9.1)	26 (9.0)	
Enterprise Organization	9 (6.2)	12 (10.3)	16 (11.4)	12 (9.7)	49 (9.3)	3 (6.1)	9 (17.0)	12 (18.5)	23 (19.0)	47 (16.3)	
Not Applicable	72 (49.3)	47 (40.5)	35 (25.0)	32 (25.8)	186 (35.4)	22 (44.9)	16 (30.2)	24 (37.0)	38 (31.4)	100 (34.8)	
Total	147 (100)	116 (100)	140 (100)	124 (100)	526 (100)	49 (100)	53 (100)	65 (100)	121 (100)	288 (100)	

Presentation of Evidence

Newspapers of both nations presented different types of evidence to demonstrate that Dokdo belongs to their own territory. Comparison of the use of evidence mobilized to support the stories reveals different patterns. Historical evidence was utilized more often by the South Korean press (43.8 percent) than the Japanese press (23.9 percent). The use of evidence based on international law and conventions was notable in the news coverage of the Japanese press. The South Korean press was less enthusiastic about viewing this conflict as a legal issue. While the South Korean press tends to regard Dokdo island as an inherent part of Korean territory, the Japanese report on Dokdo island as subject to a territorial dispute that needs to be legally resolved. These varying positions over the resolution of this issue also reflect the differing policies of the home governments. The South Korean government has argued that this issue is no longer disputable since South Koreans have resided in Dokdo for decades, while the Japanese government prefers to bring this case to the international court and to make it a legal issue.

A significant gap was found in the use of public opinion. Thirty and six-tenths percent (116) of the stories carried by the South Korean press mentioned the public's evaluation that South Korea has territorial rights over Dokdo, while the Japanese press (*The Sankei Shimbun*) published only three stories on the response of the Japanese public. This result confirms that the Japanese press was not very interested in making this issue key public agenda. The South Korean press, however, relied on much evidence obtained from the civil sector, such as academic organizations and private citizens, with the intent of mobilizing public support.

Evaluation of the Conflict

In all the South Korean newspapers, the negative evaluation of Japan was predominant, although small discrepancies among *Chosun Ilbo*, *Dong-a Ilbo*, *Seoul Shinmun* and *The Hankyoreh* were found. *Chosun*

Table 6. Type of Evidence Used in Stories

Country Evidence	Korea				Japan				Total
	<i>Chosun Ilbo</i>	<i>Dong-a Ilbo</i>	<i>Seoul Shinmun</i>	<i>The Han-kyoreh</i>	<i>Asahi Shimbun</i>	<i>The Daily Yomiuri</i>	<i>Mainich Daily News</i>	<i>The Sankei Shimbun</i>	
Routine	40 (36.0)	43 (47.1)	57 (51.9)	26 (34.7)	166 (43.8)	4 (57.2)	3 (21.4)	4 (18.1)	11 (23.9)
Informal Politician	16 (14.4)	7 (8.0)	13 (12.3)	10 (13.3)	46 (12.1)	2 (28.6)	3 (21.4)	2 (9.1)	7 (15.2)
Enterprise Organization	43 (38.7)	29 (33.3)	21 (19.8)	23 (30.7)	116 (30.6)			3 (13.6)	3 (6.5)
Not Applicable	12 (10.8)	7 (7.9)	15 (14.1)	16 (21.2)	50 (13.2)	3 (100)	1 (14.3)	8 (57.2)	13 (59.1)
Total	111 (100)	87 (100)	106 (100)	75 (100)	379 (100)	7 (100)	14 (100)	22 (100)	46 (100)

Unit: Number (percentage)

Table 7. Responsibility of Conflict

Country Respon- sibility	Korea				Japan				Unit: Number (percentage)
	<i>Chosun Ilbo</i>	<i>Dong-a Ilbo</i>	<i>Seoul Shinmun</i>	<i>The Han-kyoreh</i>	<i>Asahi Shimbun</i>	<i>The Daily Yomiuri</i>	<i>Mainich Daily News</i>	<i>The Sankei Shimbun</i>	Total
Korea	5 (8.1)		2 (4.0)	5 (11.6)			1 (1.3)	6 (4.2)	7 (1.9)
Japan	49 (79.0)	29 (90.6)	37 (74.0)	28 (65.1)		1 (1.3)	8 (10.3)	2 (1.4)	11 (3.0)
Both	5 (8.1)	3 (8.4)	6 (12.0)	8 (18.6)			1 (1.3)	4 (2.8)	5 (1.4)
Others	3 (4.8)		5 (10.0)	2 (4.6)	70 (100)	74 (98.7)	68 (86.9)	130 (91.5)	342 (93.7)
Total	62 (100)	32 (100)	50 (100)	43 (100)	70 (100)	75 (100)	78 (100)	142 (100)	365 (100)

Ilbo and *Dong-a Ilbo*, both known as nationalistic papers, evaluated the behavior of Japanese leaders as distinctly negative and laid the blame on Japan. Negative terminology frequently used in the South Korean press to describe Japan included “Japanese imperialism,” “Japanese militarism,” and “absurd remarks.”

The Japanese newspapers maintained a less negative position on South Korea than the South Korean press did on Japan. The proportion of unfavorable coverage of the opponent nation was higher in the South Korean press, suggesting that the South Korean newspapers continued to frame the South Korea-Japan relationship from the perspective of anti-Japanese ideology widely shared by South Korean people. Seventy-six and five-tenths percent of the South Korean news stories pointed to Japan as responsible for the conflict, and only 6.4 point suggested South Korean responsibility. The Japanese press, however, was divided when it came to the question of responsibility for the conflict. For example, *Mainich Daily News* carried eight articles stating that Japan was responsible for intensifying the conflict, while *The Sankei Shimbun* ran six articles blaming South Korea (see Table 7).

Both governments were mentioned as the main actors with the capability to resolve the conflict. The Japanese press had a tendency to rely on government-level talks to decrease tension between the two nations. The South Korean press, despite its emphasis on the role of the governments, expected that the efforts of private citizens would significantly help reduce the intensity of the conflict (see Table 8).

Newspapers also presented ways in which the conflict could be resolved. The editorial stance most strongly supported by the newspapers of both nations was that their home government should not give up its current position, but the news coverage of the conflict resolution revealed a notable difference. The South Korean press published more articles with an aggressive tone than the Japanese press. Almost 30 percent of stories carried by the Japanese press implied negotiation and peaceful talks as a means to reduce the tension, compared to only 13 percent of stories by the South Korean press. The South Korean press was more inclined to propose an uncompromis-

Table 8. Actors for Conflict Management

Country Actor	Korea				Japan				Total
	Chosun Ilbo	Dong-a Ilbo	Seoul Shinmun	The Han- kyoreh	Asahi Shimbun	The Daily Yomiuri	Mainich Daily News	The Sankei Shimbun	
Government	40 (51.3)	18 (51.4)	29 (60.4)	21 (36.8)	108 (49.5)	1 (100)	10 (83.3)	17 (81.0)	28 (82.4)
Political Authority	1 (1.3)			1 (1.8)	2 (0.9)	2 (100)			2 (5.9)
The Press			1 (2.1)	1 (1.8)	2 (0.9)			2 (9.5)	2 (5.9)
Private Citizens	22 (28.2)	5 (14.3)	6 (12.5)	18 (31.5)	51 (23.4)			2 (9.5)	2 (5.9)
Others	15 (19.2)	12 (34.3)	12 (25.0)	16 (28.1)	55 (25.2)				
Total	78 (100)	35 (100)	48 (100)	57 (100)	218 (100)	1 (100)	12 (100)	21 (100)	34 (100)

Unit: Number (percentage)

Table 9. Methods of Conflict Solution

Country Method	Korea				Japan				Unit: Number (percentage)	
	Chosun Ilbo	Dong-a Ilbo	Seoul Shinmun	The Han-kyoreh	Total	Asahi Shimbun	The Daily Yomiuri	Mainichi Daily News		The Sankei Shimbun
Straight News	9 (11.5)	6 (17.1)	9 (19.2)	6 (6.5)	30 (11)				3 (14.3)	3 (8.6)
Editorial and Columns	29 (37.2)	10 (28.6)	8 (17.0)	57 (61.3)	104 (41.1)	1 (100)	3 (23.1)	3 (23.1)	9 (42.9)	13 (37.1)
Background News	11 (14.1)	4 (11.4)	9 (19.1)	9 (9.7)	33 (13.0)		6 (46.2)	6 (46.2)	12 (9.5)	8 (22.9)
Letters to the Editor	2 (2.6)	1 (2.9)	1 (2.1)	1 (1.1)	5 (2.0)		1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)		1 (2.9)
Interviews	2 (2.6)	3 (8.6)	8 (17.0)		13 (5.1)				1 (4.8)	1 (2.9)
Others	25 (32.1)	11 (31.4)	12 (25.5)	20 (21.5)	68 (26.9)		3 (23.1)	3 (23.1)	6 (28.5)	9 (25.7)
Total	78 (100)	35 (100)	47 (100)	93 (100)	253 (100)	1 (100)	13 (100)	13 (100)	21 (100)	35 (100)

ing policy in dealing with the conflict, referring more frequently to some measures of punishment or protest against Japan (see Table 9).

Analysis of Editorials

The quantitative content analysis shows that news coverage by the South Korean and the Japanese press reflected the foreign policy interest of each country, assuming Dokdo to belong to their own territory. Given the conflictual nature of the territorial dispute between the two nations, this result is not surprising.

But the analysis of the editorials enables us to examine internal differences across the newspapers within each nation. Although the bottom line of editorial policy was to act in concert with the claim of territorial rights by the home government, each newspaper maintained varying degrees of autonomy in laying down its own editorial stance on the nature and resolution of the conflict.

The goal of foreign policy was never questioned, but the diplomatic tactics on particular issues were criticized by some newspapers. Newspapers operating in a given nation can present differing opinions on various aspects of a diplomatic dispute. The qualitative analysis of editorials thus allows us to examine opinion diversity existing among newspapers in a given nation.

Diversity in opinion was found to be greater in the Japanese press than in the South Korean press. South Korean newspapers had reached a consensus not only in the way of understanding the question of sovereignty over Dokdo but also in examining the underlying cause of the conflict. Upon the Japanese government's argument that Takeshima was legally incorporated into Japan on the basis of a legal announcement on January 1905, South Korean newspapers ran editorials pointing out the nonlegal basis of such a claim on the grounds that it was proclaimed when the Japanese imperial army had already occupied the Korean peninsula and begun to exercise political control over Korea. According to the editorial coverage by the South Korean press, South Korea's territorial sovereignty over Dokdo is a historical truth supported by ample evidence.

For South Korea, the issue was never open to debate, and the question of Dokdo island was rephrased by the South Korean press: Why did Japan bring up this issue at this particular time? The four South Korean newspapers reached a consensus on this question as well. The South Korean press agreed that the real intention of the Japanese government was not to occupy the island, but to make it into a controversial issue that had to be resolved in an international court. The basic attitude of the South Korean press was to not make the uncontroversial issue controversial. Therefore, it argued that South Korea's protest against Japan had to be clear, strong and rational rather than too emotional. In the final stage of the conflict, when the summit talks between the two nations sought ways to reduce the mutual antagonism, *Seoul Shinmun*, unlike other South Korean newspapers, weakened its negative editorial stance against Japan and emphasized the necessity of an amicable settlement of the dispute. The announcement that the 2002 World Cup Game would be cohosted by South Korea and Japan created an atmosphere of reconciliation and cooperation to which *Seoul Shinmun* swiftly responded. Other papers, however, maintained the view that the government should make it clear that the Dokdo issue was not negotiable and not confuse it with other issues.

The range of diversity in opinion within the Japanese press was wider than that within the South Korean press. Japanese newspapers presented differing views on various issues of the Takeshima dispute. While *The Sankei Shimbun* and *The Daily Yomiuri* asked the Japanese government to persist in its territorial claim to Takeshima and to make a strong protest against the South Korean government, which had started the construction of docking facilities on the island, *Mainich Daily News* suggested that the Japanese government not incite the negative sentiment of the South Korean people who were inclined to relate the territorial dispute with the past of the Japanese empire's colonial exploitation. *Asahi Shimbun*, standing somewhere between *The Sankei Shimbun* and *Mainich Daily News* in its editorial comments, published an editorial criticizing the overly sensitive reaction of conservative Japanese politicians. While confirming Japan's

sovereignty over Takeshima, *Asahi Shimbun* pointed out that Japanese politicians had underestimated the deep-rooted anti-Japanese feeling widely shared by the South Korean people.

There existed the clearest difference in editorial views between *The Sankei Shimbun* and *Mainich Daily News*. *The Sankei Shimbun* carried articles colored by a reactionary nationalism urging the Japanese government to follow a tough line in dealing with this issue and not to worry about the deterioration of the diplomatic relationship between the two nations. On the other hand, the editorial view published by *Mainich Daily News* was moderate and placed greater emphasis on the peaceful relationship between the two nations than the other Japanese papers did. Unlike *The Sankei Shimbun*, which tried to frame the Takeshima issue as a very serious news event associated with the infringement of national sovereignty, *Mainich Daily News* viewed it as a “technical mistake” made by some Japanese politicians who did not know much about the complexities of South Korean politics and underestimated the potential impact of such a sensitive issue on South Koreans. *Mainich Daily News* stated in an editorial that one of the reasons why so much news coverage of this territorial conflict was given by the South Korean press was that the ruling government intentionally mobilized anti-Japanese public opinion to attack one of the leading opposition leaders, Kim Jong-pil, who was seen as a leading pro-Japanese politician.

The finding that there was greater diversity in the viewpoints published by the Japanese press than by the South Korean press has several important implications. First, it can be said that the Japanese press operates in a more pluralistic political environment that allows a greater degree of press autonomy. Japanese journalists with relatively more autonomy, can write more freely and comment on the conflict from a range of perspectives. Second, this may have to do with the climates of public opinion in both nations. The Dokdo issue has not been as heavily publicized in Japan as in South Korea. Since it was the most significant public agenda in South Korea during the period of conflict, a strongly unified public opinion in favor of safeguarding Dokdo could be formed. However, most Japanese readers

showed little concern over this issue. As a result, it can be said that the Japanese press treated it as less critical than the South Korean press did.

Another interesting finding was that newspapers of both nations related the international conflict to the dynamics of political conflict within each nation. The strong negative attitude adopted by the Japanese government was understood by the South Korean press as a highly calculated diplomatic tactic to divert the public attention to an international issue and away from a domestic political battle, mobilizing conservatism as well as nationalism. A similar view was found in the Japanese press which pointed out that President Kim's blaming of Japan was a political tactic to incite anti-Japanese sentiment among the South Korean public and ultimately to increase his own popularity.

In this context, *The Daily Yomiuri* carried an editorial stating that the South Korean government's strong protest was a calculated response to prepare for the upcoming National Assembly elections in April 1996. Both governments were criticized by the press of the other side for their alleged attempt to divert public attention away from domestic conflict to an international conflict.

Summary and Discussion

From January to June 1996, the conflict over Dokdo island was the most sensitive diplomatic issue. This study examined the characteristics of news coverage of the Dokdo issue by the South Korean and Japanese press to detect systemic differences in news presentation. As predicted in the theoretical discussion, newspapers were basically sympathetic toward their home government in the coverage of this issue. Considering the fact that the media tends to depend on government officials to supply information, the news coverage in this period reflects the interest of the foreign policy adopted by the home government.

The brief analysis of news stories demonstrated that newspapers

differed in their pattern of news coverage of this conflict. First, the South Korean press was much more serious and active in reporting on the Dokdo issue, and provided readers with much more extensive coverage than the Japanese press did. Thus, while for the South Korean media, the Dokdo island issue was the most important agenda during that period, the news value given to the conflict by the Japanese press was not so great and Japanese readers did not take the issue so seriously. Even though both the South Korean and Japanese press condemned their counterpart, the Japanese papers' reaction was not as strong as that of the South Korean press.

Second, the essential reason for the difference in news coverage was the different usage of sources in the coverage of South Korea-Japan relations. News sources used by the South Korean press were more diverse than those used by the Japanese press, but this does not necessarily mean that the South Korean press reported the conflict from a greater range of perspectives. Because there have been enduring anti-Japanese sentiments widely shared by South Koreans, there was no questioning of the fact that Dokdo belonged to South Korea. Lacking such a firm national consensus, the Japanese press can be seen as having been reluctant to rely on news sources other than government officials.

Third, news frames adopted by the South Korean press were more emotional and sensational than those used by the Japanese press. The South Korean press, calling statements made by high-ranking Japanese officials "absurd," maintained an extremely negative tone toward Japan. Reaction by the Japanese press was not positive either. The result was the acceleration of mutual antagonism between the two nations. However, the Japanese press that reported more straight news was seen as more "neutral" and less sensational, and mobilization of public support was much more notable in the news coverage of the South Korean press.

Fourth, newspapers of both nations employed different approaches in understanding the nature and resolution of the conflict. While the Japanese press understood the conflict as an international issue to be settled by the application of international law, the South Korean

press adopted the view that no further negotiation with Japan was necessary to resolve the conflict. As a means to reduce the intense tension between the two sides, the South Korean press had a tendency to emphasize the importance of mutual understanding of citizens, whereas the Japanese press did not take this position.

Finally, the analysis of editorials reveals that the Japanese press presented more diverse views than the South Korea press on this territorial conflict. The South Korean press made it clear that the Dokdo island issue was not negotiable, while the Japanese newspapers advocated the sovereignty of Takeshima in differing degrees. The government-press relationship also explains how the press shifted its editorial stance. The government-owned *Seoul Shinmun* quickly responded to new developments in the situation. As the decision to cohost the 2002 World Cup Game was announced, *Seoul Shinmun* immediately toned down the intensity of its negative evaluation of Japan.

To summarize, this study suggests that a propaganda framework was at work in the news coverage of Dokdo. Both nations reproduced and reinforced “stereotypes” of the opponent nation. The news coverage by both nations was biased in line with the prevailing view toward the other nation. Journalists appeared to encode the Dokdo issue with the propaganda framework of their nation. As a result, the mutual misunderstanding and antagonism associated with the Dokdo issue is unlikely to be reduced in the near future. The international conflict between South Korea and Japan is therefore managed and sometimes manipulated by the image-making process of the opponent nation, with the active participation of foreign policy officials and journalists.

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