

International Media Framing of Current Territorial Disputes in the Asia-Pacific Region

2017-2020

Lauren Spierings

Won Yong Jang, Faculty Advisor | Communications & Journalism

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire



INTRODUCTION

South Korea, Japan, and China have disputed over territories since the end of World War II in the Asia-Pacific region. The dispute is significant and unique in that it involves three U.S. allies and partners placing the U.S. in an uncomfortable position.

DOKDO | TAKESHIMA ISLANDS

The Dokdo islands, called the Takeshima Islands in Japanese, are a chain of islands located in the East China Sea. Japan and South Korea both claim sovereignty over these islands.

SENKAKU | DIAOYU ISLANDS

The Senkaku islands, called 'Diaoyudao' in the People's Republic of China, and 'Diaoyutai' in Taiwan are located in the East China Sea and are disputed over by Japan and China.

RESEARCH OUTLINE

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

I present an empirical analysis that compares several news agencies' coverage of the territorial dispute in the Asia-Pacific region from 2017-2020.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study uses a quantitative content analysis in terms of *the amount (media attention), key frames, frame nature, and sources.*

- RQ1: How is it covered in terms of the volume of territorial disputes?
- RQ2: What frames do news agencies use most frequently when reporting international news?
- RQ3: Does the use of frames vary between western news agencies?
- RQ4: Does the use of frames differ between western and non-western news agencies?
- RQ5: How does each country's news agency describe the images of each nation involved in the disputes?
- RQ6: What sources were used/represented/mentioned/quoted?
- RQ7: Do the frames used by news agencies covering international news change over time?

NEWS AGENCIES

- Associated Press | New York-based
- Xinhua | New China News Agency
- TASS/ITAR | Russian News Agency
- Agence France-Presse | Paris-based
- Reuters | London-based

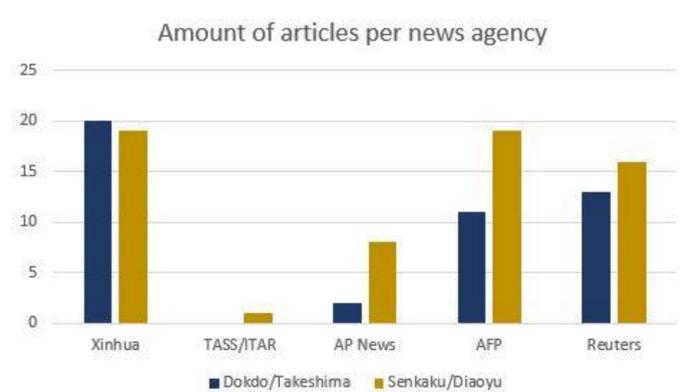
News articles were found using the online database Nexis Uni. The keywords utilized were: Dokdo, Takeshima, Senkaku, Diaoyu. Articles from Reuters were found by searching the same keywords on the Reuters website.



RESULTS

RQ1: HOW IS IT COVERED IN TERMS OF THE VOLUME OF TERRITORIAL DISPUTES?

A total of 115 articles were analyzed. It shows a general trend that news coverage about the Senkaku Islands was more frequent than the Dokdo Islands.



Xinhua is the exception to this trend. Xinhua covered 20 stories regarding the Dokdo Islands, a single story more than its coverage of the Senkaku Islands.

RQ2: WHAT FRAMES DO NEWS AGENCIES USE MOST FREQUENTLY WHEN REPORTING INTERNATIONAL NEWS?

Frames considered include:

- Conflict frame
- Human Interest frame
- Attribution of Responsibility frame
- Economic Consequences
- Morality frame
- Nationalization frame

The most commonly used frame among news agencies was the Conflict frame, followed by the Attribution of Responsibility frame. The least common frame to be used by news agencies was the Economic Consequence frame.

RQ3: DOES THE USE OF FRAMES DIFFER BETWEEN WESTERN NEWS AGENCIES?

Western news agencies included in this study are AP News, AFP, and Reuters. Evidence shows that there is no significant difference in the use of frames between these three Western news agencies.

RQ4: DOES THE USE OF FRAMES DIFFER BETWEEN WESTERN AND NON-WESTERN NEWS AGENCIES?

Non-Western news agencies in this study are Xinhua and TASS/ITAR. The most notable difference between the use of frames between Western and non-Western agencies is the use of the nationalization and morality frames by Xinhua. However, it remains that the most common frames for use are the Conflict frame and the Attribution of Responsibility frame.

RQ5: HOW DOES EACH COUNTRY'S NEWS AGENCY DESCRIBE THE IMAGES OF EACH NATION INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTES?

This question was addressed by analyzing frame nature. Frame natures were judged and coded by either being absent (0), present (1), or outstandingly present (2). The most commonly used frame nature was the Descriptive (defining problems) nature with a sum of 112, followed by the Interpretative (diagnosing causes) nature with a sum of 102. The third most common frame nature was Affective nature with a sum of 26. The least common frame nature was the Solution nature with a sum of 3.

RQ6: WHAT SOURCES WERE USED/REPRESENTED/MENTIONED/QUOTED?

The sources most commonly used by news agencies were foreign government (N=96) and domestic government (N=21), with foreign media (N=19) and unnamed experts/celebrities (N=6) following. Several source types such as the economist and business/industry group were not cited in the entirety of the study.

This study showed that the frames used by news agencies covering international news, specifically the territorial disputes over the Dokdo Islands and the Senkaku Islands, generally stayed the same over the period of 2017-2020.

RQ7: DO THE FRAMES USED BY NEWS AGENCIES COVERING INTERNATIONAL NEWS CHANGE OVER TIME?

This study showed that the frames used by news agencies covering international news, specifically the territorial disputes over the Dokdo Islands and the Senkaku Islands, generally stayed the same over the period of 2017-2020.

DISCUSSION

LIMITATIONS

The results of this study are limited to the generalizability of the findings. Some limitations include:

- The Online full-text database used (Nexis Uni)
- Content analysis

Future studies could move forward to consider news agencies within all the countries involved in the territorial disputes as well as international agencies.

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