

## Single country multiple perspectives – media discourses on North Korea in global news stations - CNN, CCTV and Al Jazeera

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### Abstract

*This study examines mainstream news media framing of North Korea based on selected events that attracted the attention of media stations around the world in 2018. The reporting of CNN, CGTN and Al Jazeera allowed for a comparative analysis of dominant ideological and political biases transpiring in the articles with particular inclinations as to the framing trends that pertain in each news provider. The findings revealed dominant US hegemonic tendencies that strongly influence the lexical as well as factual content of the publications. At the same time the Chinese reporting was found to be in total opposition to their American counterpart with their own style, ideology and particular limitations dominating the discourse. The Middle Eastern news station turned out to be the most disengaged and providing most balanced reporting with clear and structured reports mainly void of particular stances.*

**Keywords:** North Korea, Global Media, Discourse Analysis, Biases, Othering and Framing

### 1. Introduction

With the information overload coming from all sources and types of modern media, news stations are forced to resort to various methods of increasing the attractiveness of their content in order to stay afloat. They often do so by distorting and sensationalizing the events they report on. This study analyses the content of three global news providers with an aim to compare and contrast the biases and various influences transpiring in the discourse of each news channel in the reporting on the notoriously present in the public light, North Korea and its leader Kim Jong un. One of the most significant developments in the field of global news media was the establishment of CNN (Cable News Network) in 1980. The American commercial satellite channel was the first to offer continuous stream of news, which was seen as a true sign of a global medium. Over the years the station has become one of the most reliable and influential sources of information about the world. Nevertheless, in the past few years this (media) hegemony has started to be challenged by the newly arising non-western players from the Middle East and Asia. The most important among them is the pan-Arabic Al Jazeera, which was considered a starting point in a revolution in the Arab media world by introducing new democratic practices to the media, traditionally always following the governmental line [1]. On top of that, among other contenders, CCTV with its flagship international news channel CGTN - China Global Television Network (formerly known as CCTV English), has become the Chinese voice in the globalized world. The station is supposed to be the “China’s CNN” aimed at telling China’s story to foreign audiences [2, 3].

### North Korea

In the eyes of journalists from around the world, North Korea, formally known as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), has largely remained a secluded and isolated nation under infamous communist rule [4, 5]. The main focus of the global coverage on the country has been military threat and human rights abuse with persistent lack of publications regarding other spheres of life such as economy or culture [6, 7]. In the analysis of North Korea in European press, found that generally the stereotypical image of NK is similar to that of American media and presents the country as an authoritarian dictatorship, isolated on the international arena, displaying a belligerent stance in dealing with the world [8-10].

### Global media

Despite idealistic slogans claiming impartiality and objectivity, all media stations experience some sort of constraints and influences which are a result of either political or social situation in the country, dominant ideologies and culture, religion or even commercial factors. The three stations analysed here have been selected for their stark differences in terms of political grounding and ideological stances in their countries of origin. The American media in general are said to reflect the government and officials’ stand on major conflicts that the US has been involved in, even despite relatively high level of autonomy and press freedom [11]. There is a tendency to avoid critical analysis and a common acceptance of censorship when it is believed to protect national interest, especially at time of war. “When we’re at war, we’re

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Americans first and journalists second” [12]. Some even claim that the media is used by the government to propagate support for its actions, using journalists as emissaries of patriotic message that is aimed at winning over opinions of the viewers [12-15]. General analyses of American media provide a specific portrayal of reality as episodic glimpses of foreign news, mostly negative, accentuating conflicts, violent events natural disasters on top of events involving the US or its citizens because only such pieces pass the threshold of being worthy airtime [16,17]. Even international news channels (e.g. CNN) are being accused of skewing towards presenting news in a sensational way, producing infotainment that lacks context and has a tendency of being highly dramatic in its tone [18,16].

Originating in a completely different reality, the Chinese station - CCTV, has been said to depend entirely on the ruling party, given the political system in China. Nevertheless, from being the “throat and tongue” of the party line, contemporarily the station has become the leading voice of China with the reporting based on facts rather than ideology, yet the dominant national image of the country portrayed by Chinese media focuses on country’s economic development and improving lives of its citizens by peaceful and long-lasting cooperation with other nations without unnecessary involvement in international political or ideological disputes [19]. write that contemporary media in China no longer serve as the Party instrument but now they have been turned into multicultural media industry focused on providing news, information, entertainment but also public opinion voice that, even though in a limited way, attempts to evaluate government actions by criticizing some decisions of low-level local government officials [20,21]. Nevertheless, under such a complicated model balancing propaganda and the market, there are areas that fall into a strictly controlled category, namely the central propaganda tends to censor mainly those events which are harmful to state legitimacy and might provoke the audiences and endanger social stability [22,19]. Previous research indicates that the frames on sensitive news that journalists in China use are consistent with the government stance. Also, the situation of the authors in China is more complicated. They are subject to tighter control from officials and are even in danger of retaliation from them after publishing some negative news [23,24].

The third station analysed here is believed to be a breakthrough in the Middle Eastern media scope as before the development of Al Jazeera most citizens of Arabic countries had only access to local channels, which mostly reported on leaders’ speeches, official visits and activities, making the content utterly dull and monolithic [25]. The profession of journalist was not respected either because the viewing public perceived journalists as mouthpieces of dictators and political parties [26]. The station was created with the aim to bring independent source of news in the region, without biased propaganda of Western media and the following of Orientalism ideology but at the same time free from the restrictions and limitations of the existing state-run stations [27]. Yet, the opinions differ among scholars as to whether the station enjoys full autonomy from the sponsors, while apart from being dependent on Qatari royal money, even some of the board of directors of the station are members of the Royal family

[28]. The new media caused an increasing homogenization of language, by the same token solidifying Arab consensus and ultimately leading to the creation of “pan-Arab identity” [29]. According to this type of ideology might be powerful enough to successfully influence the frames prevalent in the content of AJE, skewing the reporting to anti- western themes [30].

## 2. Methodology and data

This research comprises articles collected from CNN, CGTN and Al Jazeera websites over the course of one year from January 2018 to December 2018. The time period can be characterized as a year of détente and active reconciliation and cooperation efforts from both the US as well as the rest of the world towards the DPRK [31]. In order to yield relevant results, keyword searches with the use of the words: North Korea, DPRK and Kim Jong un were conducted for each medium. Using a systematic random sampling technique, a collection of articles from the three broadcasters was gathered and then analysed for thematic convergence. Three major events regarding North Korea were chosen due to their greatest resonance in the world media at that time, this way a selection of nine articles (three from each station) was assured. The events presented here cover: the first ever summit between Donald Trump and Kim Jong un in Singapore, the murder of Kim Jong un’s half-brother in Kuala Lumpur airport and the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the DPRK.

The general focus of this study is the linguistic analysis of written texts and with the popularity of discourse analysis, there have been a number of strategies used when processing texts. In the first place, on top of drawing from Fairclough’s theory, the notion of “lexicalization” has been selected for scrutiny in this research [32,33]. The choice of lexis e.g. in the form of naming or labelling is a powerful propaganda and ideological device. The way we call someone or something may reflect the way we perceive and categorize them [34]. Another strategy adopted to present the findings of this research draws from discourse historical approach proposed by [35]. The researchers embraced the idea of predication or in other words labelling social actors in either positive or negative ways by means of stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits. Additionally, points to using modality, presupposition and hyperboles as commonly implemented approaches when constructing journalistic texts [33]. The presence and employment of the above elements will all be under analysis in this research.

### 2.1 Analysis

#### 2.1.1 Power struggle and conflict in CNN “Trump declares North Korea no longer a nuclear threat”, CGTN “Kim-Trump summit heralds thaw in DPRK-U.S. ties” and Al Jazeera

“Kim Jong-un came out victorious from the summit” On 12th June the attention of the whole world was turned to Singapore where the leaders of the DPRK and the USA met to discuss the future of relations between the two conflicted countries. Most global media provided extensive coverage of the event with major stations reporting step-by-step the events of the long-awaited summit between the ruling heads of the respective

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countries.

CGTN's coverage of the proceedings detailed technicalities of the summit with much attention paid to the way Trump and Kim behaved or what they wore to the meeting. Even though the report began with positive reaffirming of a thaw in DPRK-US ties, strengthened by direct quotes of both leaders confirming their will to overcome the obstacles and establish positive relationship, there emerged an intermediate power struggle expression and suggestive framing of the two countries as early as in the first paragraph. What the author did was to present the background of the summit by comparing the reactions of the two countries in light of the US president sudden cancellation of the meeting one month prior to the summit. Initially, the US was disappointed with North Korea's reaction to joint military drills of America and South Korea, thus Trump decided to break off the planned talks, nevertheless, soon the date of the meeting was reinstated. The US was presented as aggressive and volatile with North Korea remaining calm and balanced. This rhetoric set Americans as violent and unpredictable, at the same time portraying Koreans as the ones that promote negotiations and resolution of the conflict.

CGTN (1): Trump abruptly cancelled his planned June 12 meeting with Kim in late May, citing "tremendous anger and open hostility" displayed by Pyongyang's recent remarks. But the DPRK responded calmly by saying that it was ready to sit down with the U.S. side at any time for talks to solve the problems existing between them [36].

In the following lines of the article, the position of the DPRK's leader was promoted and enhanced by use of reversed facts. The journalist portrayed South Korean president as meeting with Kim Jong-un to discuss the ongoing developments when in fact it was Kim who sought allies after the unexpected threat of the summit cancellation. This misrepresentation of facts was aimed at strengthening the position of the DPRK leader at the same time suggesting his superiority over president Moon Jae-in.

CGTN (2): Shortly after Trump's surprise cancellation of the U.S.-DPRK summit, South Korean President Moon Jae-in met with Kim for a second time in Panmunjom, a month after their first summit on April 27 [36].

In terms of the lexical style of the publication, the paper employed euphemisms and simplifications aimed at balancing the position of the DPRK in relation to the US. Even though there is a significant discrepancy in the global power and significance of the two countries, the article described them as two rivals, which falsely implies similar global position.

CGTN (3): The agenda for improving bilateral ties between the two long-time rivals was also discussed at the summit [36]. What is noticeable is the inclusion of both sides presenting their views on the denuclearization process and their stance on the future of relations between the countries. The tones of the article promote peace and development with China presented as the party directly involved and actively advocating for building mutual trust and

development. CGTN (4): Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the meeting was of great significance, and something China long called for. Wang stressed that China would continue to play a constructive role in bringing peace to the Peninsula [36].

When we compare the above publication with that of CNN, the discourse seems quite different. The American article, transpires negative and pessimistic tones with particular focus on conflict and potential or even imminent war rhetoric. The referential strategy adopted by the journalist clearly polarizes the two sides meeting to negotiate further relations by referring to the DPRK as a rogue regime or describing Kim Jong-un as a volatile dictator (who leads a criminal regime). This lexicalization technique frames one side as inferior to the other, with the US presented as the safe keeper of the world that is able to solve all global problems.

CNN (1): Trump also said in a separate tweet that North Korea is no longer the US' 'biggest and most dangerous problem', telling Americans and the rest of the world they can 'sleep well tonight!' [37].

This evident display of hegemonic power immediately puts North Korea in the corner as the belligerent nation that requires corrective measures. Even though the summit between the two countries was supposed to promote reconciliation and cooperation, the stress of the publication is on power struggle and control with numerous repetitions and suggestions of military solution in the form of war with the DPRK. The author was notorious for accentuating conflict rhetoric by describing military exercises between SK and the US as war games, referring to Trump's last year fire and furry discourse in connection with the threat of imminent war, or suggesting lack of promises that successful negotiations would remove the possibility of war.

The author goes as far in their presuppositions, as to a hyperbolic statement summarizing the article hypothesizes whether there is even an alternative to going to war with North Korea. CNN (2): Trump's tweets seem to indicate he is ready to live with the fact that North Korea has nuclear weapons and potentially the capacity to fire them at the United States. CNN (3): Ultimately, that may end up being the only option that the US has short of war [37].

The entire publication devoted most attention to projecting negative and escalating scenarios of the situation with patronizing and dominant positioning of the US and their administration. The article is void of any other perspective apart from the paraphrasing of the American president augmented by openly biased stance of the writer who purposefully employs referential strategies aimed at skewing the perspective toward the hegemonic positioning of the US at the same time negatively framing North Korea and its actions. The evaluative attribution strategy adopted in this paper seems to reflect common themes transpiring in the official publications of the American administration as well as other American media, which oftentimes favour othering in their works [38,16]. Given the amount of journalistic commentary,

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the article seems to favour a single strategy of handling the issue of North Korea. There are no alternate solutions provided to the resolution of the conflict with unilateral governmental line of rhetoric that assumes a zero-one strategy. The publication indicates direct threat from the DPRK that is suggested not to lessen even with the assurance (from DPRK) to disarm their arsenal.

CNN (4): Any lessening of tension is positive but an assurance that the threat of war is removed based simply on a relationship between a President who is term-limited and a volatile dictator who leads a criminal regime lacks the certainty and permanence of verifiable disarmament that the administration says is its goal [37].

Another approach was adopted by Al Jazeera journalist, who formulates a strong thesis at the beginning of the article titled: “Kim Jong-un came out victorious from the summit” [39]. The writer openly claims that the summit was decidedly won by the leader of North Korea and that the US only managed to legitimize and strengthen the position of Kim Jong un. What is noticeable is the fact that lexicalization clearly suggests the bias of the writer against the leader of the DPRK with repeated labelling and naming techniques present in the article. Al Jazeera (1): In the end, what this summit achieved was have the US president indirectly legitimize a notorious dictator [39].

The publication focuses on the power struggle between the two nations and the concessions that the US decided to offer, at the same time receiving nothing tangible in return. The winner-loser perspective adopted here is achieved by the predicated portrayal of both the two leaders as well as potential outcomes of their decisions. The journalist employs presupposition throughout the article that polarizes the sides and clearly indicates the negative character (loser) of the event. Al Jazeera (2): Both men were desperate for this meeting, Trump perhaps even more so. The US president wanted to score his first major foreign policy achievement. [39].

Instead of an unbiased reporting the publication is enhanced with critical evaluation of the summit and its results. Especially the final part of the article adopts a clearly polarized stance of the journalist, who, with the use of hyperbole, gives all the credit to the North Korean leader while at the same time bashing the US president for his actions. Even though, it was meant to be a sign of reconciliation and cooperation, the summit is compared to a war between the two nations. The same goes for the two players at the negotiating table with the DPRK regarded as reclusive regime that is steadily gaining political power and recognition freeing itself from the so-called pariah status.

Al Jazeera (3): With Trump constantly heaping praise on the North Korean leader and dangling the prospect of full normalization of bilateral ties, the reclusive regime is gradually and stealthily dispensing with its ‘axis of evil’ pariah status [39].

Overall when we compare the linguistic aspect of the three publications, it turns out that the article by Al Jazeera presents

the most complex and sophisticated language. The structure follows a logical flow and the whole text seems more coherent than the other two. The author paraphrases the events, accentuating particular elements and providing explanations to certain events. The CNN publication in contrast, lacks particular structure because individual paragraphs refer to different themes which makes grasping the main message of the article rather difficult. The same goes for CGTN where the text focuses on direct quotes of the two leaders and short commentaries to what they said. Both CNN and CGTN articles seem less organized this way with a sort of chunks of text combined together to form the publications. The above journalistic style selection indicates varying models of writing adopted by the respective media houses. Conversely, Al Jazeera seems to put stress on the logical aspect of their publications with clear and easy to follow narrative that follows a certain path [33].

## **2.2 Human interest angle and its ideological application in CNN “Kim Jong Nam trial: Judge rules women’s lawyers must mount defense”, CGTN “Women accused of killing DPRK man in Malaysia asked to enter defense” and Al Jazeera “Judge: ‘Well-planned conspiracy’ to kill Kim Jong-nam”**

The events of 16<sup>th</sup> August attracted the attention of media around the world with two women at Kuala Lumpur airport, wiping the face of Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of the North Korean leader Kim Jong un, with highly lethal nerve agent VX. The action, claimed by the women to be a part of a prank show in which they were allegedly participating, led to the man’s death. Particular media houses decided to approach this topic from different angles. Namely, CNN presented the story with the focus on the human-interest side of the scandal by presenting the profiles of the two women responsible and the justification of their act in detail. The station framed the story as a witch hunt against innocent women, who were victims of the North Korean regime plot.

CNN (1): Lawyers for both women maintain they were duped by a group of North Koreans, four of whom have been charged in relation to Kim’s murder but have since left the country [40]. The journalist repeatedly incorporates reasons for the women’s innocence, paraphrasing the events in a way that strongly suggests the actual perpetrators in the form of the North Korean government. At the same time the women are portrayed as common good-natured personas with idyllic family life and work aspirations. CNN (2): Doan, who is from Vietnam, and Aisyah, an Indonesian national, have been described by friends and family as simple, well-meaning women who had expressed interest in acting jobs [40].

The employment of human-interest elements in the story creates an image of the two women as unaware tools in the hands of the regime. The fact that the author combined an additional fact that the Vietnamese and the Indonesian had an interest in acting serves as a justification for the perpetrator’s claims that they were taking part in a prank show which would explain why they sprayed the face of Kim Jong Nam with some liquid. This

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kind of framing is aimed at redirecting the guilt and dispersing responsibility for the act while at the same time it evokes the feeling of pity over the faith of the naïve women. The readers are supposed to see them as actual people with families and career aspirations, unaware of the whole situation, thus unlikely to be guilty, even though solid facts in the form of a video footage suggest that their actions did lead to the death of the man.

The entire article continues as a presentation of the defense and reasons why the women should not be found guilty. There is even a hidden critical analysis of the judge's decision to go to trial with the two women. CNN (3): Defense lawyers had relied heavily on the argument that the women thought they were participating in a prank TV show (...) [40]. CNN (4): But Ariffin rejected that argument in his Thursday decision, which took more than two hours to read – an unusually long amount of time [40]. The man was accused by the journalist of taking too long to explain why the women should stand trial, which suggests, according to the American journalist, difficulty in finding grounds for the case. The evaluative attribution that the women were victims of the North Korean scheme to murder the estranged half-brother of their leader, presents a biased perspective in presenting events at hand which strongly influences the reception of the situation facilitating one-sided interpretations and at the same time blurring actual events.

When contesting the above reporting with that from CGTN regarding the events we can clearly see discrepancies in interpreting the news. It is possible to assume that due to political restraints and ideological influences in the editorial office of CGTN, the events at an airport in Kuala Lumpur were heavily censored and simplified before publication. Namely, the Chinese station decided to present the situation as a story of two women charged with killing a man from the DPRK without revealing the most crucial fact that the man was the half-brother of Kim Jong un. CGTN (1): The two women charged with killing a man from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (...) were asked to enter their defence by a Malaysian court on Thursday (2018).

The slight omission influenced the entire publication as without the most significant piece of news the article lost its momentum and was rather published out of sheer need to report breaking news following other global media, yet it lacks the political motives and consequences of the whole affair. It can be assumed that the name of Kim Jong un's brother was deliberately eliminated in the post editing cycle as it also eliminated the need to delve into the suspected involvement of the North Korean government in the murder of their leader's exiled brother. The publication as such is left with a direct report on the events at hand, namely a presentation of the two women recorded on surveillance camera spraying the unnamed man's face with some liquid. This kind of framing distorts the reality by omitting certain elements in the story. On the one hand the station did report on the events, however, the fact that they decided not to include the name of the main actor suggests political influences in place that were aimed at setting the reality to fit political strategy of China towards North Korea as their friendly neighbor [41,42]. The unavoidable mention of the fact that the half-brother had been exiled from

North Korea by Kim's family and that Kim Jong un's top brass might have been involved in his murder was simply eliminated by not mentioning the victim's name [37]. The omission of facts seems to be a common strategy in CGTN as there is a recurring tendency to simplify articles and only include ongoing events with particular focus on staging the story, that is what people wore, what they said, without particular analyses of the situation or providing any sort of historical background [43,20]. What can be seen from the reporting of the third broadcaster Al Jazeera, is the way it distanced itself from the events by presenting all the relevant information without particular focus or favouritism of any of the sides.

Brother of Kim Jong-un was killed with toxic substance in 2017 but women involved say they were unwitting participants (2018). The reporting from the Arabic station presents the events at the airport along with the developments in the case and potential outcomes. There is some mention of the possibility of the North Korean government being involved in the case but at the same time the article strongly follows fact and developments in the case by direct quotes of the judge and his ruling to prosecute as in his opinion there was enough evidence to charge them with the murder of Kim Jong Nam. The two young Southeast Asian women are the only suspects in custody and face the death penalty if convicted. The four North Korean suspects fled the country the same morning Kim was killed (2018).

The style of the reporting does not contain any open bias towards the individuals or the parties involved as the journalist decided to incorporate both the US and South Korea's accusations of Kim's regime in the plot to murder the man as well as North Koreans response denying the claims. The lack of presupposed blame allows the readers to freely interpret the whole event and the motives behind it without additional implications as who actually ordered the killing of the Kim Jong un's half-brother. Altogether, the same story is depicted as having three different foci and potential outcomes, which suggests varying factors influencing the coverage. Given the limitations of the Chinese station in reporting on politically sensitive news, the omission of crucial elements of the story seems to be the purposeful act of balancing between delivering the news and staying within the limits of (Chinese) political correctness. At the same time the human interest focus of CNN facilitates speculations on the dominant tendencies in American media transpiring in the article.

### **2.3 Conflict and war rhetoric in CNN “North Korea holds military parade without ICBMs”, CGTN “Is the absence of ICBM a sign for DPRK to break ice with US?” and Al Jazeera “North Korea marks 70th anniversary without ballistic missiles”**

The three stations' coverage of the events from 9th September focused on the military parade honouring the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of the DPRK that took place in the capital. The CNN's report presented the celebrations on the main square in Pyongyang on that day, however, instead of focusing on the parade itself the story was rather a background to discuss the weaponry and military capabilities of North Korea. Regardless

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of the fact that the parade was supposed to glorify 70 years of rule by the Kim dynasty, most attention was paid to the issue of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles, which were mentioned in the article a number of times.

CNN (1): The day began with a smaller than expected military parade – which did not include the ballistic missiles believed to be capable of targeting the United States [44]. The authors repeated the cliché statement describing North Korean weapons that had been used by numerous other journalists in publications on that country. This technique automatically set the tone and agenda of the article, placing the DPRK as the potential aggressor with weapon system ready to attack. Even though the topic of the parade had nothing to do with attacking any country, this kind of framing served as a political and ideological tool presenting North Korea as a dangerous military regime.

On top of that, as early as in the first paragraph, a biased ideological hegemony was displayed by the author who compared the celebrations to highly choreographed propaganda spectacle and equated the participants to trained human pixels flipping cards. This way of dehumanizing the participants of the parade and immediately focusing on the weapons and missiles of mass destruction created an impression of the DPRK as not a real country but an automated military machine. The perspective was strengthened with paraphrasing of the events during the parade, which were mixed with short analyses of the international political situation of North Korea.

CNN (2): An estimated 100,000 performers participated in Sunday night's Games, a highly choreographed propaganda spectacle in which participants act as human pixels, flipping colorful cards to reveal socialist messages that glorify North Korea [44].

Unlike previous CNN reports analysed here that can be characterized by overwhelming dominance of the American skew of reporting, the author decided to augment the story with external sources that serve as an equilibrium to the military-centred theme of the publication. Particular experts presented counterbalance to the critical approach of the American journalist by placing emphasis on economic development and limited demonstration of military equipment by the DPRK. On top of that, the article included a comprehensive background of the situation, which enabled to build a picture of the events with relation to its historical origin. Nevertheless, a clearly evident journalistic bias could be observed in the form of immediate contestation of ongoing reconciliation efforts of both sides. The author expressed a direct warning against North Korea which clearly presupposed the country as one not to be trusted with the good signs being a mere decoy.

CNN (5): The United States should not forget about North Korea's arsenal simply because it's kept out of sight (...) Even as talks have ground to a halt, every indication is that research and development of nuclear capable systems is continuing [44].

In the analysis of CGTN report from the same day describing the

parade, there transpired divergent tones that framed the events in a completely different way. Namely, the article by Chinese reporters was constructed in a form of a report based on an interview with one of the professors at the top Chinese university. This technique of presenting events served two purposes, on one hand the responsibility for critical or sensitive ideas presented in the text was diluted by the fact that the article presented the opinions of one person. Hence, the station seemingly attained the impartiality status by merely summarizing the points mentioned by Cheng Xiaohe without taking stance which safeguarded them from censorship criticism. At the same time the mention of Renmin University was aimed at grounding the opinions presented and strengthening the message of the text by use of academic authorities.

When presenting opinions of others, the station was able to abandon, a previously observed here, technique of dry reporting of events at hand and paid more attention to the analysis of the situation and the implications of the parade celebrations. The early paragraphs devoted space to pointing out the three main aims of the parade along with some background explanation of their significance and potential. The events were framed as a presentation of the DPRK's accomplishments with stress on the need to unify and strengthen North Korean's confidence. The second perspective pointed out the need to intimidate potential enemies and finally the third purpose of the parade was presented as an opportunity for Kim Jong-Un to announce new policies and changes.

Significant attention was drawn to the fact that ICBM weapons (Intercontinental ballistic missiles) were not present at the parade. The decision was positively framed as a sign of respect for the participants of the ceremony. Unlike the American report, the DPRK administration's decision not to display them was perceived as a good will gesture, augmented with paraphrasing of the Chinese government stance on the use of such weapons by North Korea.

CGTN (3): China, a close neighbor of the Korean Peninsula, has always stated its opposition to the missile launch by the DPRK and called for more dialogue (2018).

The report concluded with a strong suggestion as to the bettering of the relations between both Koreas and the United states, adding that it would positively influence the resolution of the conflict between the countries. This perspective was aimed at conveying the dominant ideology and international strategy of China as the newly arrived global leader, strongly influencing the politics of its neighbours.

Al Jazeera, the third station analysed here, presented a more distant and descriptive approach in reporting on the celebrations. The focus was on the unfolding of the parade with particular attention paid to the people and visitors present as well as the technical details of the celebrations themselves. The reporting presented South Korean point of view with direct quotations of the managing director of Korea Expose magazine or paraphrasing of the South Korean president claiming that the reason why there

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was a limited number of missiles on display during the parade was a sign of the DPRK's willingness to denuclearize.

Al Jazeera (2): North Korea has said it wants to denuclearize by the end of Trump's first term. So, given all the optimism, given all the clear signs, it was unlikely that North Korea would jeopardize the process with a display of its missiles (2018).

The only analysis adopted by the journalists was a short paragraph finalizing the publication where the Chinese – North Korean relations were presented with a suggestion that after a cooling off period the situation seemed to be improving due to the presence of a high official representing China at the parade.

These three reports are an example of three different stances on the same event that took place in the DPRK. When comparing the framing tendencies in the three stations there emerge significant discrepancies. CNN followed a common American model of framing foreign countries in a negative way with some limited external voices that would counterbalance the message of the publication [45]. The main focus of their publication revolved around conflict frames with strong accentuation on military capabilities and a potential attack on the US soil. At the same time Al Jazeera editors did not find the topic of the parade in the DPRK as a newsworthy event, thus their report is a rather short statement of facts at hand. Among the three, CGTN adopted a technique of presenting an interview with an academic authority to analyze the significance of the parade and the way to read the signs and the message of the events at the celebrations. The Chinese publication, similar to the US edition, followed ideological stance of China with strong stress on the Chinese political aims of economic development of North Korea along with a step-by-step peaceful denuclearization.

### 3. Discussion

The three media exhibited varying semantic and ideological choices, despite reporting on the same events related to the DPRK and its leadership. When comparing the language adopted by the stations it was the American broadcaster that employed most biased and polarizing language aimed at influencing the message of its news stories. The CNN journalists exhibited a tendency to commonly employ clearly derogatory terms aimed at framing the DPRK and leading to its correct (clearly negative) positioning in the minds of audiences. North Korea in the station's output was referred to as belligerent, rogue regime, a big world problem, a propaganda spectacle with human pixel and many others. The leader of the republic, unlike in the case of any other references to the heads of state involved in the conflict in the Peninsula, was most of the time referred to as a volatile dictator, hostile threat, a criminal or a murderer, in milder cases he became downgraded to simply Kim. This kind of lexicalization clearly suggests the uniform inclination to employ the technique of "othering". in their article on "othering" in the US media, analysed the way China has been constructed by American media [38]. They observed similar tendencies transpiring in the reporting. Tracing elements of Orientalism in the representations and language used in US news media and political rhetoric, the above researchers found elements of the

language that clearly polarized China as a potential threat, and a contender to American political and ideological hegemony. In the case of North Korea, the evident national interest reporting openly separates the good (the US) and the bad (the DPRK). By placing stress on conflict and military solution rhetoric, CNN clearly polarizes the situation to a battlefield forcing the audiences to immediately take sides. Pessimistic and openly negative reporting augmented with common use of hyperboles and presuppositions creates an unfavourable impression of the republic, which only strengthens the hegemonic power display favouring America as the only rightful nation to set the global political stage.

The reporting was notorious for following American patriotic reporting style with repeated lack of reports which would be critical towards American administration [46].

The findings on CNN as a representative of the American media support previous conclusions and allow building a more comprehensive picture of the biases visible in the reporting. Most of the elements of American nationalism and power struggle polarization in reporting about other countries raised by can be confirmed and even extended to an accusation of justification and a sort of enabling of media to resort to military solutions, clearly favoured by the US administration [46,47,38]. Unlike other stations studied here, CNN glorifies the military solution to the conflict with the DPRK, repeatedly referring to clichés like North Korean missiles able to hit the US, or constant threat of nuclear weapons aimed at the American soil. There are even voices presenting imminent war perspective and the possibility of pre-emptive strikes, that are all aimed at justifying the possibility of taking a military action by the US.

When contrasting the above findings with the Chinese station's content, there is a complete dissonance in terms of the language used as well as the positioning of the DPRK in the reporting. The discourse employed by CGTN is void of diminutive lexicalization of the other two stations that would frame the country as a dystopic hermit kingdom or present the leader of North Korea as a tyrant or a murderer, however, it needs to be stated that it is also less complex and lacking in particular style. News reports provided by the station are twice as short as their American counterpart with evident lacks, omissions or cut outs at the editorial stage. Thus, the texts seem less coherent and rather reporting events step by step than reporting on events. The way the DPRK is constructed in the articles builds an image of a peaceful, neighbouring country with a young and energetic leader that is able to alleviate all the problems and lead the country to social and economic wellbeing. China accentuates cooperation and development tones in most of its reports on that country, to the point that certain facts and events become strongly skewed to present the expected view. The approach is closely linked to the soft power that China employs (Si, 2014) by presenting itself as a peaceful and cooperation seeking nation without volatile hegemonic inclinations of its American counterpart. Unlike CNN, for whom Kim Jong-un is a clearly negative character, CGTN glorifies the leader of NK, presenting him in positive light only or going as far as to stretch facts and

use simplifications to boost his importance, e.g. “two long-time rivals” – when referring to Kim Jong-Un and Donald Trump [36]. Overall the results of the analyses confirmed general tendencies of other researchers who claimed that Chinese media undergo heavy censorship and are an exact extension of the Party ideology [3,20,43]. The reporting is clearly void of any critical assumptions against strategic partners of China simply repeating official Party line, which distorts the reality and builds a one-sided picture that is far from reality.

Al Jazeera’s reporting projects as the most detached and fact-oriented stance, which is aimed at presenting a comprehensive report on the events concerning, in this case, the situation and the image of the DPRK and its leadership. What characterizes its discourse is a more complex and sophisticated language employed when compared with the other two stations. The articles seem to follow a logical flow with clear narrative, extensive paraphrasing and analyses provided in almost every story. The conflict accentuation goes beyond a feud between two leaders but it is put in context allowing for a more general assumptions and understanding of the issues. To some extent, the Middle Eastern station does fall in the trap of following Western style of reporting and Western prism of portraying other countries, sometimes employing the so called “proximity hype” or in other words, exaggerated, sensationalized danger, commonly favoured by American culture and media [16]. Yet the results of the discourse analysis prove that their articles contained fewer obviously biased lexical techniques of framing the reality with lack of particular favouring of one of the sides. The reason behind this fact might be the geographical distance as well as a lack of particular involvement of the Middle Eastern countries in the politics on the Peninsula. CNN and CGTN are indirectly both heavily engaged in the power struggle between the DPRK and the US by having easier access and a more natural inclination to represent and follow their respective countries of origin.

When comparing the underlying motives for the varying results of reporting on the same issues, one must not forget about the cultural divergences that might have prompted certain aspects to lead in the reporting of particular stations. The above findings on CNN as a representative of the US media can be associated with the general assumptions of American culture that cherishes guns and is known for their attachment to the image of the American nation as strong and militarily capable. Thus, this sort of cultural resemblance is visible in the type of reporting that dominates their discourse. On the other hand, CCTV reporting clearly accentuates the rhetoric of the Chinese government aimed at building the positive image of China as a major economic and political actor [48]. Therefore, the peaceful resolution of the conflict advocated by CCTV is also related to the strategy of China aiming to strengthen their soft power and dictate the terms of resolving the conflict in the Peninsula.

#### 4. Conclusion

Overall this study confirms that the framing of foreign countries by media is a highly debatable matter, oftentimes subject to political, ideological editorial and also cultural influences. There

is no single definition of particular framing trends on the DPRK in global media but they are a result of a combination of different factors that all influence the final outcomes in the form of media reports that distort the reality in certain ways. The three stations depicted in this research all work towards providing audiences with comprehensive reports on global events. By employment of different stylistic and lexical devices they yearn to present their vision and projection of the world to greater audiences at the same time skewing and sometimes moulding the reality to fit their aims and agendas.

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