Discursive Diversion: Manipulation of Nuclear Threats by the Conservative Leaders in Japan and Israel

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We study how leaders of parliamentary democracies attempt to trigger the "rally-around-the-flag" effect through the mass media. We have collected news articles on North Korean and Iran published by liberal and conservative newspapers in Japan and Israel from 2009 to 2018 and analysed them in terms of their emphasis on threats, employing semi-supervised quantitative text analysis techniques. We find that both Japanese and Israeli conservative newspapers overemphasized nuclear threats before important political events (enactment of Japan's the National Security Laws and the Israel's 2014 General Election). We argue that leaders of countries that lack opportunities or capabilities often attempt to manipulate perceived threats through the mass media, calling such actions *discursive diversion*. We explain the similarity between the Japanese and Israeli cases by the following factors. Firstly, the diminishing political gains from the successful economic reforms in the earlier years; Secondly, the increasing opposition in the legislature or competition in the elections; Thirdly, the lack of the countries' ability to solve the security issues unilaterally; Finally, the (4) diplomatic and military relationship with the United States.

Introduction

Governments shape their security policies to protect their countries from foreign threats. One of the most important security issues is the nuclear capability of hostile countries that threaten the very existence of the country, but people's understanding of nuclear threats is usually limited as it relies on information from the government through the mass media (Farnsworth et al., 2010; Lytle & Karl, 2020). Such an information advantage of governments on security issues allows them to manipulate people's perception of threats for their own political interests (Downs & Rocke, 1994). An example of such manipulation could be found before the United Kingdom's invasion in Iraq 2002. In order to gain public support for their foreign policy, Tony Blair's government published dossiers, claiming that weapons of mass destruction could be used within 45 minutes of the order by Saddam Hussein, and deployed the military to Heathrow Airport to prevent alleged terrorist attacks (Hayes, 2016; Tumber & Palmer, 2004), but the subsequent Hutton Inquiry concluded that Blair's government mishandled the intelligence.

International relations scholars have long believed that political or economic turmoil motivates leaders to initiate wars to trigger the "rally around the flag" effect (DeRouen, 2000; Enterline & Gleditsch, 2000; Levy, 1989; Parker, 1995; Tir & Jasinski, 2008), but empirical studies have only produced inconclusive results: American and British leaders are more likely to use force when domestic discount is high, but such patterns are rarely found in other democratic countries (Gent, 2009; Leeds & Davis, 1997; Miller, 1995; Mitchell & Prins, 2004; Russett, 1990). The mixed results can be explained by the lack opportunities for leaders to use diversionary force; most countries have capabilities to engage only with immediate neighbours as the military lose strength away from home (Enterline & Gleditsch, 2000; Tir & Jasinski, 2008). Therefore, leaders would

attempt to trigger the rally effect by manipulating people's perceptions of its security environment (Alrababa'h & Blaydes, 2020).

Governments can control the media coverage of security issues by selectively offering stories to news organizations (Farnsworth et al., 2010; Herman & Chomsky, 1988/1995). Exploiting news organizations' dependency on official sources, governments create certain media frames of foreign countries that emphasize threats to increase the sense of fear among the public (Entman, 2004). The limited amount of resources available to news organizations for independently gathering information often means that governments can easily set the national media agenda (Schudson, 2011). Thus, the mass media influences public agendas in security policy as people lack direct experience or expert knowledge (known also as "unobtrusive issues") (Cohen, 1963; Iyengar & Kinder, 2010). In fact, earlier studies revealed that news coverage affects the public's perception of foreign countries (Besova & Cooley, 2009; Kiousis & Wu, 2008; Segev & Hills, 2014; Zhang & William Meadows III, 2012). Further, a recent study has shown that greater media exposure makes people experience stronger nuclear anxiety, prepare for nuclear attacks and discuss the risk with others (Lytle & Karl, 2020).

The tendency of mass media to reflect opinions of policymakers is also known as the "indexing function" (Bennett, 1990). It is particularly important for security issues, where journalists rely on politicians and bureaucrats. In fact, a cross-national study showed that the newspapers in multi-party democracies represented more diverse views on the government's policy on Iraq (Baum, 2013). Critical newspaper coverage on government's security policy is even less common in democracies such as India and Pakistan which face geo-political instability (Rasul et al., 2016). In autocracies such as Russia and Syria, newspapers are often employed to blame domestic social and economic problems on western countries (Alrababa'h & Blaydes, 2020;

Rozenas & Stukal, 2019). It is also known that the mass media promotes the opinions of certain political parties and readers in democracies ("political parallelism") based on their organizational affiliation and commercial consideration (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, 2011).

Jack Lavy's classic work (1989, p. 271) suggested that diversionary actions can "fall short of actual war", but the possibility was not considered seriously in empirical studies. Scholars sought stronger evidence of diversionary actions by including extra variables along with domestic political and economic conditions in their models, but dependent variables were almost always overt military actions (e.g. militarized interstate disputes). This is problematic not only because overt actions are usually limited to the major power countries with a high power projection capability (Leeds & Davis, 1997), but also because it ignores *discursive diversion*, which is based on manipulation of the media coverage of security issues by the government.[1] While event counts have been the only available data for earlier empirical studies, recent methodological developments have made it possible to measure the intensity of threat in media content (Trubowitz & Watanabe, Forthcoming).

Aiming to bridge the literature on diversionary wars and press-state relationship, we study how leaders of parliamentary democracies use the mass media instead of more direct means (i.e. military actions) to manipulate people's perception of foreign threats. We choose Japan and Israel as cases, because both countries have regional adversaries with nuclear ambitions: North Korea and Iran, respectively. However, their leaders have very distinctive military options: the Israeli Prime Minister can deploy the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) to attack other countries without the

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[1] *Discursive diversion* is different from "securitization" because securitization concerns mainly social, economic or cultural threats (Huysmans & Buonfino, 2008). A more related term is "security climax", which refers to politicians putting excessive emphasis on traditional or non-traditional security threats (Lupovici, 2016), but security politics encompasses broader connection between foreign policy and domestic politics.

approval by legislators, while the Japanese Prime Minister can mobilize the Japan Self-Defence Force (JSDF) only to defend the country from invaders due to the pacifist constitution.[2] The difference between the two would offer stronger evidence for leaders' tendency to employ *discursive diversion*.

We focus on the period from 2009 to 2018, during which North Korea and Iran attracted international attention to their nuclear programs and both Japan and Israel had conservative prime ministers (Shinzo Abe and Benjamin Netanyahu). We have collected and analysed Japanese and Hebrew newspaper articles from the period in terms of emphasis on threats of North Korea or Iran's nuclear programs using quantitative text analysis techniques. We argue that the newspapers' greater emphasis on threats reflect the governments' emphasis in speeches and press conferences, that are aimed at triggering the rally effect; these leaders choose to use rhetoric instead of force because of the countries' institutional or diplomatic constraints, namely Japan's pacifist constitution and the US opposition to Israel's use of force.

Hypotheses

We assume signs of *discursive diversion* to appear in how newspapers with different political orientation cover North Korea or Iran, because the literature on press-state relationship suggests the mass media with closer affiliation with the government follows official positions on security issues more closely. Specifically, we expect that conservative (center-right) newspapers emphasize security threats more than liberal (center-left) newspapers. Both Japan and Israel have

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[2] An earlier study showed that IDF's deployment between 1950 and 1988 was related to proximity to elections (Russett & Barzilai, 1992), but JSDF have never been mobilize against foreign countries since its creation in 1954, because Japan's constitution disallows the country to possess a military or use force against others. See the Appendix 1 about the historical background of Japan and Israel's security policy.

the conservative governments in the study period and those conservative governments made a series of claims to emphasize the security threats to the country.

H1: Conservative newspapers emphasize security threats more than liberal newspapers.

We also expect that conservative newspapers emphasize security threats before important electoral or legislative events, because the alignment between the conservative political parties and newspapers would become even tighter when the conservative political parties need the mass media to gain popular support:

H2: Conservative newspapers emphasize security threats more than liberal newspapers before important electoral or legislative events.

Nonetheless, we expect that occurrences of diplomatic or military events related to North Korea or Iran most strongly affect the coverage of security issues by both liberal and conservative newspapers, because the governments cannot fully manipulate the commercial news outlets:

H3: Both liberal and conservative newspapers emphasize security threats more after military events but less after diplomatic events.

Methodology

We measure the emphasis of threats by liberal and conservative newspapers in each country using quantitative text analysis techniques and correlate the threat scores with event variables by multiple regression analysis to detect overemphasis of threats by conservative newspapers.

Key Events

We have identified important national and international political events related to Japan and Israel that occurred during the study period and classified them into four categories: military ('M'), diplomacy ('D'), election ('E'), and legislation ('L') (Table 1-1 and 1-2).[3]

Events for Japan.

North Korea launched rockets (M1, 5, 6) and tested atomic bombs (M2, 7, 8, 9, 11) between 2008 and 2016. The successful launching of satellite (M1) by an Unha rocket that shares its delivery system with Taepodong-2 and detonation of nuclear bombs implied that North Korea is acquiring a ballistic nuclear missile capability (M10). North Korea also showed its aggression by sinking a South Korean naval ship (M3) and shelling Yeonpyeong Island (M4).

North Korea's repeated hostile actions led to the closure of Kaesong Industrial Region, where South Korean companies employ North Korean workers (D2). Abe attempted to solve the abduction issue diplomatically and relieved sanctions on North Korea (D3), but its hostility invited sanctions by the United Nations members, including Japan (D4). [4] During the study period, the leadership of the country was inherited from Kim Jong-il to Jong-nam (D1) to Jong-un (D5), who met with Moon Jae-in (D6), and Donald Trump (D7) after their elections.

Abe's coalition government (LDP plus Komei) ruled Japan through the period by winning four Lower House elections (E1, 3, 5, 7) and Upper House elections (E4, 6). He also approved the JSDF of collective self-defence (L2) and enacted three sets of security-related bills: The State Secrets Law (L1), National Security Law (L3), and Anti-terror Conspiracy Law (L4). The State Secrecy Law, which restricts access to classified information, raised concerns about government

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[3] We consulted the websites of Nuclear Threat Initiative (https://www.nti.org) and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (https://missilethreat.csis.org) to identify military events.
[4] Japanese government has been demanding North Korea to return Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s.

transparency and accountability; the National Security Laws, which permit mobilization of JSDF to protect Japan's allied forces overseas, was criticized as unconstitutional; the Anti-terror Conspiracy Law, which criminalizes formation of groups for illegal activities, was considered to undermine civil liberty.

Table 1-1: Key evens for Japan. Events are classified into four categories and given serial numbers.

date	Event	Military	Diplomacy	Election	Legislation
2009-04-05	Satellite launch	M1			
2009-05-25	2nd nuclear test	M2			
2009-08-30	2009 Lower House election			E1	
2010-03-26	Cheonan torpedoed	M3			
2010-07-11	Upper House election 10			E2	
2010-11-23	Bombardment of Yeonpyeong	M4			
2011-12-17	Kim Jong-il deth		D1		
2012-04-12	1st Unha rocket launch	M5			
2012-12-12	2nd Unha rocket launch	M6			
2012-12-16	2012 Lower House election			E3	
2013-02-12	3rd nuclear test	M7			
2013-04-06	Kaesong Industrial Region closed		D2		
2013-07-21	Upper House election 13			E4	
2013-12-06	State Secrets Law				L1
2014-07-02	Collective self-defense approval				L2
2014-07-03	Japanese sanction relief		D3		
2014-12-14	2014 Lower House election			E5	
2015-09-19	National Security Laws				L3
2016-01-06	4th nuclear test	M8			
2016-03-02	UN sanction		D4		
2016-07-10	2016 Upper House election			E6	
2016-09-09	5th nuclear test	M9			
2017-02-13	Kim Jong-nam death		D5		
2017-06-15	Anti-terror Conspiracy Law				L4
2017-07-03	Hwasong-14 missile test	M10			
2017-09-03	6th nuclear test	M11			
2017-10-22	2017 Lower House election			E7	
2018-04-27	South-North Korea summit		D6		
2018-06-12	US-North Korea summit		D7		

Events for Israel.

From the beginning of the study period, Iran started enriching Uranium (M1, 2) to acquire nuclear capability and developing cruise and ballistic missiles that can reach Israel (M3, 4) based

on the technology imported from North Korea. The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany (P5+1) attempted to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons through a series of meetings (D1, 3, 8) and sanctions (D2, 6, 8). As a result of the diplomatic effort, the multilateral deal on Iran's nuclear programs, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed (D9) despite Netanyahu's strong opposition. However, the United States under the Trump administration withdrew from the deal (D10).

Netanyahu as the leader of the Likud party formed a coalition government with the nationalist party (E1), but the required number of coalition partners increased to four as he lost his popularity (E2). He announced his opposition to the two-state solution and circulated anti-Arab videos in his election campaign, but the number of nationalist coalition partners increased further to five (E3). He presented controversial bills to the Israeli parliament: the Loyalty Law, which requires a loyalty oath to those who seek Israeli citizenship (L1); the Nakba Law, which defunds Palestinian institutions that commemorate the establishment of Israel a tragedy (L2); the Anti-Boycott Law; which prohibits boycotts against West Bank settlers by Israeli citizens and organizations (L3); the NGO Funding Law, which demands NGOs to reveal their sources of funding (L5); the Regulation Law, which retroactively legalizes settlements in the West Bank (L6); the Nationality Law, which makes Hebrew the sole national language, grants autonomy only to Jews, and encourages expansion of Jewish settlement (L7). However, the Loyalty Law was rejected by MPs and disputes over the Nationality Law led to the collapse of the coalition government (L4).

Table 1-2: Key events for Israel. Events are classified into four categories and given serial numbers.

Date	Event	Military	Diplomacy	Election	Legislation
2009-02-10	2009 general election			E1	
2009-10-01	P5+1 Geneva		D1		

2010-02-07	Uranium enrichment start	M1			
2010-05-17	Iran-Turkey uranium swap agreed	M2			
2010-06-09	UN sanction expanded		D2		
2010-12-06	P5+1 Geneva		D3		
2010-12-06	Loyalty Law				L1
2011-03-23	Nakba Law				L2
2011-07-12	Anti-Boycott Law				L3
2011-11-08	IAEA report published		D4		
2012-03-06	IAEA Parchin inspection agreed		D5		
2012-08-10	US expand sanction		D6		
2013-01-22	2013 general election			E2	
2013-06-03	US expand sanction		D7		
2013-10-16	P5+1 Geneva		D8		
2014-12-02	Coalition government collapse				L4
2015-03-08	Soumar missile revealed	M3			
2015-03-17	2015 general election			E3	
2015-07-14	JCPOA signed		D9		
2016-07-11	NGO Funding Law				L5
2017-01-29	Khorramshahr missile test	M4			
2017-02-06	Regulation Law				L6
2018-05-08	US withdrew JCPOA		D10		
2018-07-19	Nationality Law				L7

Sources

We selected leading liberal (centre-left) and conservative (center-right) daily newspapers with the largest circulation in Japan and Israel. The Asahi Shimbun and the Yomiuri Shimbun are liberal and conservative national broadsheets in Japan. Yomiuri has been more supportive of the LDP than Asahi historically, but this became even more so during Abe's second term: Yomiuri supported Abe's security policy reforms and promoted Abe's nationalist agendas (Nakano, 2016).

Yedioth Aharonoth and Haaretz are Israel's major daily newspapers. Yedioth has been the largest newspaper in Israel and is considered a mainstream-center newspaper. Haaretz is the longest running print newspaper in Israel and has a liberal-left political inclination. Allegedly, in 2017 there was an intention to set up a deal between Netanyahu and the owner of Yedioth to give him more favourably coverage in exchange for limiting media competition. As a result both parties are currently under corruption investigations (Freedman, 2019a).

Data Collection

We collected news articles by searching newspaper publishers' databases for "North Korea OR Iran" ("北朝鮮 OR 朝鮮民主主義人民共和国 OR イラン" for Japanese, "צפון קוריאה OR איראן OR אירן" for Hebrew). We included news articles about both North Korea and Iran in the two languages to statistically identify word semantics as closely as possible, but news articles not mainly about North Korea or Iran are excluded from the Japanese and Hebrew corpora respectively, by a geographical classifier, which is explained below. The number of articles we collected are as follows: 34,219 from Asahi; 26,360 from Yomiuri; 17,899 from Haaretz; 9,787 from Yedioth. After removing duplicated or very short articles (comprising only of one sentence) and those containing many symbols, marks and digits (more than 20% of tokens), the number of articles in our corpus became 22,686 for Asahi, 18,727 for Yomiuri, 11,390 for Haaretz, and 6,292 for Yedioth.

Text Pre-processing

We pre-processed the collected news articles following the standard procedure in quantitative text analysis. We employed the Quanteda package (Benoit et al., 2018) for its ability to handle Asian languages and tokenize Japanese texts into individual words without the whitespace between them. We further improved the tokenization of both languages by identifying strongly associated words with collocation analysis and compounding them to form selective n-grams. We employed the Marimo stop-words list that extends the Snowball stop-words list and covers many Asia languages, including Hebrew and Japanese languages.[5] Throughout the pre-

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[5] Marimo stop-words are available at https://github.com/koheiw/marimo. They are also distributed as part of the stop-word package on CRAN.

processing, we made handling of the two different languages as similar as possible to obtain directly comparable results.

Security Threat Scaling

We employed Latent Semantic Scaling (LSS) to score news articles in terms of how much they emphasize security threats. LSS allows us to measure the specific quantity in the text without a large lexicon, because the algorithm automatically identifies synonyms of keywords ('seed words') (Watanabe, 2020). Since there was no earlier study that analysed security threats using LSS in Japanese and Hebrew, we selected our seed words based on our knowledge of the political discourse (Table 2). In selecting seed words, we first created candidate words in English and selected equivalent words in the native language of the authors. We selected seed words that were both general and unambiguous from the candidate words, but the final list of seed words was created after testing candidate words against the manually coded documents as explained below.

Table 2: Security threat seed words

Category	English (translation)	Japanese	Hebrew
Threat	dangerous	危険	סכנה מסוכן
	hostility	敵意	תוקפנות
	complete destruction	壊滅	הרס
	harm/harmful	危害	פגע פוגע
	crash/collide	衝突	תאונה התנגשות פגיעה
	attack	攻撃	התקפה
Secure	talk/dialog	対話	שיחות
	support/assist	支持	עזרה
	opportunity	機会	הזדמנות
	negotiation	交渉	משא ומתן
	success	成功	הצלחה
	trade	貿易	מסחר

First, we computed polarity scores of words that were related to nuclear programs based on their proximity with the seed words in the latent semantic space.[6] Many of the most polarized words (on the left and right edges of the plot) are seed words but there are other words too (Figure 1-1). Japanese words with positive polarity (i.e. high threats) scores are related to immediate military actions: "先制" (preemptive) , "敵国" (enemy country), "テロリスト" (terrorists), "武力行使" (use of force), "砲撃" (shelling), "使用" (use); words with negative polarity scores (i.e. low threats) are related to negotiations on or development of North Korea's programs: "問題解決" (solve problems), "発射実験" (launch test), "弾道ミサイル" (ballistic missiles), "弾頭" (warhead), "人工衛星" (satellites), "追加制裁" (additional sanctions), "多国" (multilateral). Words related to nuclear weapons usually indicate serious threats, but they do not occur in our corpus because the articles are directly related to them. In other words, in this particular context, nuclear weapons do not pose threats to Japan unless they are used against the country.

Similarity, Hebrew words with positive polarity scores (i.e. high threats) are related to immediate military actions and possible damages (Figure 1-2): "הפצצה" (bombing) , "ירי" (fire), "מסוגל" (capable) , "השמדה" (destruction), "תגובה" (reaction), "אימה" (terror), "קיומית" (existential). Words with negative polarity scores (i.e. low threats) are related to negotiation, cooperation or the development of Iran's programs: "יחסים" (relationships), "קשרים" (ties), "לחדול" (stop), "העשרה" (enrichment), "בינלאומית" (international), "קונגרס" (congress).

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[6] Words related to nuclear programs are selected based on how often words occur in the segment of text in which target words ("nuclear" and "atomic") occur. We compared the frequency of words inside and outside of the 10-word window and selected those statistically significantly frequent inside the window as context words. Statistical significance is tested by the Chi-square test with the threshold $p < 0.001$. The target words are "核*" and "原子*" in Japanese and "גרעין*", "גרעינ*", "גרעינא* ", "אטומ*", "אטומ*" in Hebrew.

Figure 1-1: Polarity scores of words in the fitted LSS models in Japanese.

Figure 1-2: Polarity scores of words in the fitted LSS models Hebrew.

Second, we computed polarity of news articles with the fitted LSS models by weighting the polarity scores of frequent words in the documents. The polarity scores are centred around zero and normalized by the standard deviation to make interpretation easy. Although the absolute zero

does not have substantive meaning, the changes in polarity scores indicate changes in emphasis on threats by the newspapers.

We also manually coded samples of 500 articles employing three native Japanese and Hebrew speakers to assess the accuracy of the polarity scores. They were asked to read at natural speed and classify articles into one of three categories ("threat", "neutral", or "safe") depending on how events and figures mentioned pose threats to the normal lives of Japanese or Israeli people. Unlike traditional content analysis, we did not provide detailed instruction on how to classify news articles to allow the coders to respond in a similar way to the general audience of the newspapers. Such natural reading of news articles is important because we will incorporate the result of content analysis from this study with survey experiments in other studies as part of our larger research project.

The result of manual classification was turned into discrete scores ranging from -2 to $+2$ based on the agreement between the coders ($\alpha = 0.43$ in Japanese and $\alpha = 0.29$ in Hebrew), following the work by Young and Soroka (2012). The individual predicted polarity scores only weakly correlate with the manually scores ($r = 0.37$ in Japanese and $r = 0.26$ in Hebrew; $p < 0.001$), but their means within each level strongly correlate with the manual scores ($r = 0.99$ and $r = 0.97$ respectively; $p < 0.001$) (Figure 2). We can perform analysis of news coverage as far as groups means are accurate because regression models eliminate random measurement errors.

Figure 2: Correlation in mean polarity scores between machine and human.

Hebrew | Japanese charts
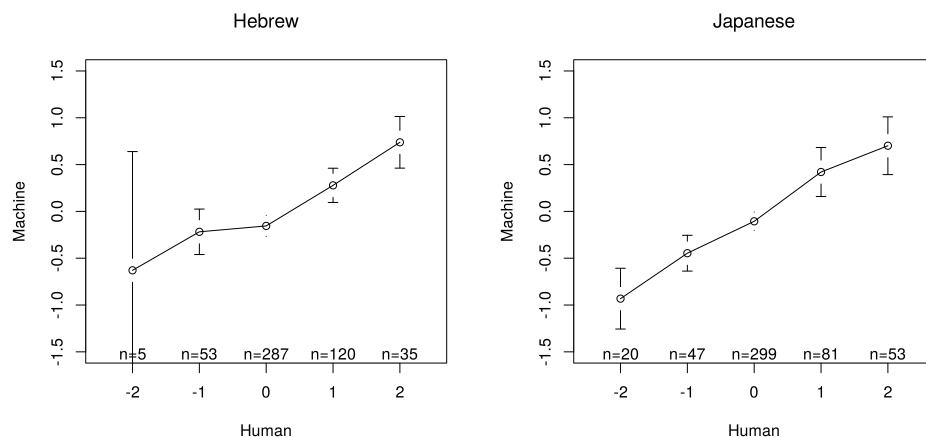
Geographical Classification

Not all news articles mentioning Iran or North Korea focus on these countries. Therefore, we applied Newsmap, which can accurately identify the main geographical focus of the news articles. In this technique, we first train the Bayesian classifier on the news articles labelled by a geographical dictionary to collate words related to countries (e.g. names of places, people, organizations etc.), and then predict the country that is most strongly associated with the news articles (Watanabe, 2018). We included news articles only mainly about North Korea or Japan in analysis of Japanese newspapers, and Iran or Israel in Israeli newspapers; Gaza and West Bank are treated as separate territories from Israel and excluded from the analysis. After the selection, the total number of news articles included in our analysis are 26,835 in Japanese and 9,597 in Hebrew.[7]

Analysis

First, we analyse the volume of articles published by newspapers and their emphasis on threats to gain an overall picture of the data. Second, we apply OLS regression analysis with the LSS scores as the dependent variable and event dummies as independent variables to gauge the

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[7] We manually checked the location of a sample of 300 news articles and found 87% of articles in Japanese and 95 % in Hebrew are correctly classified.

changes in intensity of threats over time. Third, we apply logistic regression analysis with a binary indicator for lone coverage of North Korea or Iran as dependent variables to understand their international isolation in the news. Finally, we present the result of our hyperparameter optimization and robustness check.

Volume of News

Figures show that the volume of articles published by the newspapers corresponds to the occurrences of the military and diplomatic events from 2009 through 2018. The number of articles concerning North Korea published by the Japanese newspapers are nearly identical until late 2017 (Figure 3-1). Across the same period, Haaretz published more news articles about Iran than Yedioth did, but both newspapers covered the military and diplomatic events extensively (Figure 3-2). The correlation of the volume of articles are r = 0.86 in Japan and r = 0.45 in Israel.

Figure 3-1: Volume of articles published by Japanese newspapers about North Korea. Vertical lines indicate occurrences of the military and diplomatic events in Table 1-1.
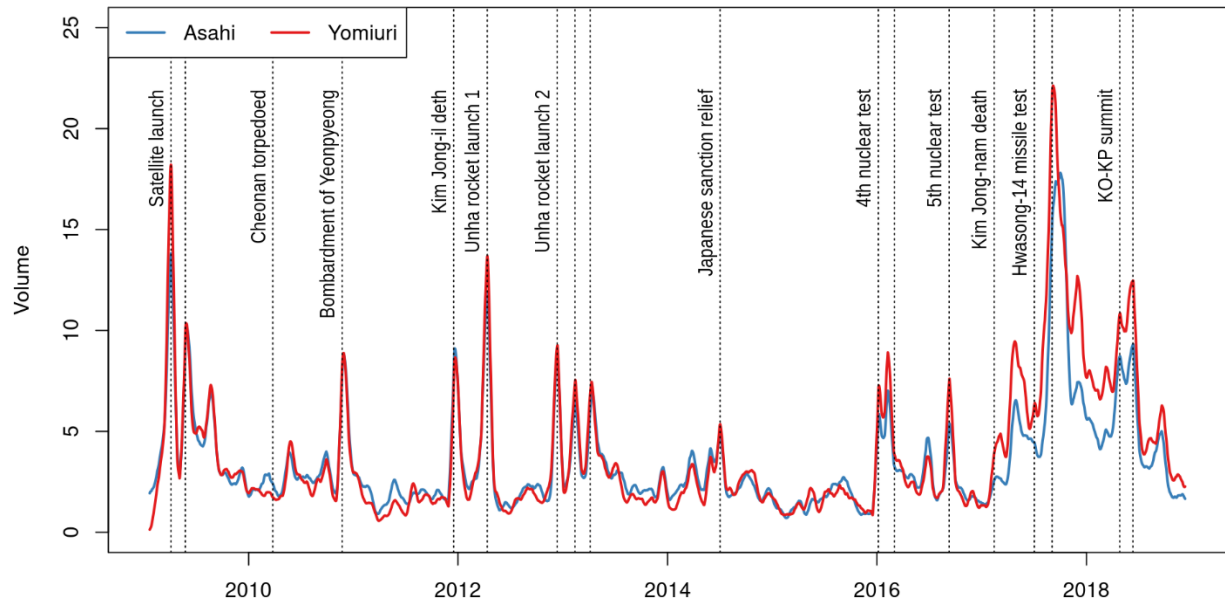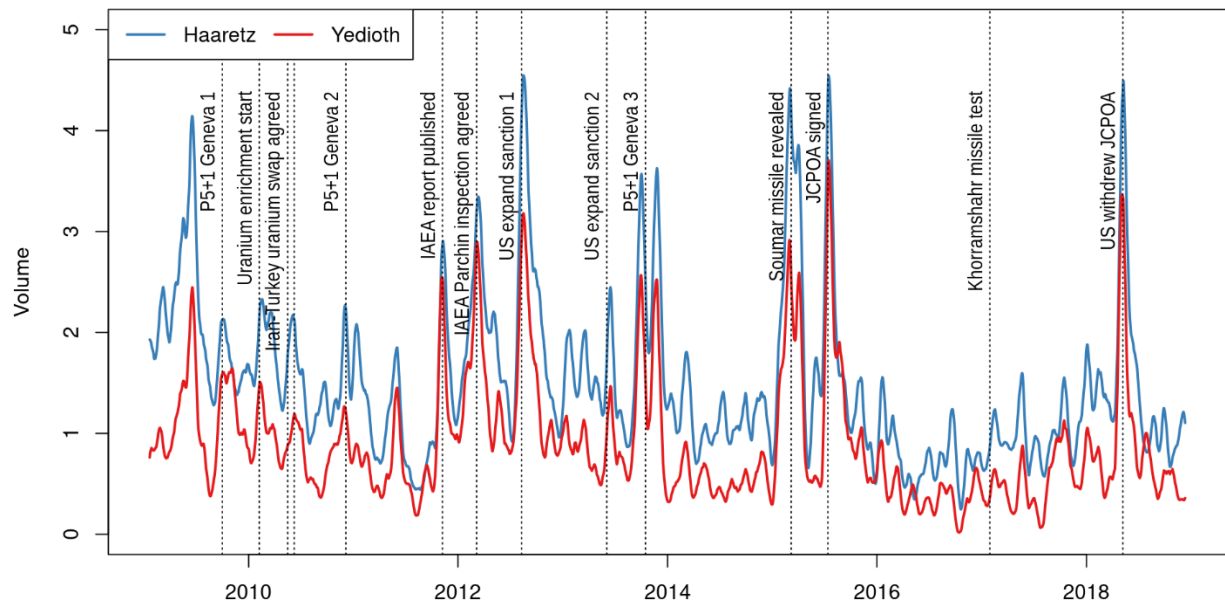

Figure 3-2: Volume of articles published by Israeli newspapers about Iran. Vertical lines indicate occurrences of the military and diplomatic events in Table 1-2.

Emphasis on Threats

Japanese newspapers emphasized threats only after occurrences of the key events until 2012, but the high threats persisted from 2014 to 2017 (Figure 4-1). Asahi and Yomiuri correlate but there are noticeable differences during this period: Asahi emphasized threats more than Yomiuri in 2011, 2014, and 2016. In Israeli newspapers, threats were high at the end of 2011, but decreased rapidly afterwards, although they increased gradually towards 2018 (Figure 4-2). Haaretz and Yedioth correlate only until 2013, and they differ greatly between 2014 and 2017.

Figure 4-1: Threat emphasis in Japanese newspaper articles. Moving average (dark) and 95% confidence band (light) of LSS scores are computed by the local regression (LOESS).
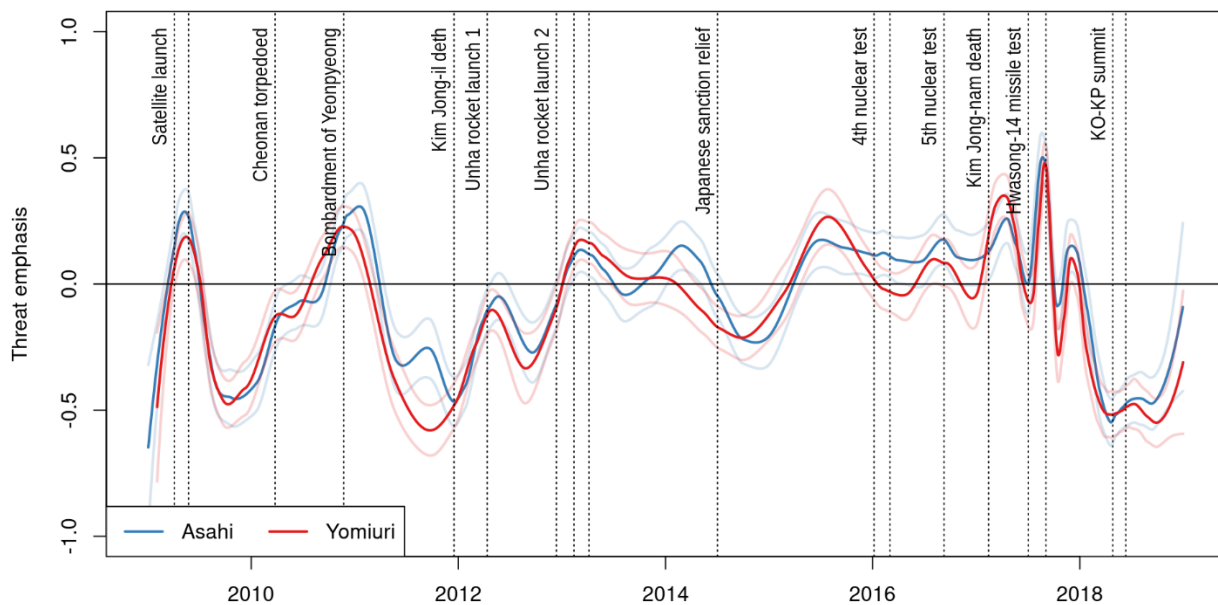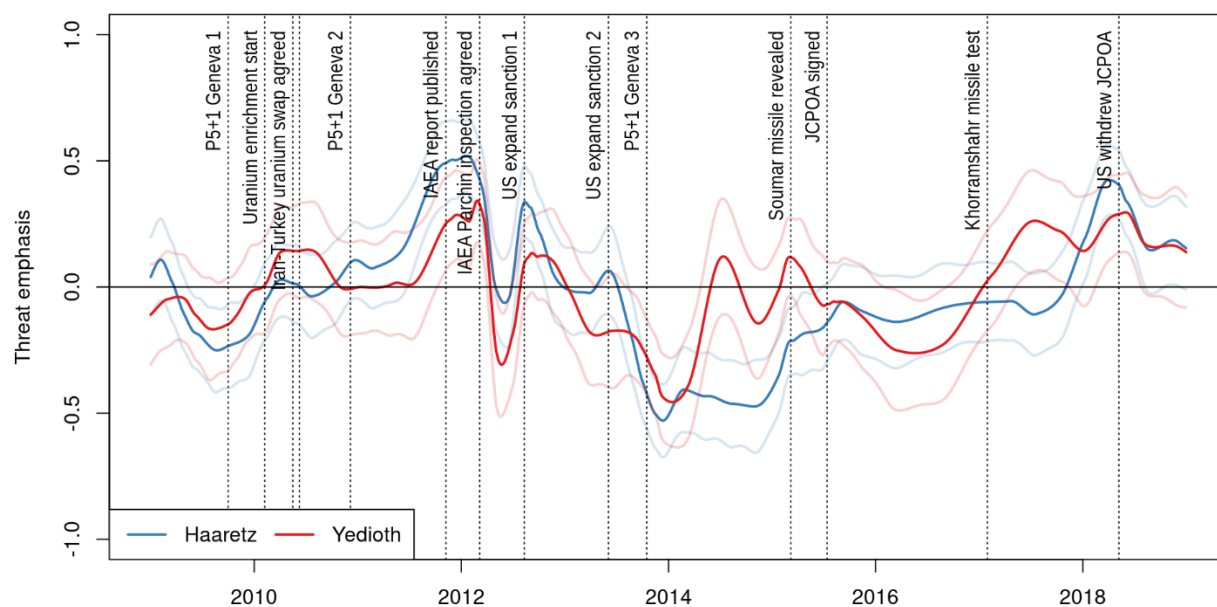
Figure 4-2: Threat emphasis in Israeli newspaper articles. Moving average (dark) and 95% confidence band (light) of LSS scores are computed by the local regression (LOESS).

We tested the statistical significance of the changes and the differences between the newspapers by OLS regression analysis with multiple dummy variables. In the models for Japanese newspapers (Table 3-1), the variable 'government' refers to mentions of cabinet members, including the Prime Minister ("*首相") or other ministers ("*大臣" and "*長官"); 'yomirui' is the newspaper indicator; 'nkorea' is focus on North Korea; 'alone' is focus on a single country; 'military' and 'diplomacy' are aggregated time indicators within 60 days *after* the military and diplomatic events; 'election' and 'legislation' are within 60 days *before* the electoral and legislative events.[8] The basic model (Model 0) shows that threats are weaker in articles that mention the cabinet members or focus on North Korea than others (p < 0.001), but there is no difference between Asahi and Yomiuri. When the interactions between 'youmiuri' and 'goverment'

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[8] We chose the size of the time window that maximizes the R^2 from 30, 60, 90 or 120 days. See Appendix 2 for robustness checks.

and 'youmiuri' and 'nkorea' are added (Model 1), Yomiuri appears different from Asahi: Yomiuri emphasized threats less in articles that mention the cabinet members (p < 0.001) and more in articles about North Korea (p < 0.05) than Asahi. The consistently weaker emphasis on threats (p < 0.001) in news articles about North Korea ('nkorea' in Model 0-5) is puzzling, but the interaction term between 'nkorea' and 'alone' in Model 2 indicates that threats are strongest in articles that mention only North Korea ('nkorea x alone', β = 0.88, p < 0.001). The dummy variables in Model 3 show that the newspapers emphasized threats more after the military events ('military', β = 0.30, p < 0.001) but less after the diplomatic events ('diplomacy', β = −0.07, p < 0.001). However, the effect of the diplomatic events no longer appears to be significant when the legislative events are added ('legislation' in Model 4). Model 5 includes interaction terms between 'yomiuri' and the dummy variables for electoral and legislative events, although they do not appear to be significant.

Table 3-1: Japanese newspapers' emphasis on threats with aggregated event indicators.

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	0.258***	0.266***	0.272***	0.202***	0.135***	0.142***
	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.029)
yomiuri	−0.014	−0.065	−0.084	−0.076	−0.063	−0.076
	(0.013)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.047)
government	−0.183***	−0.127***	−0.113***	−0.110***	−0.117***	−0.116***
	(0.014)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
nkorea	−0.277***	−0.310***	−0.340***	−0.360***	−0.341***	−0.345***
	(0.022)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
yomiuri x government		−0.105***	−0.092***	−0.079**	−0.076**	−0.077**
		(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
yomiuri x nkorea		0.097*	0.105*	0.092*	0.075	0.081
		(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)
alone			−0.355**	−0.335*	−0.305*	−0.308*
			(0.137)	(0.135)	(0.135)	(0.135)
nkorea x alone			0.886***	0.796***	0.772***	0.776***
			(0.141)	(0.139)	(0.138)	(0.139)
military (M)				0.308***	0.348***	0.349***
				(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)
diplomacy (D)				−0.076***	−0.027	−0.027
				(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.019)
election (E)					0.034	0.028
					(0.018)	(0.025)
legislation (L)					0.406***	0.351***

				(0.027)	(0.039)
yomiuri x election (E)					0.010
					(0.035)
yomiuri x legislation (L)					0.104
					(0.053)
sigma	0.965	0.964	0.959	0.947	0.942	0.942
R-squared	0.014	0.015	0.026	0.051	0.061	0.061
F	102.135	65.532	83.869	129.710	127.453	108.149
N	21752	21752	21752	21752	21752	21752

Significance: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

We performed an additional regression analysis by disaggregating the event dummies to capture different degrees of changes in emphasis on threats before or after individual events (Table 3-2). We confirmed that the effects of basic variables in Model 6 are roughly the same as Model 2, despite the large number of dummies for the military and diplomatic events. The event dummies indicate that all but the sinking of Cheonan (M3) and the second Unha rocket launch (M6) increased the newspapers' emphasis on threats. The diplomatic events affected newspapers in either two ways: threats increased after the closure of Kaesong Industrial Region (D2), the UN sanction (D4), and the death of Kim Jong-nam (D5); or decreased after the death of Kim Jong-il (D1), the Inter-Korean summit (D6) and the US-North Korean summit (D7). All these changes are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$).

Further, we have added dummy variables for the electoral and legislative events to reveal the newspapers' coverage of security issues during the domestic political debates (Model 7). The newspapers emphasized threats significantly more before the 2010 Upper House election (E2); the 2017 Lower House election (E7); the approval of collective self-defence (L2); and the passing of the National Security and Anti-terror Conspiracy bills (L3 and L4). The interaction terms between the newspaper indicator and event dummies show that Yomiuri emphasized threats more than Asahi during the debate on the National Security Laws ('yomiuri x L3', $p < 0.05$).

Table 3-2: Japanese newspapers' emphasis on threats with disaggregated event indicators. Model 2 is inserted for comparison.

	Model 2		Model 6		Model 7	
(Intercept)	0.272***	(0.028)	0.210***	(0.028)	0.157***	(0.029)
yomiuri	−0.084	(0.046)	−0.083	(0.045)	−0.082	(0.046)
government	−0.113***	(0.020)	−0.114***	(0.020)	−0.122***	(0.020)
nkorea	−0.340***	(0.028)	−0.360***	(0.028)	−0.353***	(0.028)
alone	−0.355**	(0.137)	−0.353**	(0.133)	−0.349**	(0.132)
yomiuri x government	−0.092***	(0.027)	−0.076**	(0.027)	−0.072**	(0.027)
yomiuri x nkorea	0.105*	(0.046)	0.093*	(0.045)	0.083	(0.045)
nkorea x alone	0.886***	(0.141)	0.843***	(0.137)	0.832***	(0.136)
military (M1)			0.165***	(0.042)	0.218***	(0.041)
military (M2)			0.298***	(0.034)	0.405***	(0.035)
military (M3)			−0.042	(0.060)	−0.165**	(0.063)
military (M4)			0.776***	(0.039)	0.828***	(0.039)
military (M5)			0.116**	(0.043)	0.169***	(0.042)
military (M6)			0.021	(0.046)	0.023	(0.049)
military (M7)			0.405***	(0.040)	0.444***	(0.040)
military (M8)			0.225***	(0.036)	0.275***	(0.036)
military (M9)			0.315***	(0.049)	0.368***	(0.049)
military (M10)			0.455***	(0.033)	0.375***	(0.037)
military (M11)			0.242***	(0.026)	−0.098	(0.052)
diplomacy (D1)			−0.381***	(0.043)	−0.329***	(0.043)
diplomacy (D2)			0.118**	(0.043)	0.167***	(0.044)
diplomacy (D3)			−0.016	(0.059)	0.037	(0.059)
diplomacy (D4)			0.144**	(0.054)	0.190***	(0.054)
diplomacy (D5)			0.516***	(0.048)	0.569***	(0.048)
diplomacy (D6)			−0.300***	(0.036)	−0.247***	(0.036)
diplomacy (D7)			−0.271***	(0.038)	−0.217***	(0.038)
election (E1)					−0.222***	(0.059)
election (E2)					0.427***	(0.076)
election (E3)					0.133	(0.070)
election (E4)					−0.029	(0.079)
election (E5)					−0.083	(0.096)
election (E6)					0.079	(0.078)
election (E7)					0.430***	(0.057)
legislation (L1)					0.087	(0.097)
legislation (L2)					0.330***	(0.074)
legislation (L3)					0.413***	(0.087)
legislation (L4)					0.410***	(0.057)
yomiuri x election (E1)					0.011	(0.081)
yomiuri x election (E2)					−0.020	(0.100)
yomiuri x election (E3)					−0.006	(0.092)
yomiuri x election (E4)					−0.044	(0.110)
yomiuri x election (E5)					−0.056	(0.134)
yomiuri x election (E6)					−0.021	(0.116)
yomiuri x election (E7)					0.015	(0.048)
yomiuri x legislation (L1)					0.197	(0.151)
yomiuri x legislation (L2)					−0.093	(0.107)
yomiuri x legislation (L3)					0.287*	(0.126)
yomiuri x legislation (L4)					0.079	(0.073)

sigma	0.959	0.933	0.925
R-squared	0.026	0.078	0.096
p	0.000	0.000	0.000
N	21752	21752	21752

Significance: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

We applied the same regression analysis on Israeli newspapers (Table 3-3). In these models, the variable 'government' refers to mentions of cabinet members ("ראש ממשלה", "ראש הממשלה", "שר ה*", "השר"), 'yedioth' is the newspaper indicator; 'iran' is focus on Iran; 'military', 'diplomacy', 'election' and 'legislation' are aggregated time indicators with 30 days before or after the events. We decreased the window sizes for Israel to achieve a better model fit (see Appendix 2).

The basic model (Model 0) shows that Israeli newspapers emphasized threats less in articles that mention cabinet members ('government') and focus on Iran ('iran') ($p < 0.001$) than in other articles, but the interaction terms in Model 2 reveal that Yedioth emphasized threats in such articles more than Haaretz ($p < 0.001$). Unlike Japanese newspapers, Israeli newspapers emphasized threats more after the diplomatic events ('diplomatic') (Model 3, 4, 5).

Table 3-3: Israeli newspapers' emphasis on threats with aggregated event indicators.

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	0.229***	0.278***	0.278***	0.255***	0.259***	0.260***
	(0.019)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
yedioth	0.048*	−0.098**	−0.098**	−0.101**	−0.101**	−0.103**
	(0.024)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.037)
government	−0.335***	−0.396***	−0.398***	−0.397***	−0.397***	−0.397***
	(0.024)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)
iran	−0.384***	−0.459***	−0.456***	−0.467***	−0.468***	−0.469***
	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)
yedioth x government		0.188***	0.188***	0.186***	0.187***	0.186***
		(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.050)
yedioth x iran		0.207***	0.207***	0.205***	0.204***	0.206***
		(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.049)
alone			−0.064	−0.090	−0.088	−0.088
			(0.235)	(0.234)	(0.234)	(0.234)
iran x alone			−0.226	−0.238	−0.240	−0.238

			(0.309)	(0.308)	(0.308)	(0.308)
military (M)				0.026	0.029	0.029
				(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)
diplomacy (D)				0.191***	0.187***	0.187***
				(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
election (E)					−0.051	−0.106
					(0.059)	(0.075)
legislation (L)					−0.043	0.001
					(0.062)	(0.076)
yedioth x election (E)						0.144
						(0.122)
yedioth x legislation (L)						−0.128
						(0.130)
sigma	1.022	1.021	1.021	1.018	1.018	1.018
R-squared	0.052	0.055	0.055	0.060	0.060	0.060
F	142.145	91.397	65.592	55.034	45.130	38.380
N	7828	7828	7828	7828	7828	7828

Significance: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

Our regression models (Model 6 and 7) with disaggregated event dummies show roughly the same effects of 'government', 'yedioth' and 'iran' but they reveal different directions of effects within 'diplomacy' and 'legislation' (Table 3-4). The level of threats in news coverage was lower after the third P5+1 meeting in Geneva (D8) but higher after the publication of IAEA report (D4); the agreement on IAEA inspection of the nuclear facility in Parchin (D5); the first expansion of the US sanctions (D6); and the US withdrawal from JCPOA (D10) ($p < 0.001$). Both newspapers emphasized threats less before the collapse of the coalition government (L4) than other times ($p < 0.001$). However, the interaction terms in Model 7 reveals that Yedioth emphasized threats more than Haaretz before the 2015 general election ('yedioth x E3', $p < 0.05$).

Table 3-4: Israeli newspapers' emphasis on threats with disaggregated event indicators. Model 2 is inserted for comparison.

	Model 2		Model 6		Model 7	
(Intercept)	0.278***	(0.021)	0.247***	(0.022)	0.244***	(0.022)
yedioth	−0.098**	(0.036)	−0.096**	(0.036)	−0.093*	(0.037)
government	−0.398***	(0.030)	−0.393***	(0.030)	−0.387***	(0.030)
iran	−0.456***	(0.031)	−0.450***	(0.031)	−0.439***	(0.031)
alone	−0.064	(0.235)	−0.132	(0.233)	−0.135	(0.233)

yedioth x government	0.188***	(0.050)	0.181***	(0.050)	0.177***	(0.050)
yedioth x iran	0.207***	(0.050)	0.195***	(0.049)	0.185***	(0.049)
iran x alone	−0.226	(0.309)	−0.112	(0.309)	−0.107	(0.308)
military (M1)			0.204	(0.105)	0.199	(0.105)
military (M2)			0.177	(0.114)	0.174	(0.113)
military (M3)			−0.052	(0.080)	−0.038	(0.082)
military (M4)			−0.116	(0.148)	−0.167	(0.155)
diplomacy (D1)			−0.051	(0.108)	−0.056	(0.108)
diplomacy (D2)			−0.167	(0.118)	−0.169	(0.117)
diplomacy (D3)			−0.258	(0.147)	−0.262	(0.146)
diplomacy (D4)			0.576***	(0.100)	0.571***	(0.100)
diplomacy (D5)			0.647***	(0.089)	0.644***	(0.088)
diplomacy (D6)			0.272***	(0.075)	0.270***	(0.075)
diplomacy (D7)			−0.123	(0.119)	−0.128	(0.119)
diplomacy (D8)			−0.451***	(0.108)	−0.458***	(0.108)
diplomacy (D9)			0.163*	(0.074)	0.158*	(0.074)
diplomacy (D10)			0.449***	(0.084)	0.445***	(0.084)
election (E1)					0.023	(0.141)
election (E2)					0.103	(0.176)
election (E3)					−0.212*	(0.100)
legislation (L1)					0.162	(0.164)
legislation (L2)					−0.016	(0.211)
legislation (L3)					0.740**	(0.245)
legislation (L4)					−0.987***	(0.174)
legislation (L5)					0.103	(0.238)
legislation (L6)					0.220	(0.237)
legislation (L7)					0.301	(0.167)
yedioth x election (E1)					−0.204	(0.258)
yedioth x election (E2)					−0.102	(0.269)
yedioth x election (E3)					0.349*	(0.156)
yedioth x legislation (L1)					−0.268	(0.255)
yedioth x legislation (L2)					0.156	(0.398)
yedioth x legislation (L3)					−0.776*	(0.391)
yedioth x legislation (L4)					0.426	(0.277)
yedioth x legislation (L5)					−0.439	(0.399)
yedioth x legislation (L6)					0.018	(0.476)
yedioth x legislation (L7)					0.096	(0.326)
sigma	1.021		1.011		1.008	
R-squared	0.055		0.074		0.082	
F	65.592		29.847		16.950	
N	7828		7828		7828	

Significance: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

Discussion

Based on the literature on press-state relationships, we predicted that conservative outlets support the conservative leaders in power. Our analysis indeed revealed significant differences

between the conservative and liberal newspapers when North Korea or Iran was the only focus of the articles. Yet conservative newspapers did not always emphasize threats when covering North Korea or Iran in broader international contexts. Our first hypothesis (H1) is therefore only partially supported. Still, we found that conservative newspapers overemphasized threats before important political events: the enactment of Japan's controversial security bills and Israel's 2015 general election. These finding support the second hypothesis (H2).[9]

The direction of changes in newspapers' emphasis on threats after military and diplomatic events varied between Japan and Israel. Japanese newspapers emphasized threats more after 9 out of 11 military events, but Israeli newspapers did not emphasize threats more after any of the four military events. Japanese newspapers emphasized threats less after 3 out of 7 diplomatic events, but Israeli newspapers emphasized threats even more after 5 out of 10 diplomatic events. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3) was supported only in Japan. These results indicate that newspapers' coverage of security issues is more complex than the literature suggests.

Japanese newspapers' coverage of North Korea after military and diplomatic events often changed as expected: the emphasis on threats increased after military events but waned after diplomatic events. This pattern was not observed in Israel. We explain the difference between Japan and Israel based on the different nature of threats: North Korea was highly provocative and seemingly close to deploying nuclear missiles, while Iran was restrained and still far from obtaining nuclear capabilities. The closure of Kaesong Industrial Region (D2), the UN sanction

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[9] The overall tendency of all newspapers to emphasize threats supports Bennet's indexing hypothesis that media coverage is strongly influenced by the government's positions. This is true in security issues because national newspapers often lack the ability to gather information independently (Soroka, 2003). The high correlation in terms of the volume of news between newspapers further means that there is a general agreement on the agenda in foreign news. Yet, the conservative newspapers differentiate themselves from liberal rivals by emphasizing threats in articles featuring North Korea or Iran alone. Furthermore, conservative newspapers' closer relationship with the conservative governments is clearly observed during specific events, when politicians need mass media's support to survive challenging legislative processes or election campaigns.

(D4) and the death of Kim Jong-nam (D5) increased Japanese newspapers' emphasis on threats because they indicated North Korea's continued aggression against neighbours and ambition to possess nuclear weapons, or the potential instability in and around the country.

The periods during which we discovered the conservative newspapers' emphasis on threats are consistent with the anecdotal evidence for collisions between the conservative governments and the news media in Japan and Israel. Abe's government increased pressure on the liberal media over the country's historical issues in 2014; this tension further intensified a year after when the liberal media opposed the national security legislation while conservative media supported it (Nakano, 2016). Netanyahu reportedly asked the owner of Yedioth for favourable news coverage in exchange for blocking publication of its rival newspaper in meetings between 2008 and 2014; the prime minister was subjected to investigation for possible corruption, although he has not been indicted (Freedman, 2019a).

Despite the difference in the security environment of the countries and institutional constraints on leaders, Abe and Netanyahu appear surprisingly similar in terms of their rhetorical use of nuclear threats by regional adversaries. The reasons behind the similarity are the following common factors: the (1) diminishing political gains from their successful economic reforms in the earlier years; the (2) increasing opposition in the legislature or competition in the elections; the (3) lack of the countries' ability to solve the security issues unilaterally; and the (4) diplomatic and military relationship with the United States. The first two factors are consistent with the diversionary war thesis that the leaders attempt to divert domestic turmoil by the rally effect, while the last two factors explain why Japanese and Israeli resorted to political rhetoric instead of actual force. That is to say, Abe could not use force against North Korea due to the country's constitution;

Netanyahu only used limited force (e.g. cyber-attack and assassination) against Iran due to Obama administration's policy (David, 2019; Freedman, 2019b).

Netanyahu's opposition to the JCPOA and emphasis on the nuclear threats were consistent with his known political strategy to spread fear (Lochery, 2016). However, his subsequent loss of popularity suggests that he did not manage to trigger the rally effect, because of the lack of clear distinction between in and out-groups in his rhetoric: his narrative that the US-led nuclear deal will pose threats to Israel is equivalent to claiming that the US foreign policy threatens Israel. In contrast, Abe's threat narrative was better received as he remained popular despite the corruption scandals in the following years. He was successfully in *discursive diversion* because North Korea was hostile to both Japan and the United States and reached no agreement on its nuclear program with Japan's allies. There is no direct evidence that Yomiuri intentionally emphasized North Korea's threats to support Abe, but its tendency to focus on threats and isolate North Korea in the international community could be the result of its close relationship with the government. Regardless of the publisher's intention, such coverage of North Korea could have assisted Abe to gain public support and passed controversial bills to complete his sweeping security policy reforms (c.f. Hughes, 2015; Kagotani 2015; Ryu, 2018).

Conclusions

We found that Japanese and Israeli conservative leaders attempted to divert domestic turmoil by manipulating people's perception of nuclear threats through the mass media. Such *discursive diversion* is an attractive option for leaders of small countries that have limited opportunity or capability to use force because it is much less risky and less costly than actual use of force. Leaders of the ruling party can manipulate people's fear by their emphasis on threats in

speeches and press conferences, which are the main sources of information on security issues for the news media. Conservative outlets do not necessarily collaborate with the conservative government, but they often reflect their views because of their partisanship or clientelism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

We believe that *discursive diversion* as an action "fall short of actual war" (Levy, 1989, p. 271) is very common in countries across the world, but it has not attracted much research attention presumably because systematic content analysis in non-European languages has been too challenging. Nevertheless, we have demonstrated that analysis of news articles written in two unique Asian languages is possible using the recently developed tools. If *discursive diversion* is included, much clearer relationships between domestic turmoil and leaders' diversionary actions would be found in cross-national analysis.

Our study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between the state and the mass media over security issues, but there are also limitations. First, we have only studied Japan and Israel despite there being other interesting cases of democracies or semi-democracies in geo-politically unstable regions, such as South Korea, India, Philippines, Turkey. Second, we have analysed only news articles on North Korea despite China being a major source of threat to Japan. Third, we did not include non-state actors that are immediate security threats for Israel in our analysis, such as Hamas, Hezbollah and ISIS. While we chose to focus on nuclear capabilities as the most important security issue, but future studies should include broader types and sources of threats.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Historical Background

Since the Second World War, Japan's constitution has disallowed the country to possess a military force, but the deepening of the Cold War led to the establishment of the Japan Self-

Defense Force (JSDF) and the ratification of the Japan-US Security Treaty. Still, the country has maintained its pacifist foreign policy by restricting the deployment of the JSDF overseas. A series of events such as the Gulf War (1990-1991), the 9/11 attacks (2001), the Iraq War (2003) as well as the rising tension with China and North Korea persuaded the government to revise its security policy. North Korea has posed a threat to Japanese security when it launched Nodong and Taepodong missiles in the 1990s, while rapidly developing nuclear bombs. By 2006, North Korea was identified as the primary threat to Japan by the government, leading to enhancement of the JSDF's capability. Shinzo Abe started reforming the country's foreign policy with the ambition to make Japan a military power by amending its pacifist constitution in his first term as a Prime Minister (2006-2007). Succeeive prime ministers, including those from the opposition party, continued to revise its security policy and Abe further accelerated the changes in his second term (2012-2020). His security-related bills faced strong opposition but he successfully enacted them by LDP and its coalition partner's dominance in the lower house (see Hughes, 2015; Oros, 2017).

Israel has undergone multiple armed conflicts with its Arab neighbours since independence from Britain in 1948. The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) established military dominance in the region by the 1980s supported by the United States, but the country faced a threat from Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. During the Gulf War (1990-1991), Israel was attacked by Iraq's Scud missiles and was threatened by chemical weapons, although actual damage was limited. Israel signed the Oslo Accord for the two-state solution in 1993, but Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist in 1995. During the first term as prime minister (1996-1998), Benjamin Netanyahu approved the Palestine peace agreements (Hebron and Wye Memoranda) and initiated neo-liberal economic reforms. In his second term as prime minister (2009-present), he formed a coalition government with Zionist parties and destroyed the two-state solution by

expanding the Jewish settlement in the West Bank. Netanyahu strongly opposed nuclear deals with Iran in his speeches at the United Nations (2012) and the US Congress (2015). He also enacted controversial bills that undermine the social and cultural status of Arab Israelis (see David, 2019; Freedman, 2019c; Lochery, 2016; Rasul et al., 2016).

Appendix 2: Robustness Checks

We determined the size of time windows in the regression analysis by fitting the disaggregated models (Model 7) with 10 to 90 days and finding the highest R^2 value. Figure 5-1 shows that the models fit the best when the window size is 60 days for Japan but 30 days for Israel. We also compared the coefficients of regression models fitted with 30 and 60-day windows for both countries, but the result did not change dramatically.

Further, we collected t-scores of interaction terms of Model 7 by bootstrapping the events to compute nonparametric p-values. We fitted the model 1000 times with sizes from 30, 60 and 90 days with randomly allocated four legislative events for Japan and three electoral events for Israel. Figure 5-2 shows that the distribution of t-scores becomes abnormal when the window size is 90 days. However, the t-score for the interaction between L3 and 'yomiuri' in Model 7 is among the top 2.1% ($p < 0.03$), and E3 and 'yedioth' in Model 7 is among the top 1.7% ($p < 0.02$) in the distribution. The similar results of parametric and nonparametric significance test confirm that the event dummies are not inducing bias to the regression model's estimation.

Figure 5-1: R^2 of Model 7 with different window sizes. The vertical lines indicate optimal size of window (60 days for Japan and 30 days for Israel).
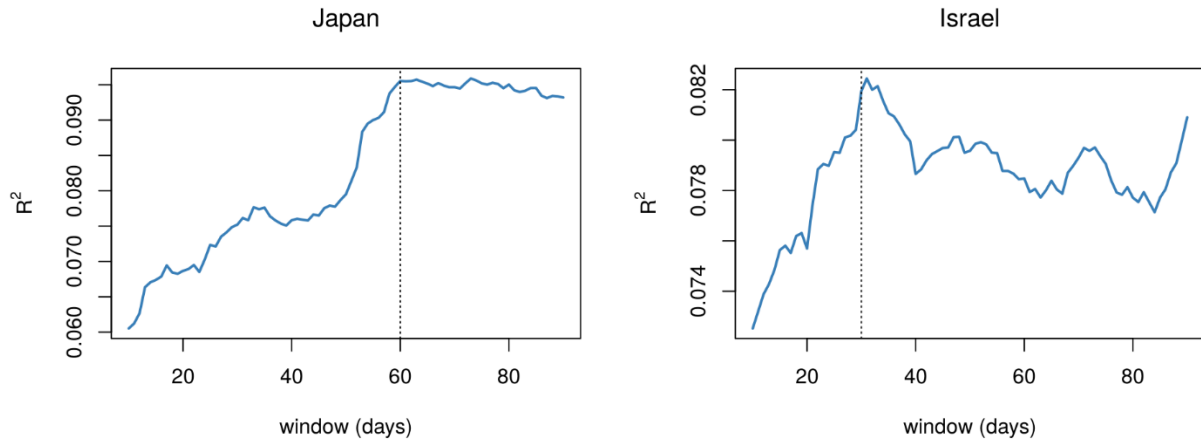

Figure 5-2: Distribution of t-scores with randomized events and different window sizes (days).