

INTERNATIONAL AGENDA-SETTING AND AGENDA-BUILDING: THE CHANGE OF
U.S. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF SOUTH KOREA

By

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To my beloved family

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This study explored the agenda-setting effects of *The New York Times* on the U.S. public opinion about South Korea. Also, this study investigated whether there were agenda-building influences between South Korean principals' public relations activities in the United States and the U.S. news coverage at the specific subject level. The current study found a significant change in affective attributes of news of South Korea between 2008 and 2010 and its connection to the U.S. public's perception change between 2008 and 2010. Furthermore, the study discovered a significant change in affective attributes of news holding involvement frames between 2008 and 2010, which is contrary to overall attention. This result indicated stronger agenda-setting effects of the involvement frame than general description of a foreign country. In terms of the agenda-building influence, the study observed a significant difference in issue salience of news between 2008 and 2010, however, any correlations between subjects of public relations activities and news subjects and between public relations activities and affective attributes of news were not discovered. This study provided several points of professional implications for public diplomacy professionals and policymakers.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

According to a Pew Research Center's survey released February 24, 2011, the U.S. public has expressed considerable interest in Asia, particularly in news about China (69%) and South Korea (69%). South Korea tied for fourth place with China, followed by Iraq (78%), Afghanistan (77%), North Korea (70%), and Iran (70%). The Pew Research Center interpreted these findings to mean that the U.S. public is interested in news from "global trouble spots," such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Korea, and the findings reflected "the public's growing focus on Asia" (Pew Research Center, 2011). Moreover, in the February 2011 survey, Pew published another study stating that "47% of respondents said that Asia is most important to the United States, while 37% considered Europe to be the most important region" (Pew Research Center, 2011).

In addition, in a 2010 National Survey of American Public Opinion conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, there was a change in Americans' feelings toward South Korea between 2008 and 2010, which was 52 in feeling thermometer indicating slightly favorable in 2010, on the other hand, 45.7 in 2008 indicating slightly unfavorable in 2008 (The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2010). The rising trend of U.S. public interest in South Korea has been demonstrated in these two public opinion surveys.

Why has the Eastern Asian country located on the eastern edge of Eurasia been considered one of the important countries to the U.S. public? Historically, the United States and South Korea have maintained their alliance militarily as well as economically. Since the initiative of the Mutual Defense Treaty signed in 1953, the United States Forces Korea troops have been stationed in South Korea, and the military alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States has been maintained through annual security meetings and regularly conducted military exercises (Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the USA, n.d.). In 1995, the dedication

ceremony of the Korea War Veterans Memorial in the United States was held to commemorate U.S. efforts in the Korean War and to appreciate the soldiers' commitment in the war. This event helped Americans remember the Korean War—the so-called the forgotten war for a majority of Americans. The South Korea-U.S. relationship was further demonstrated when Korea provided backup troops for the United States in the Vietnam, Gulf, and Iraq Wars.

South Korea has also been one of the major trading partners for the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in July 2011, South Korea ranked seventh among the top-trading partners of the United States (in goods only). In addition, in a meeting with U.S. businessmen held at the Maine International Trade Center in July 2011, Korean Ambassador Han Duk-soo stated that “the U.S. and Korea enjoy a balanced trade relationship and the U.S. goods and services deficit with Korea was only \$4.6 billion out of a total bilateral trade volume of \$115 billion”—10 times less than the U.S. trade deficits with both Germany and Japan in 2010 (Dynamic-Korea, 2011). Furthermore, U.S. President Barack Obama announced the success of a U.S.-Korea free trade agreement on December 4, 2010. President Obama favorably viewed ratifying the free trade agreement with South Korea, which is expected to play a significant role in boosting the American economy by creating jobs and increasing exports: “The agreement is a win-win for both our countries” (Remarks by the President 2010). He further stressed maintaining partnership between the two countries and their successful alliance (Statement by the President, 2010). The U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement was eventually approved by the U.S. Congress on October 12, 2011 (U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, n.d.).

The recently released 2011 BBC Country Rating Poll presented valuable information on the public views in both countries. The results indicated that both the United States and South Korea have mutually positive attitudes toward each other: 74% of South Koreans responded that

the United States has a positive influence in the world while 53% of Americans indicated favorable opinions of South Korea's influence. This poll has tracked world opinions since 2005, demonstrating a seven-point increase in Americans' favorable views of South Korea since 2010. The report concluded that "a majority of Americans now sees South Korea's influence favorably" (BBC Country Rating Poll, 2011, p. 27).

Recent research has revealed that news coverage of foreign nations can have powerful agenda-setting consequences on public opinion (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004); thus, this study investigates changes in U.S. public opinion in response to changes in news coverage and media agenda setting in the United States.

Moreover, by applying second-level agenda-setting theory (Ghanem, 1997; McCombs, 2005), this paper explores how tones of news coverage of South Korea influences the U.S. public's opinion change of South Korea as a relatively more important country comparing to other countries.

Finally, this study investigates issues that have been saliently covered by the media and compares them with subjects of public relations activities to examine agenda-building (Albritton & Manheim, 1987; Kioussis & Wu, 2008; Manheim & Albritton, 1984; Zhang & Cameron, 2003). This investigation helps to find out to what extent public relations efforts practiced in the United States on behalf of South Korean principals (or by themselves) influenced U.S. news media coverage.

Purpose of the study: The main purpose of this study is to examine whether the change in U.S. public perception of South Korea has been affected by the media agenda as well as public relations activities on behalf of South Korea. Although prior studies have investigated whether agenda-setting effects play roles in moving people's attitudes as well as their cognition on

political figures and issues (Kiouisis, 2005; Kiouisis, McDevitt, & Wu, 2005; McCombs & Reynold, 2002), few studies (Wanta et al., 2004; Kiouisis & Wu, 2008; Besova & Cooley, 2009) have examined whether the agenda-setting effect can also be applied to foreign nations and how attributes of media agendas influence public opinion shifts, especially there have been lack of investigations for one particular country. Given the growing U.S. public's interests in Asian countries, recent relations between the United States and South Korea are once again illuminated in the media through the U.S.-Korea free trade agreement issue and President Obama's frequent citation of South Korea in his speeches. By analyzing relationships between information subsidies and salient news stories, as well as between salient media coverage and public perception change, this study will not only contribute to the agenda-setting theory, but also provide practical implications for public relations professionals and agencies and policymakers regarding how to influence foreign publics' perceptions of their country successfully through media relations.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Agenda Setting and Public Agenda

As initially demonstrated by McCombs and Shaw's (1972) study, the priority of order of current issues in the public's cognition is considerably influenced by the media exposure of those issues. McCombs and Shaw (1972) examined the influence of the media on voters' concerns and the correspondence between the voters' ranking of important issues in the 1968 U.S. presidential campaign, as well as the rank order according to the number of media reports of each issue.

McCombs (2004) argued that the key contention of agenda-setting theory is that "those issues emphasized in the news come to be regarded over time as important by the public" (p. 5). McCombs (2004) highlighted "a strong causal effect of mass communication on the public—the transfer of salience from the media agenda to the public agenda" (p. 5). McCombs (2004) further distinguished the agenda-setting theory from the previously discussed bullet theory or hypodermic theory in terms of a primary role of the news media to originate items for the public agenda. McCombs (2005) suggested that the media play a role in telling people not only "what to think about," but also "how to think about it" (p. 546).

McCombs (2005) said that while first-level agenda setting focuses on the salience of issues or objects, second-level of agenda setting examines the salience of attributes of issues. McCombs (2002) explained the concept of objects and attributes of the media agenda in detail:

The items that define the agenda are objects. The objects are the things on which the attention of the media and the public are focused. Each of these objects has numerous attributes, those characteristics and traits that describe the object. When the media and the public think and talk about an object, some attributes are emphasized, others are given less attention, and many receive no attention at all (p. 5).

McCombs and Estrada (1997) explained, “how news frames affect public opinion” is the emerging second level of agenda setting (p. 240). Ghanem and Evatt (1995) added that choosing specific attributes of an issue for attention has a strong effect on setting public agendas.

McCombs (2004) argued that salience of objects in the media agenda affects salience of objects on the public agenda and that the salience of attributes in the media agenda affects the salience of attributes on the public agenda. The object is the thing to which our attention is directed or the thing towards which people have an opinion or attitude (McCombs, 2004). In other words, the object traditionally has been a public issue and public issues have attributes like all other objects. Some facets of issues, which mean some attributes, are highlighted in the news and in the way that people think about those issues (McCombs, 2004). McCombs (2004) also pointed out that highlighted attributes of a certain issue often change over time. This is true for repetitive main issues for numerous countries in recent decades.

Controversies in the literature have emerged regarding the differences between attribute agenda setting and framing. Regarding the convergence of attribute agenda setting and framing, McCombs (2005) argued that links exist between the two theories and that framing has a complementary characteristic to the agenda-setting theory in terms of Robert Entman’s (1993) use of the term salient in the definition of framing:

Framing is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (p. 52).

According to McCombs (2004), if the concept of framing is situated in the context of agenda-setting theory, it underscores not only “its subsequent consequences” but also “this power to organize and structure thought” (p. 89). McCombs (2004) also pointed out that as

plenty of observers have commented, frames are limited to “central themes or dominant perspectives, a special class of attributes” (p. 91). In the process of operationalization, this distinction is obvious in the way that the media contents are analyzed — namely, discovering the attributes that describe the main theme of a single news story versus a dozen of the diverse attributes that are shown throughout the sentences and paragraphs of a single news story (McCombs, 2005).

However, Takeshita (2002) proposed a creative approach to the boundary between the attribute agenda setting and framing by investigating public opinion as a dependent variable to distinguish the two concepts. Takeshita conducted a content analysis of *Mainichi Shimbun* to examine the attribute agenda-setting effects of news agenda on Japanese economical difficulties. Twelve specific micro-attributes in the aspects of problematic situations caused by the economic difficulties were identified in the analysis and combined into four macro-frames through a factor analysis. According to the findings, although fairly large differences occurred in the absolute values of correlations between micro-attributes and macro-frames, a consistent pattern of three levels of exposure to news—low, moderate, and high exposure—was found (for low-level attributes +0.54, +0.55, and +0.64 and for the macro-frames, -1.00, +0.80 and +1.00 for low, moderate, and high media exposure, respectively). Thus, this research on Japanese public opinion demonstrated that agenda-setting effects were applied to both micro-attributes and macro-frames.

Agenda Setting and Public Opinion

Lippmann’s (1922) classic *Public Opinion* argued that news media provide primary sources for the pictures in our heads about the larger world outside. McCombs (2002) asserted, “what we know about the world is largely based on what the media decide to tell us” (p. 2), and

he pointed out that elements shown prominently in the media become prominent in the public mind over time, which is also called agenda-setting effects (McCombs, 2005).

The public agenda can change with the media agenda (Lippmann, 1922). Public agendas are notably “volatile problems that surge and decline in rapid succession as focal points of public attention and concern” (Behr & Iyengar, 1985, p. 38).

MacKuen and Coombs (1982) suggested that public concern for particular issues is determined by the amount of media attention those issues receive. Jasperson, Shah, Watts, Faber, and Fan (1998) mentioned not only the increased presence of issues in the media but also that “how different conceptions of issues emerge and evolve over time is important for understanding change in public opinion” (p. 206).

Turk (1985) stated that even though the mass media are “not omnipotent sources” to influence the public, a significant body of literature (Berelson & Steiner, 1964; Berlo, 1960; Schramm, 1960; Schramm, 1961; Schramm, 1963) asserted that the media have a substantial impact on public opinion (p.11). As Rivers and Schramm (1969) indicated, the power of the mass media must be regarded “not as a tidal wave, but as a great river”:

It feeds the ground it touches, following the lines of existing contours but preparing the way for change over a long period. Sometimes it finds a spot where the ground is soft and ready, and there it cuts a new channel. Sometimes it carries material which helps it to alter its banks. And occasionally, in time of flood, it washes away a piece of ground and gives the channel a new look (pp. 27-28).

International News Coverage and Its Influence on Public Opinion

During the past few decades, mass communication scholarship has found the significance of international news coverage. Larson and Hardy (1977) found that international news coverage accounted for over 30% of network television news contents. Whitney, Fritzler, Jones, Mazzarella, and Rakow (1989) also found that 34% of network news coverage was international news.

Moreover, not only the importance of international news coverage, but also the imbalance of coverage was revealed. Chang (1998) pointed out that in U.S. news media selected nations were reported intensively but most were ignored. Weaver, Porter and Evans (1984) found the lack of balance in international news coverage through a 10-year analysis of television news reports. Weaver et al. (1984) showed that some nations receive much more news coverage than others:

The ABC, CBS, and NBC networks covered the world in an unbalanced manner. Between 1972 and 1981, the three networks focused 32.4% of their coverage on the Middle East, 21.1% on Western Europe, 10.8% on Eastern Europe, 9.5% on Asia, 6.7% on Africa, and only 6.2% on Latin America. (p. 360)

Golan (2006) argued that the imbalance of coverage of nations may influence public perception of the nations and international affairs because mass media are the most common source for many Americans to learn about the world.

“International news coverage has a direct influence on U.S. public opinion,” Wanta, Golan, and Lee stated (2004, p. 366). Wanta et al. (2004) found the statistically significant correlation between “the number of news stories aired on network newscasts and the percentage of respondents saying ‘yes’ to whether each of 26 individual countries is of vital interest to the United States” (p. 371). In addition, the more negative news that is reported about a nation, the more likely respondents are to perceive that nation negatively (Wanta et al., 2004). However, their study found that public perceptions were not affected by the positive coverage of a nation. Kiouisis and Wu (2008) also presented positive relationships between the negative media portrayal of foreign countries and negative attitudes towards those countries.

Salwen and Matera (1989) revealed correlations between foreign news coverage and public opinion and argued that international news coverage has an explicitly agenda-setting effect.

Wanta and Hu (1993) also found that U.S. public opinion is strongly affected by the agenda-setting effect of international news.

Although previous studies have not observed the agenda-setting effect of public perception change on favorable attitudes towards a foreign country, this study attempts to find how media coverage of South Korea has changed in 2010 comparing to 2008 in terms of the amount of news coverage of South Korea and their attributes such as frames and tones.

Hypothesis 1: Increased media salience of South Korea will be related to the U.S. public's perception of South Korea.

Hypothesis 2: The salience of positive attributes of South Korea will be related to favorable public attitudes toward South Korea.

Research Question 1: Was there a decrease of negative portrayals in news regarding South Korea?

Public Relations Contacts and Agenda Building

On behalf of their clients or organizations, public relations practitioners provide the media with information subsidies to distribute information systematically (Turk, 1985). If practitioners can obtain placement of their subsidies in the media, they shape the media agenda, which in turn can affect public opinion and the public agenda—a procedure known as agenda building (Curtin, 1999). Sources from public relations entities are in the process of agenda building: news releases, news conferences, media advisories, and interviews (Kioussis & Wu, 2008).

Those subsidies from public relations professionals play a key role in deciding the daily news contents in major newspapers (McCombs, 2002). A 20-year examination revealed that nearly half of news stories in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* were based on news releases and other direct information subsidies (Sigal, 1973). To be specific, 17.5% of all news stories stemmed from news releases and another 32% were based on news conferences and

background briefings (Sigal, 1973). Even major newspapers with large staffs and immense resources substantially rely on public relations sources (McCombs, 2004). Zoch and Molleda (2006) also stressed organizations' authority for critical information sources, whereas there are a variety of sources involved in the agenda-building process such as interest groups, journalists, editors and opinion leaders.

Researchers demonstrated a positive relationship between public relations activities and agenda building in the media. In the political communication approach, Turk (1986) demonstrated the positive relationship between the number of news releases from state government public information departments and media salience of those states. Kaid (1976) found that the more frequently news releases are disseminated the more salient media coverage is achieved in congressional elections. This correlation was also shown in business communication, which suggested that increased salience of news releases has an effect on news tone that is favorable for corporate as well as frequency of media coverage (Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, & Harrison, 1995). By involving the tone of news in agenda building in the study, Ohl et al. (1995) discussed the second level of agenda building.

Furthermore, public relations activities undertaken by foreign nations help those nations achieve a more visible and positive valence in international news coverage (Manheim & Albritton, 1984). For example, when Argentina, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Turkey hired American public relations firms, positive news stories about these five countries in *The New York Times* increased (Albritton & Manheim, 1985). Negative news coverage can also be decreased through public relations campaigns subsidized by foreign governments (Albritton & Manheim, 1987; Zhang & Cameron, 2003). After Rhodesia hired public relations counsel in the U.S., the number of news stories covering the country's domestic violence problem

noticeably decreased (Albritton & Manheim, 1987). Zhang and Cameron (2003) also demonstrated the effect of a public relations campaign initiated by the Chinese government by comparing news coverage in *The New York Times* before and after the campaign.

Addressing the influence of hired public relations counsel by foreign nations on international news coverage, Kiousis and Wu's study (2008) showed that even though there was a minimal level of public relations counsels' influence on object salience of foreign countries in the media, association between public relations counsel and decreased amount of negative news coverage was notable.

Given the influence of public relations (PR) activities on news coverage, this study will examine issue salience and attribute salience in the media according to the type of issues and areas to which PR activities are relevant. Hence, the following research question and hypotheses are provided:

Research Question 2: What issues had been saliently shown in the media regarding South Korea?

Hypothesis 3a: Subjects of PR activities will be related to issue salience in the media regarding South Korea.

Hypothesis 3b: Increased public relations activities will be related to a decrease in the amount of negative news stories regarding South Korea.

Research Question 3: Was there an increase of favorable, friendly or positive portrayals in news related to subjects of PR activities?

Foreign Principals, Public Relations Counsel, and FARA Report

To measure the public relations efforts of foreign countries in the U.S., Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA) semi-annual reports will be used. Prior studies (Kiousis & Wu, 2008; Lee, 2007; Zhang, 2004) have used these reports released by the U.S. Department of Justice to

define public relations subsidies from foreign countries in the U.S. By using FARA reports as secondary data, Lee (2007) found that public relations activities initiated by foreign nations' governments are significant predictors of the prominence of U.S. media coverage. He also characterized the report as the ideal source for public relations activities of foreign governments in the U.S.

In 1938, FARA was passed to “ensure that the U.S. Government and the people of the United States are informed of the source of information (propaganda) and the identity of persons attempting to influence U.S. public opinion, policy, and laws” (FARA, n.d.). Any foreign principals, including “foreign political parties, a person or organization outside the United States, except U.S. citizens, and any entity organized under the laws of a foreign country or having its principal place of business in a foreign country,” must “register with the Department of Justice and file forms outlining its agreements with, income from, and expenditures on behalf of the foreign principal and copies of public relations contract information” (FARA, n.d.). Among public relations contracts, “public relations, media relations, press releases, newsletters, homepages, public information services, and governmental relations” were indicated as main activities (Lee, 2007, p. 161). The department generates two semi-annual reports every year and the reports from 1997 through 2009 have been declassified on the FARA Web site (<http://www.fara.gov/annualrpts.html>).

U.S. Public's Interests on South Korea and Its International Reputation

Historically, the United States and South Korea have maintained an alliance to deter aggression from North Korea. In a national survey of American public opinion conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in 2010, Americans saw this original intent of the U.S.-Korea alliance as a value (Cha & Katz, 2010). Moreover, “80% of survey respondents indicate that if North and South Korea were to reunify as a single nation, the United States should maintain its

alliance with Korea” (Cha & Katz, 2010, p. 2). Two rationales behind this result were suggested; one is the potential threat of China’s rising power and the other is strong economic ties with Korea. Given that a large percentage (65%) of respondents recognized China as a military threat, Cha and Katz (2010) saw it as a main reason for maintaining the U.S.-Korea alliance.

In addition, a majority of Americans (62%) favor U.S. negotiations with North Korea as a way for ending its nuclear program. When asked about U.S. deployment if South Korea is attacked by North Korea, more than 60% of respondents supported the use of troops when the United States share in efforts from other countries as well as U.N. sponsorship.

For the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS-FTA), the status quo is supported in general, which means opposing new agreements with South Korea (The Chicago Council, 2010). Cha and Katz (2010) pointed out that “it is not surprising given the current state of the U.S. economy struggling with 9.5 percent unemployment rate and a large trade deficit” (p. 7). Furthermore, 71% of Americans do not recognize South Korea as one of the U.S.’s top ten trading partners—South Korea is the seventh-largest trading partner of U.S. However, Cha and Katz (2010) believed that President Obama’s statement of passing KORUS-FTA in G20 summit in Toronto may change U.S. public opinion in favor of the agreement.

South Korea is one of 60 nations that went through the “third wave” of global democratization (Huntington, 1991) and it is “a representative of a number of emerging economies that have experienced extensive periods of political and economic liberalization in recent decades” (Siegel, 2007, p. 623). According to the database of the International Monetary Fund (IMF):

The economy is export-driven, with production focusing on electronics, automobiles, ships, machinery, petrochemicals and robotics. South Korea is a member of the United Nations, WTO, OECD and G-20 major economies. South Korea is one of four newly industrialized Asian economies of 33 advanced

economies. It is Asia's fourth-largest economy and the world's 14th (nominal) or 12th (purchasing power parity) largest economy (IMF, 2010).

According to U.N. Human Development Report 2010, South Korea is classified as “Very high human development” in the Human Development Index. In contrast to its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita or per capita income, the HDI examines “how income is turned into education and health opportunities and therefore into higher levels of human development” (UNDP, 2010, p. 46).

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

This study will use a triangulation of methods by comparing media content, public opinion data, and FARA semi-annual reports concerning South Korea in 2008 and in 2010.

Public Opinion

Two public opinion surveys published in 2008 and 2010 by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs were used to measure U.S. public opinion about the perceived importance of South Korea and the attitude towards this Eastern Asian country. The Chicago Council conducts public opinion surveys nationwide in the United States every two years (The Chicago Council, 2010).

Soft Power in Asia: Results of a 2008 Multinational Survey of Public Opinion (2009) was published by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) and the East Asia Institute (EAI) in South Korea. They conducted public opinion surveys in the United States, Japan, China, South Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam to find out each country's soft power indices in terms of national pride perceived by the people in their own country and reputation by other countries (EAI, 2008). The report also included U.S. public's perception of South Korea and presented how the U.S. public feels about South Korea through a feeling thermometer. The feeling thermometer indicates what attitudes respondents have towards an object nation (0 degrees means a very cold or very unfavorable feeling; 100 degrees means a very warm or very favorable feeling; 50 degrees means not particularly warm or cold towards an object nation). The survey conducted in the United States was asked to 1,029 randomly selected U.S. adults and the margin of error was ± 3.1 percentage points (The Chicago Council, 2010).

Global Views 2010 – Constrained Internationalism: Adapting to New Realities was also published based on a 2010 national survey conducted (The Chicago Council, 2010). The survey polled 2,596 adult Americans, asking them more than 100 questions regarding diverse details of

U.S. foreign policy and their attitudes toward other nations, and its margin of error was ± 1.9 percentage points (The Chicago Council, 2010). *The Global Views 2010* report also included the results of a 100-point feeling thermometer rating 22 countries favorable or unfavorable.

Media Content

For media content, news articles in *The New York Times* were analyzed. Since prior studies used them extensively, it can be considered reliable. Golan (2006) analyzed international news coverage in *The New York Times* to assess its influence on television network news programs; Manheim and Albritton (1984) regarded *The New York Times* as a primary source for opinion leaders to read. Semmel (1976) believed that a larger volume of foreign news is transmitted through it than other major U.S. newspapers. Wanta and Hu (1993) also chose *The New York Times* as a single newspaper source other than television networks because it has national circulation that may influence the majority of respondents' opinion in Gallup polls. In addition, Winter and Eyal (1981) asserted that *The New York Times* has been recognized to show a robust agenda-setting influence on public opinion as one of the most extensively cited newspapers by policymakers (Grau, 1976). Furthermore, it symbolizes "a primary target for public relations efforts as well as an acid test of their effectiveness" (Manheim & Albritton, 1984, p. 647). Kiouisis and Wu's study (2008), which handled international agenda-setting and agenda-building effects, also used *The New York Times* as data for analysis of media contents.

Articles of *The New York Times* were retrieved from the LexisNexis® database. Setting a time frame to see agenda-setting effects has been varied in every agenda-setting study from a couple of weeks (Wanta & Hu, 1993) to nine months (Atwood, Sohn, & Sohn, 1978). Particularly, previous research targeting countries as subjects also showed different period settings ranging from three months (e.g., Kiouisis & Wu, 2008) to two constructed weeks through a year (e.g., Besova & Cooley, 2009) and ten months (Wanta et al., 2004). As this study

attempted to look at public perception of one particular country and to see issue salience in media coverage affected by public relations efforts, it is necessary to allow audiences to view related issues and perceive a country for an ample time period. In this study, news articles from March 3 to July 3 in 2008 and from February 11 to June 11 in 2010 — for four months each before each year’s public opinion — were analyzed to compare news coverage with public opinion surveys and also to compare with public relations activities documented in FARA reports in 2008 and 2010. Articles searched by key word “South Korea” as search terms in the LexisNexis® database were used to collect the samples ($N = 147$ in 2008; $N = 170$ in 2010).

As object salience was clarified as the frequency of stories presenting foreign nations in *The New York Times* content in studies that addressed agenda-setting effect (Kiousis, 2004; Kiousis & Wu, 2008; McCombs & Shaw, 1972), this study also tallied all individual news articles mentioning South Korea as a major term in the news stories to see the salience of South Korea in the U.S. media and investigated whether there was a significant difference in object salience of South Korea between 2008 and 2010 through a chi-square analysis. Substantive and affective attributes of each news story were also coded to see the second level agenda-setting effect. The coding category of this study was adopted from Kiousis and Wu’s study (2008). As shown in Table 3-1, there are three substantive frames: conflict frames, involvement frames, and overall attention. News reports describing a confrontation or dispute concerning South Korea were categorized as the conflict frame and those describing the intervention of the United States in a situation concerning South Korea and reversed involvement frames—the intervention of South Korea in a situation concerning the United States—were identified as the involvement frame. Finally, news stories generally describing events of South Korea that belong to neither the conflict frame nor the involvement frame were recognized as the overall attention. Affective

attributes for the conflict frame were coded as unfavorable, neutral, or favorable and those for the involvement frame were coded as hostile, neutral, or friendly. Lastly, the affective attributes for the overall attention to South Korea in the news story were coded as negative, balanced, or positive. Coders generally looked at overall tones of an article. If positive and negative tones were mixed, the coders counted them by each paragraph. Also, in the case of South Korea involvement frames, tones of paragraphs to indicate its involvement were used. When coders judge tones of an article, they counted tones by words used in the article as well as sentences containing affective meanings.

To answer research question one, issues of South Korea were investigated in the articles of *The New York Times*. The type of issues was partially acquired from Besova and Cooley's study (2009) and a section of the Republic of Korea in the 2008 and 2010 FARA reports. The type of issues comprised are: international trade, economic issues, military and security, conflict, crime, diplomacy and political issues, energy and environment, human rights, immigration issues, religious issues, science and technology issues, health, tourism and travel, media, sports, culture, education, history, North Korean society, national character (Table 3-2).

FARA Reports

As stated in the literature review, semi-annual FARA reports were used to assess public relations efforts of South Korean principals. The number of public relations counsels hired by South Korean principals in a first half of 2008 was 22 and, for a first half of 2010, it was 19.

Unlike prior studies by Kioussis and Wu (2008) and Wanta et al. (2004), this study targets only one country — South Korea. Consequently, the study examined which South Korean principal conducted public relations practices and analyzed which subject or issue such public relations activity belongs to. Eventually, this study explored whether there are correlations between the subjects of public relations activities and salience of issues as media agendas.

Public relations activities described in the FARA reports were categorized into the type of issues composed based on Besova and Cooley's study (2009) and the 2008 and 2010 FARA reports.

Data Analyses

To ensure internal validity of the study, Krippendorff's alpha was measured as an intercoder reliability test, which is one of the most commonly used in content analysis studies. Regarding the adequate amount of samples needed for the reliability test, there are varied arguments from 5% and 7% of the total body of contents (Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989) to 10% and 25% of the total (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Referring to previous related studies (e.g., 10% in Wanta et al. (2004), 5.5% in Kiouisis & Wu (2008)), this study systematically and randomly selected 15% of all news stories ($N = 22$ in 2008; $N = 26$ in 2010) concerning South Korea in 2008 and 2010 as samples for the reliability test.

Intercoder reliability was measured for three variables: The subject of news story, a substantive frame, and an affective attribute of the story. An agreement level for the news story subject was 85.7%, and its Krippendorff's alpha value was 0.83. For the substantive frame, coders reached 91.8% of agreement, and the alpha value was 0.87. Third, for the affective attribute variable, 95.9% of agreement as attained and the alpha value was considered satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.92$).

Furthermore, to investigate Hypothesis 1, all news stories in *The New York Times* published in 2008 and 2010 that contained and used South Korea as a major term were tallied and the number of news stories was compared with the results of the public opinion surveys through a chi-square test. For example, the news stories mentioning South Korea simply as a geographic location were excluded, but those covering issues that directly related to South Korea or those covering stories in which South Korea was specifically involved were included. By

finding out how frequently South Korea was stated in news articles for a certain period before the public opinion surveys and comparing the amount of the U.S. news coverage of South Korea with the U.S. public's feelings toward South Korea between 2008 and 2010, the object salience in news stories that affected a change in the public's perception of the object country, i.e., Korea, can be determined.

To examine Hypothesis 2, the extent to which the number of news articles was different between 2008 and 2010 in terms of affective attributes needed to be investigated. Also, whether there was a significant difference for the two designated years was examined by using a chi-square test. In addition, to answer Research Question 1, the number of news stories, including such negative attributes—an unfavorable or hostile tone in news frames, needed to be compared between 2008 and 2010 to determine whether there had been a decrease in number concerning negative news stories or not.

For Research Question 2, the frequency of news articles for each topic was measured based on the categorization of new subjects (Table 3-2). Continuing on to Hypothesis 3a, the number of news topics for four months in each year was compared to the number of public relations activities addressed in that same year's semi-annual FARA report through testing the Spearman rank order correlation. Before the actual statistical analysis, topics were balanced between the news subjects in *The New York Times* and those for public relations activities to compare them under the same subject categories that corresponded to the subjects documented on the FARA reports and offered as salient news subjects. To find the agenda-building influences of public relations activities on media coverage, a positive relationship between these two variables was expected.

Furthermore, to see the agenda-building effects that occur between public relations activities and media coverage, a correlation between the number of news stories, including negative attributes, as well as addressing those subjects that relate to public relations activities and the number of public relations activities was needed. To support Hypothesis 3b, an inverse relationship between the two factors was expected.

Finally, to answer Research Question 3, the frequency of news stories, including their positive attributes, as well as addressing the topics relevant to public relations activities was investigated for each year.

Due to a limited availability of public opinion survey data, this study was conducted using a preliminary approach for further research on the agenda-setting and the agenda-building effects on one particular country. Thus, for exploring the correlations between media coverage and public opinion surveys, this study sought to provide the rationale for the correlations found by analyzing media content. Therefore, although media analysis barely was found to connect to public opinion survey results directly, presenting such meaningful rationales to support agenda-setting theory does contribute and offer a clear foundation for future research that can examine the causal relationships for the agenda-setting of international news as initially proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972).

Table 3-1. Coding category of media content

Object salience		Determined by frequency of news stories of South Korea	
Media Salience		Conflict frames	News reports describing a confrontation or dispute concerning South Korea
		Substantive frames	News reports describing the intervention of the U.S. in a situation concerning South Korea, and vice versa—the intervention of South Korea in a situation concerning the U.S
	Attribute salience	Involvement frames	News reports generally describing events of South Korea
		Overall attention	Coded as unfavorable, neutral or favorable
	Affective attributes	Conflict frames	Coded as hostile, neutral or friendly
		Involvement frames	Coded as negative, balanced or positive
		Overall attention	

Table 3-2. The type of issues of South Korea

Categories of Issues
International Trade
Economic issues
Military and Security
Conflict
Crime
Diplomacy and Political issues
Energy and Environment
Human rights
Immigration issues
Religious issues
Science and Technology issues
Health
Tourism and Travel
Media
Sports
Culture
Education
History
North Korean Society
National Character

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Media Salience and the U.S. Public Perception of South Korea

To test hypothesis one, first, it was necessary to examine whether there was increased U.S. media salience toward South Korea in 2010 when comparing the media coverage in 2010 to coverage in 2008. Of the 317 observations gathered from LexisNexis® database by inputting the search term “South Korea,” 247 news articles were found as including relevant stories to South Korea rather than news articles simply stating the country as a geographic location. These were used for the data analysis. The number of news stories for the four months before the public opinion survey conducted in 2008 totaled 103, and in 2010, and there were a greater number of news stories on South Korea before the 2010 public opinion survey, totaling 144.

Regarding the U.S. public perception of South Korea, favorable feelings toward South Korea was increased to 52 in 2010, which is 6.3 points up comparing to 2008 (45.7).

When investigating whether there was a significant difference in the amount of U.S. news coverage and U.S. public’s perception of South Korea between 2008 and 2010, no significant difference was found, $\chi^2(1, N = 2) = .735, p = .391$.

Affective Attributes of U.S News

Research question one and hypothesis two investigated how affective attributes of news stories about South Korea changed in 2010 compared to 2008. Based on the survey results for U.S. public perception change of South Korea, it was expected to be more positive or less negative media coverage of South Korea during the four-month period before the 2010 survey.

In the media coverage of South Korea in 2008, 65.0% ($n = 67$) of the news articles had a neutral or balanced tone with 31.1% ($n = 32$) of news portrayed stories having a hostile, or negative tone, and 3.9% ($n = 4$) of news stories demonstrating a friendly or positive tone. In 2010,

on the other hand, 81.9% ($n = 118$) of news stories contained a neutral or balanced tone, 15.3% ($n = 22$) presented a favorable, friendly, or positive tone of news, and only 2.8% ($n = 4$) showed an unfavorable, hostile, or negative tone. In addition, the affective attributes of news for the two years were indicated as being significantly different, $\chi^2(2, N = 247) = 42.67, p < .001$ (Table 4-1).

Hence, as hypothesis two suggested, the salience of positive attributes of news stories increased. This observed result could be the rationale for the U.S. public to consider South Korea as a more important country than other countries. Moreover, there were a fewer number of negative portrayals in 2010 (2.8%, $n = 4$) compared to those for 2008 (31.1%, $n = 32$).

In a combined view that included substantive frames, the affective attributes reported with involvement frames were significantly different between 2008 and 2010 for the news coverage of South Korea, $\chi^2(2, N = 119) = 33.57, p < .001$. As presented in Table 4-2, the hostile tone of news decreased in 2010 from 42.0% ($n = 50$) of total coverage with involvement frames in 2008 to 1.4% ($n = 1$) of total involvement frames in 2010. Also, news stories that had friendly tones increased in 2010 (23.2%, $n = 16$) compared to 2008 (6.0%, $n = 3$).

Not only did the news stories showing friendly tones increased, but also stories with a neutral tone rose up from 52.0% ($n = 26$) in 2008 to 75.4% ($n = 52$) in 2010.

In terms of overall attention, on the other hand, although a significant difference in affective attributes between the two years was observed ($p < .01$) as indicated in Table 4-2, this result was not acceptable because two cells that related to positive attributes under the overall attention category (33.3% of total cells) had expected counts that were less than 5. Lastly, there was no news story with conflict frames in either 2008 or 2010. Therefore, hypothesis two was only partially supported in the involvement frame.

Issue Salience of News

Research question two examined issues of South Korea that had been saliently reported in the media. As indicated in Table 4-3, diplomacy and politics was the most frequently reported issue both in 2008 (25.2%, $n = 26$) and 2010 (27.8%, $n = 40$), and military and security issues (18.8%, $n = 27$) was the second most covered issue in 2010. Conflict stories came in second (14.6%, $n = 15$) in 2008.

Continually, while military and security (10.7%, $n = 11$) and economic issues (10.7%, $n = 11$) were covered at same rate as the third in 2008, sports (17.4%, $n = 25$) was the third most covered topic in 2010.

Furthermore, when collapsing these related issues into four major news categories—politics, economy, society, and culture—based on the issue attributes of the dominant number of news articles in each issue category, a significant difference was found between the 2008 and 2010 news coverage, $\chi^2(3, N = 247) = 8.43, p < .05$.

Relationship between Subjects of Public Relations and News Subjects

Hypothesis 3a predicted there would be a correlation between issue salience in the media and the topics of public relations activities, based on the agenda-building influences of public relations activities in the media. Table 4-4 reports the number of public relations subjects documented in FARA reports and the percentage of news topics covered in the same period that the FARA reports covered.

However, any relationships between news topics and the subjects of public relations activities were not discovered either in 2008 or in 2010. The correlation coefficients were $-.25$ ($p = .633$) in 2008 and $-.53$ ($p = .280$) in 2010. Thus, Hypothesis 3a was not supported.

Public Relations Activities and Affective Attributes of News

Hypothesis 3b and research question three explored how affective attributes of issue salience in the media changed according to the degree of public relations activities practiced on similar topics. Hypothesis 3b anticipated that increased public relations activities would link to decreased negative news stories on South Korea.

As reported in Table 4-5, there was no significant relationship between public relations activities and negative news coverage of South Korea in 2008: the correlation coefficient between public relations activities in 2008 and hostile involvement frames for South Korea in 2008 was $-.460$ ($p = .436$), and the correlation coefficient for public relations activities in 2008 and negative overall attention given to South Korea in 2008 was $-.287$ ($p = .640$). For the correlation between public relations activities in 2010 and negative news stories on South Korea in 2010, media content data could not be used for statistical testing, because no sufficient number of news were found in both the hostile frames and the negative attention categories. As a result, Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

In addition, any correlation between positive portrayals of South Korea and public relations activities practiced for same periods related to research question three indicated no significant relationships between public relations activities in 2010 and friendly media frames for South Korea in 2010 as well as between public relations activities in 2010 and positive media attention to South Korea in 2010. The correlation coefficient for the friendly involvement frame and public relations activities was $-.750$ ($p = .086$), and the correlation coefficient for positive media attention and public relations activities was $-.514$ ($p = .296$). Finally, the number of news articles for both friendly involvement frames and positive media attention in 2008 was not enough to perform a correlation analysis between the public relations activities and the two affective attributes of news in 2008 (Table 4-5).

Table 4-1. Changes in affective attributes of news of South Korea between 2008 and 2010

Affective attribute	Year 2008 (N = 103)	Year 2010 (N = 144)
Hostile or negative	31.1% (32)	2.8% (4)
Neutral or balanced	65% (67)	81.9% (118)
Friendly or positive	3.9% (4)	15.3% (22)

Note: $\chi^2(2, N = 247) = 42.67, p < .001$.

Table 4-2. Differences in affective attributes of news of South Korea under substantive frames between 2008 and 2010

Affective salience	Year 2008 (N)	Year 2010 (N)
Involvement frames		
Hostile	42.0% (21)	1.4% (1)
Neutral	52.0% (23)	81.9% (52)
Friendly	6.0% (3)	15.3% (16)
Total	100.0% (50)	100.0% (69)
$\chi^2(2, N = 119) = 33.57, p < .001$		
Overall attention		
Negative	20.8% (11)	4.0% (3)
Balanced	77.4% (41)	88.0% (66)
Positive	1.9% ^a (1)	8.0% ^a (6)
Total	100.0% (53)	100.0% (75)
$\chi^2(2, N = 128) = 10.51, p < .01$		

Note: a. Cells (33.3% of overall attention category) with an expected count less than 5.

Table 4-3. Issue salience of news of South Korea in 2008 and 2010

Issues	Year 2008 (N = 103)		Year 2010 (N = 144)	
	n	%	n	%
Politics				
Diplomacy and Politics	26	25.2	40	27.8
Military and Security	11	10.7	27	18.8
Conflict	15	14.6	7	4.9
Immigration	3	2.9	0	0.0
Total	55	53.4	74	51.4
Economy				
Trade	9	8.7	2	1.4
Economy	11	10.7	16	11.1
Energy and Environment	0	0.0	1	0.7
Science and Technology	7	6.8	2	1.4
Total	27	26.2	21	14.6
Society				
Crime	1	1.0	4	2.8
Human rights	2	1.9	0	0.0
Education	3	2.9	0	0.0
History	0	0.0	1	0.7
North Korean Society	0	0.0	6	4.2
Total	6	5.8	11	7.6
Culture				
Health	2	1.9	0	0.0
Media and Entertainment	1	1.0	2	1.4
Sports	8	7.8	25	17.4
Culture	4	3.9	9	6.3
National Character	0	0.0	2	1.4
Total	15	14.6	38	26.4

Note: $\chi^2(3, N = 247) = 8.43, p < .05$.

Table 4-4. Correlation between topics for public relations activities and news topics

Year/Topics	PR Activities	News (%)
2008		
International trade and FTA	13	8.7
Diplomacy and Politics	1	42.7
Economy (Investment, etc.)	6	10.7
Culture	4	4.9
Military	1	10.7
Sports	0	7.8
Total	25	77.7
<i>Spearman's rho</i> = $-.25$ ($p = .633$)		
2010		
International trade and FTA	12	1.4
Diplomacy and Politics	5	27.8
Economy (Investment, etc.)	5	11.1
Culture	4	7.7
Military	0	23.7
Sports	0	17.4
Total	26	89.1
<i>Spearman's rho</i> = $-.53$ ($p = .280$)		

Table 4-5. Correlation between subjects of PR activity and affective attributes of news of South Korea

	Involvement frame		Overall attention	
	Hostile	Friendly	Negative	Positive
PR activity 2008	-.460	Less variance	-.287	Less variance
PR activity 2010	Less variance	-.750	Less variance	-.514

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore the agenda-setting influence of international news on the U.S. public's perception of South Korea and agenda-building influence of public relations activities on behalf of South Korean principals on the U.S. media coverage of South Korea. Specifically, South Korea's media salience as an object in the media was examined by investigating the amount of news coverage about South Korea for a certain period before the public opinion surveys and examining whether there was a significant difference in the number of news covering South Korea and the U.S. public's perceptions of South Korea between 2008 and 2010. Greater media salience was found in 2010 than in 2008, corresponding to the 2010 public opinion survey result that presented more favorable feelings of U.S. public toward South Korea. However, no significant difference was found between the two years of media object salience of South Korea as much as affecting U.S. public perception.

In addition, affective attributes of news stories about South Korea were investigated in each year to determine what tone *The New York Times* used to cover stories on South Korea and whether there was more positive or less negative news coverage of South Korea in 2010 based on the public opinion survey report in 2010. The results indicated a significantly different media salience of affective attributes of news stories about South Korea between 2008 and 2010. Furthermore, differences in affective attributes according to substantive frames and differences in issue salience between 2008 and 2010 news coverage of South Korea were explored. A statistically significant difference in affective attributes between 2008 and 2010 news coverage with involvement frames was observed; however, no significant difference was found in overall attention. Added to this, in terms of issue salience related to South Korea in 2008 and 2010, a significant difference occurred.

This study also sought to define a correlation between news subjects and public relations activities' subjects based on the agenda-building influence. In particular, two correlations were expected: an inverse correlation between increased public relations activities and negative news coverage on an issue subject in which a public relations activity was engaged and a positive correlation between increased public relations activities and positive news coverage on an issue subject in which a public relations activity was engaged. However, relationships between issue salience in the media and public relations activities' subjects were rarely found; the reversed relationship between increased public relations activities and issue-based negative news coverage was not found either. Moreover, the relationships between positive media portrayals and public relations activities were not found to be significant.

Agenda-Setting Influence on Public Opinion

Although no statistically significant difference between 2008 and 2010 in the number of news coverage of South Korea as much as influencing U.S. public's perception of South Korea was found, the statistical difference between the two years in affective attributes of news is correspond to the change of public opinion from "unfavorable (45.7)" in 2008 to "favorable (52)" in 2010. It is also consistent with previous research on international agenda-setting (Kiousis & Wu, 2008; Wanta et al., 2004) presenting significant positive associations between negative news salience and negative public perception of foreign countries.

The result of different attributes' salience in tones of news and frames between 2008 and 2010 media coverage of South Korea indicates the influence of media salience on the public's perception of a foreign country in terms of affective attributes of news coverage, which supports second-level agenda-setting effects (Ghanem & Evatt, 1995; McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Estrada, 1997). The significant difference in the involvement frame rather than overall attention between the two years also parallels previous study findings that presented stronger agenda-

setting effects of U.S. involvement frame and conflict frame on the public's concerns about foreign countries than overall attention of news coverage (Kioussis & Wu, 2008; Wanta & Hu, 1993). In addition, the lack of conflict frames found in both periods indicates that negative attributes of news were rarely covered, which may be linked to the U.S. public's warm feeling for South Korea (The Chicago Council, 2010). This finding provides meaningful implications to policymakers and public relations practitioners in that they will need to seek issues related to a targeted country if they want to improve the public's awareness and generate favorable attitudes about the country.

Agenda-Building Influence on Media Agenda

In terms of issue salience of South Korea, a significant difference emerged in issues covered in 2008 and 2010. Similar rates were evident for the politics category in both years, yet the second largest rate of categories differed: economy for 2008 and culture for 2010. Specifically, two major issues broke out in Korea in each year: In 2008, civilian protests against U.S. beef imports and the Korean and U.S. governments' resulting action, which is linked to diplomatic actions. Meanwhile, in 2010, a military shipment was attacked by a torpedo, resulting in U.S. military and diplomatic supports, as well as Yu-na Kim's winning of a gold medal in women's figure skating at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.

This shift in issue salience between 2008 and 2010 indicates why there was no correlation between news subjects and public relations activities' subjects. Although there were no outstanding differences between subjects of public relations activities in 2008 and 2010, issue salience in the media was time-sensitive in responding to issues that emerged when the news covered them. Moreover, according to the FARA reports in 2008 and 2010, which were used in this study, eight out of 20 public relations activities in 2008 and 12 of 19 public relations activities in 2010 were related to lobbying or contact with U.S. government officials (U.S.

Department of Justice, n.d.). The other types of public relations activities were also mostly concentrated on relations with interest groups, such as business contacts or participation in exhibitions and trade shows, rather than promoting activities targeting the general public. Such interest group-focused relations may be one of reasons that no correlations were found between the news subjects and subjects of public relations activities, thereby indicating a lack of support for agenda-building influence. Although Zhang and Cameron (2003) presented Chinese government-led public relations campaigns' influence on media agenda and Lee (2007) found a low level of association between the number of public relations contacts and the amount of news coverage 97 countries received, at the level of subjects of news and public relations activities for the one country examined in this study, no significant relationship existed.

In regard to the influence of public relations activities on affective attribute salience in the media, no relationships were observed in either negative news coverage or positive news portrayals with public relations activities. In this study, the relationships were examined at the level of issues. In other words, the amount of positive or negative news coverage was compared with the number of public relations activities by categorizing them into five major issues: trade, diplomacy and politics, economy, culture, military, and sports. Unlike previous research evidencing that the more public relations counsels a country received, the less negative news coverage the country experienced (Kioussis & Wu, 2008; Manheim & Albritton, 1984), the current study investigated the relationships between the number of public relations activities South Korean principals practiced and the amount of negative or positive news coverage of South Korea at the level of specific subjects.

Specifically, regarding public relations activities in 2008, although public relations efforts for international trade and free trade agreement with the United States were overwhelmingly

dominant (13 of 25 total public relations activities in 2008), civil protests against U.S. beef imports and their physical altercations with the police were portrayed with negative frames in the same period; consequently, the effects of public relations activities were not reflected in the news coverage. Regarding public relations activities' subjects in 2010, public relations efforts for trade were also prominent, indicating 12 out of a total of 26 activities; however, there was no positive portrayal on trade with South Korea whereas sports and military issues were reported with positive frames. During 2010, Korean figure skater Yu-na Kim won an Olympic gold medal and set a new world record, which was reported saliently; in addition, the Korea–U.S. military alliance was illuminated because of North Korea's provocation. Since such news coverage usually has nothing to do with governmental principals' public relations activities, the agenda-building influence might not be observed.

Interestingly, according to Shoemaker, Danielian, and Brendlinger (1991), three social significances—economic, political, and cultural significances—determine whether international issues can be covered as news or not. Shoemaker et al. (1991) asserted that as a country has more “substantial economic, political ties” and cultural similarities with the United States, events occurred of the country become more newsworthy (p. 785). Several specific indicators for the three types of social significances were provided: the event country's trade and investment sizes with the United States for economic significances, military alliances or presence of U.S. military in the event country for political significance, and ethnic and religious similarities for cultural significance (Shoemaker et al., 1991). Lee (2007) also suggested that countries holding a higher level of social significances will be more salient in the news coverage in a target country. South Korea is not geographically close to the United States; thus, it needs to appeal other cultural similarities and to focus efforts on linking economical and political association with the United

States. Cha and Katz (2010) pointed out that much of the U.S. public was not aware of South Korea's political, economical, and cultural similarities with the United States: About half of their respondents thought of "South Korea as democracy (with 40% thinking it is not a democracy)" (p. 8) while more than 70% of the U.S. public did not recognize South Korea as one of top ten trading partners for the United States and only 19% accurately names Christianity as the religion with the most followers in South Korea. Lee (2007) also observed significant relationships between the social significances such as religious similarity, trade size and foreign countries' investment in U.S. and the media salience of foreign countries as well as a significant relationship between public relations contacts and the international news salience. As the involvement frame indicates, a significant difference exists between the two years, implying that the agenda-setting effect—linking the two countries' association and similarities to public relations activities in the United States—would enhance the relationship between the United States and South Korea at both the general public level and between the two governments.

Implications for Agenda-Setting and Agenda-Building Influence

This study was intended to examine whether the salience of South Korea in the media influenced U.S. public opinion about South Korea. While a significant difference between 2008 and 2010 in object salience was not found, a significant difference in affective attributes of news about South Korea between the two years was observed. A significant difference in affective attributes according to involvement frames between 2008 and 2010 was found, whereas there was no significant difference in overall attention between the two years. These findings provide crucial theoretical implications that support second-level agenda-setting effects as suggested by previous scholarship (Ghanem & Evatt, 1995; Kiousis & Wu, 2008; McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Estrada, 1997; Wanta & Hu, 1993; Wanta et al., 2004). In particular, the finding of the significant difference between 2008 and 2010 in affective attributes of news that held

involvement frames highlights the stronger effects of the involvement frame, rather than the overall description of international news stories. This fortifies previous studies' findings that indicated more robust attribute agenda-setting effects in involvement frames compared to overall descriptions of foreign issues (Kioussis & Wu, 2008; Wanta & Hu, 1993).

This study also explored whether the public relations activities of South Korean principals in the United States affected media coverage of South Korea at the level of subjects and affective attributes of news. A significant difference in issues of South Korea between 2008 and 2010 news coverage was observed, however, there was no correlation between subjects of public relations activities and news subjects. There were also no correlations between public relations activities and affective attributes of news coverage. Since this study investigated the influence of public relations activities on news coverage at the level of specific subjects, this study's specific exploration added to previous studies that examined agenda-building influence between the number of public relations counsels provided to foreign countries and affective attributes of international news coverage (Kioussis & Wu, 2008; Lee, 2007; Manheim & Albritton, 1984). Based on the finding of Lee's study (2007) indicating significant relationships between both public relations contacts and foreign news coverage and also between social significances and international news coverage, public relations efforts that address cultural similarities and economic and political association with a target country may improve the media salience of those issues. Issues as such that involve a target country are expected to have stronger agenda-setting effects as suggest by the current study.

Limitations and Future Research

This study provided theoretical and professional implications of agenda-setting and agenda-building influences at the single-country level. However, this study also has several limitations, including reliance on limited data of public opinion and a narrow timeframe setting

for the analysis. It was hard to discern a pattern of relationships between the amount of news coverage and the public opinion change by comparing only two years of data. To address this limitation, a longitudinal study should be adopted in the future, looking at a longer period of time to examine the change in the U.S. public's perception of South Korea based on a greater amount of public opinion data. Furthermore, regarding the influence of public relations activities on news coverage, rather than looking at only half- year periods, future research should establish a timeframe with a longer time-lag, such as two or three years, to help observe expected relationships regarding agenda-building effects. In addition, to better understand correlations between the subject of public relations activities and the subject of news, conducting in-depth interviews with public relations practitioners regarding how they practice public relations in detail may offer more meaningful practical findings concerning the correlations.

APPENDIX A
CODING GUIDE

1. Coder ID: (1) Eunju; (2) Kyung-Gook
2. Case number: (1, 2, 3, etc., from articles in 2008 and 2010)
3. News article number: Follow the number indicated in the beginning of an article (e.g., if an article is 1 of 111 DOCUMENTS, the article number will be 1; if an article is 1 of 138 DOCUMENTS, the article number will be 1 as well)
4. Date of News: mm/dd/yy
5. Subject of News (choose 1; or, if there are more than one, choose a more closely related one):
 - (1) International Trade
 - (2) Economic Issues
 - (3) Military and Security
 - (4) Conflict
 - (5) Crime
 - (6) Diplomacy and Political Issues
 - (7) Energy and Environment
 - (8) Human Rights
 - (9) Immigration Issues
 - (10) Science and Technology Issues
 - (11) Health
 - (12) Tourism and Travel
 - (13) Media
 - (14) Sports
 - (15) Culture
 - (16) Education
 - (17) History
 - (18) North Korean Society
 - (19) National Character
 - (99) Other: Please specify

(cf.) Drop any stories mentioning South Korea as simply a geographic location that are not actually relevant to the main point of the story.

(e.g., a story accusing a physician who violated certain medical law listed South Korea as one of his vacation locations, or the location where a news article was written was South Korea)

6. Substantive attributes of news:
 - (1) Conflict frames
 - (2) Involvement frames
 - (3) Overall description

7. Affective attributes of news:
 - (1) Favorable/ friendly/ positive
 - (2) Neutral/ balanced
 - (3) Unfavorable/ hostile/ negative

APPENDIX B
CODING CATEGORY OF MEDIA CONTENT

Media Salience	Object salience	Determined by frequency of stories mentioning South Korea		
	Attribute salience	Substantive attributes	Conflict frames	News reports describing a confrontation or dispute concerning South Korea
			Involvement frames*	News reports describing the U.S. intervention in a situation concerning South Korea or vice versa (South Korea’s intervention in a situation concerning the U.S.)
			Overall attention	News reports generally describing events of South Korea
		Affective attributes	Conflict frames	Coded as unfavorable, neutral, or favorable
			Involvement frames	Coded as hostile, neutral, or friendly
			Overall attention	Coded as negative, balanced, or positive

<Substantive Attribute>

* Involvement frames: (coded as 2)

- U.S. involvement in a situation concerning South Korea
(e.g., a news story of a South Korean civilian protesting against American beef imports
and the revision of terms of agreement between the two countries)
- South Korea’s involvement in a situation concerning the U.S.
(e.g., a news of a hidden reason for the U.S. failing to win a 2010 Vancouver Olympic
medal in figure skating and comparing it with the dominate winnings of South Korea
and Japan in recent periods of that time)
- South Korea’s involvement in a story about other countries
(e.g., a story of Canadian figure skater who “finished behind South Korea’s Kim Yu-
na”)

<Instruction for affective attributes>

- Generally, look at overall tones of an article; if positive and negative tones are mixed,
count them by each paragraph.

- In the case of South Korea involvement frames, use tones of paragraphs to indicate its involvement.
- When judging tones of an article, tones by words used in the article as well as sentences containing affective meanings are counted.

(eg.) Negative tones: “The government of South Korea sealed off major rallying points in central Seoul after hundreds of citizens and police officers were injured during a protest against United States beef imports,” (NYT, June 30, 2008, Section A, p.2) “It also forced South Korea to again confront one of the paradoxical legacies of its economic miracle” (NYT, April 24, 2008, Section C, p. 1).

Positive tones: “...winning a Olympic gold medal and her rightful place as one of the greatest women’s figure skaters of any era,” (NYT, Feb 27, 2010, Section D, p. 1) “Clinton said Wednesday that Washington would stand beside Seoul” (NYT, May 27, 2010, Section A, p. 10).

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Eunju Kang was born in Seoul, South Korea, in December 1985. While attending Kyung Hee University in Seoul, she accumulated various academic and working experiences in non-government organizations, fair trade, women rights, and international governmental organizations. Completing her undergraduate studies in 2010, Kang joined the graduate school of journalism and communications as a master's student majoring in public relations at the University of Florida.

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