



University of  
**Sheffield**

# **Reporting on East Asia**

## **International Journalism I**

Dani Madrid-Morales

18 April 2023

A WORLD  
**TOP 100**  
UNIVERSITY

# Your lecturer today

**Dani Madrid-Morales (@DMadrid\_M)**  
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- Lecturer at the University of Sheffield
- Studied Journalism & East Asian Studies
- Former broadcast journalist



## Lesson materials

If you'd like to follow along this presentation on your own device, you can download a copy by following the link below or scanning the QR code.

<https://bit.ly/uc3m-international>



# Today's Learning Outcomes

1. To examine key aspects of **inter-Asian state relations** in the twenty-first century that are often discussed in the news media.
2. To name some of the most prominent **English-language news sources** from/about East Asia.
3. To list **common shortcomings** in the news reporting of East Asian countries (China, Japan, South/North Korea) in global media.
4. To **recognize biases** in how the news media in East Asia report on other countries in the region.

# A word on terminology



- Russia
- East Asia
- Southeast Asia
- South Asia
- Central Asia
- West Asia
- Far-East
- The Orient



# **1. Inter-East Asian relations in the twenty-first century**

# Task #1 - News Quiz, East Asia Edition



# East Asia in the news in the last week

**BBC** Sign in Home News Sport Reel Worklife

## NEWS

Home | War in Ukraine | Climate | Video | World | UK | Business | Tech | Science | Stories

Asia | China | India

### North Korea says it tested "most powerful" missile to date

3 days ago

North Korea missile tests

**CNN** World Audio Live TV Log In

### Former J-pop star alleges sexual abuse by late Japanese music mogul Johnny Kitagawa

By Helen Regan, Sophie Jeong and Alex Stambaugh, CNN  
Updated 7:50 AM EDT, Thu April 13, 2023



Kyodo News/Getty Images

A roadside screen in Tokyo's Yurakucho area reports on July 10, 2019, the death of Johnny Kitagawa, founder of Japanese talent agency Johnny & Associates.

**DW** Live TV

IN FOCUS Russia's war in Ukraine Nuclear energy



POLITICS | CHINA

### Brazil's Lula lands in China for state visit

04/12/2023

FRANCE 24

Asia / Pacific

### Japanese PM Kishida resumes campaigning following 'smoke bomb' incident

Issued on: 15/04/2023 - 07:41 Modified: 15/04/2023 - 22:11

**REUTERS** World Business Markets Legal More Register

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Asia Pacific

3 minute read · April 11, 2023 5:33 PM GMT+2 · Last Updated 6 days ago

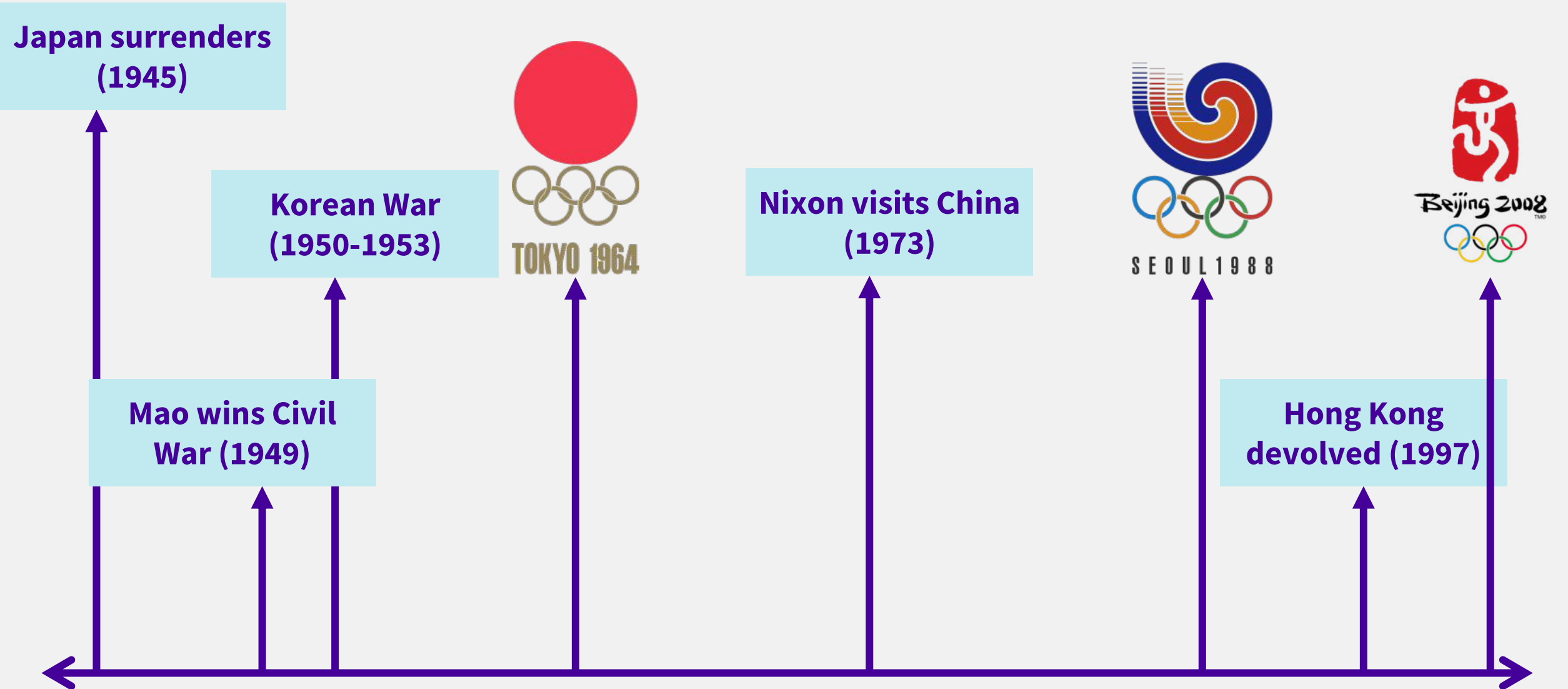
### A punch in the face for Xi caricature: Taiwan air force badge goes viral

Reporting on East Asia  
By Sarah Wu and Yew Lun Tian

# Key factors shaping inter-East Asian relations

- All the countries in the region **have highly intertwined histories**. The connections have become more intense since the twentieth century, but the common history precedes that point.

# A (recent) timeline of inter-East Asian relations



# Key factors shaping inter-East Asian relations

- All the countries in the region **have highly intertwined histories**. The connections have become more intense since the twentieth century, but the common history precedes that point. Nationalism-fueled tensions are on the rise.
- There are very significant differences in the **political systems** across the region, leading to “ideological battles” and contrasting worldviews.

# Diverse political systems

## JAPAN

**Liberal democracy  
with one dominant  
catch-all political  
party (LDP)**

## CHINA

**Authoritarian regime  
with “single-party”  
rule by China’s  
Communist Party  
(CCP)**

## SOUTH KOREA

**Multi-party liberal  
democracy with  
strong regional  
political cleavages**

# Diverse political systems

## **NORTH KOREA**

**Communist dynastic  
dictatorship with a  
very strong  
emphasis on military  
autonomy.**

## **TAWAN**

**Highly polarized  
multi-party and  
vibrant liberal  
democracy**

# Key factors shaping inter-East Asian relations

- All the countries in the region **have highly intertwined histories**. The connections have become more intense since the twentieth century, but the common history precedes that point. Nationalism-fueled tensions are on the rise.
- There are significant differences in the **political systems** across the region, leading to “ideological battles” and contrasting worldviews.
- Despite efforts towards deeper regional integration, particularly in the field of trade, contemporary relations are marked by **lingering political/military tensions**, from unresolved territorial disputes to historical revisionism.

# China's relations with its neighbours



**China shares land borders with 14 countries creating a uniquely complex situation**

# China's relations with its neighbours

- Taiwan is **the most contentious** of all territorial disputes, and the “reunification” of the two has been deemed a priority by Xi Jinping.
  - This has ramifications not just for the region but globally, as Taiwan has a military alliance with the US, which makes a potential conflict global.

# China's relations with its neighbours



**The 'reunification' of Taiwan  
has marked China's foreign  
policy since 1949**

# China's relations with its neighbours

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- India and China are both “allies” as they pursue a multipolar order with initiatives such as BRICS, but have also a **long-standing territorial dispute**. In 2020, dozens of soldiers died in armed fighting.

# China's relations with its neighbours



**Nationalism in both China and India has reignited border disputes, which remain unresolved.**

# China's relations with its neighbours

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- India and China are both “allies” as they pursue a multipolar order with initiatives such as BRICS, but have also a **long-standing territorial dispute**. In 2020, dozens of soldiers died in armed fighting.
- In the last 20 years, China has had a somewhat expansionist foreign policy, **claiming territorial control of large sways of the South China sea** (Spratly and Paracel Islands), raising tensions with multiple Southeast Asian nations and territories.

# China's relations with its neighbours



**China has been pursuing a policy of *faits accomplis* in much of the South China Sea**

# Japan's relations with its neighbours

- Japan's colonial legacy includes the ruling of the Korean Peninsula as a **protectorate** (between 1910 and 1945), the **invasion of China** from the North East to constitute a puppet state in Manchuria (1931-1945) and the creation of a **colony** in Taiwan (1895-1945).
  - The abuses committed by Imperial Japan mark much of its relations with its neighbours today.
- Japan has multiple “**low-stakes**” **territorial disputes** with Russia (around the Kuril Islands, China (Senkaku/Diaoyu islands) and South Korea (Dokdo/Takeshima).

# China's relations with its neighbours




**Japan claims sovereignty over territories in the East China Sea, Sea of Japan and Sea of Okhotsk.**

# Japan's relations with its neighbours

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- Japan has multiple “**low-stakes**” **territorial disputes** with Russia (around the Kuril Islands, China (Senkaku/Diaoyu islands) and South Korea (Dokdo/Takeshima).
- After its defeat in 1945, Japan included (or was forced to include) in its Constitution that it would **never have an offensive military force again**, and is highly dependent on the US militarily.

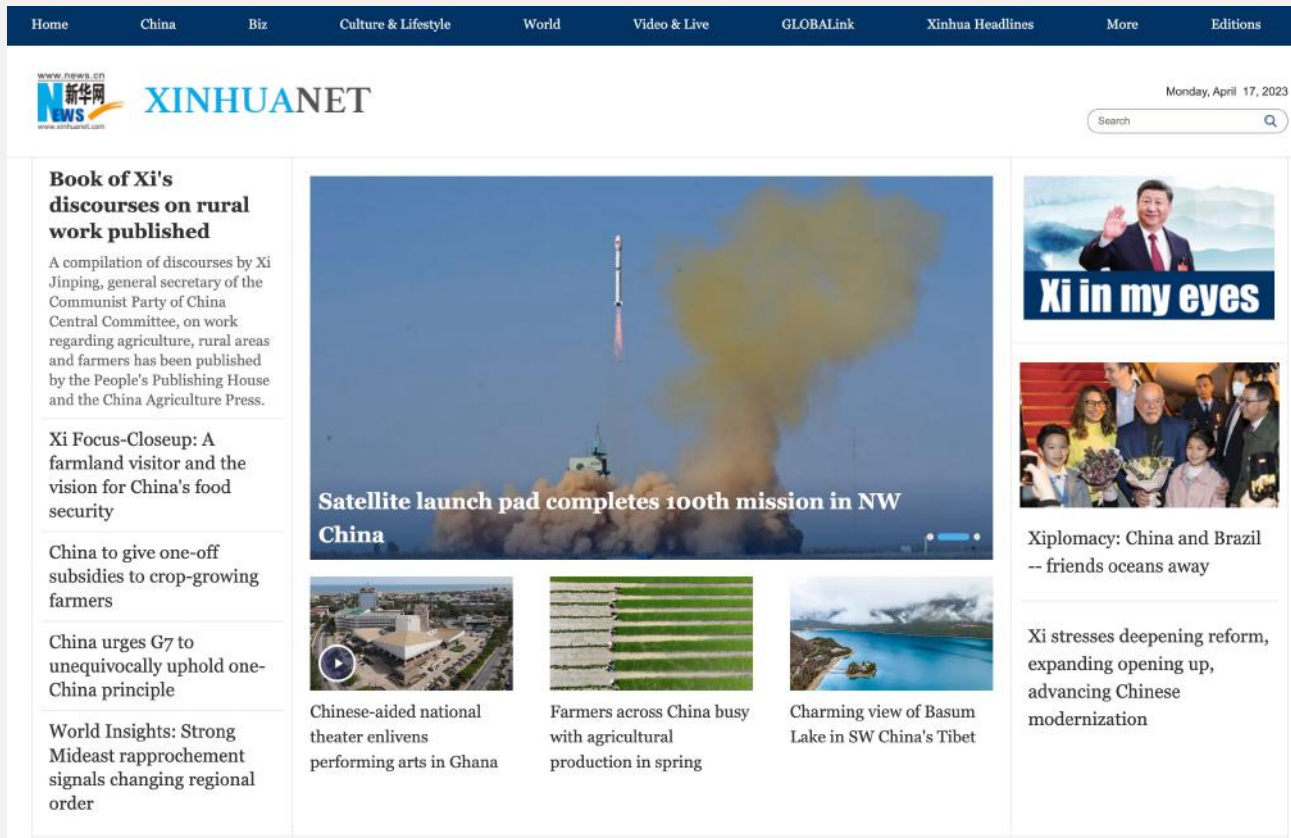
# North and South Korea's relations with their neighbours

- The Korean Peninsula is **divided in two parts** at the 38th Parallel since 1945, with a communist regime ruling the North (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), and a liberal democracy established in the South (Republic of Korea). Formally, the two Koreas are still at war.
- Efforts have been made over the years for a peaceful resolution to the conflict (e.g. Sunshine Policy in the 1990s) and both countries have pursued, with different degrees of intensity, **Unification policies**.
- US forces are stationed at the 38th Parallel. North Korea's regime sees its survival highly dependent on nuclear deterrence and has kept a **very activity nuclear programme**.



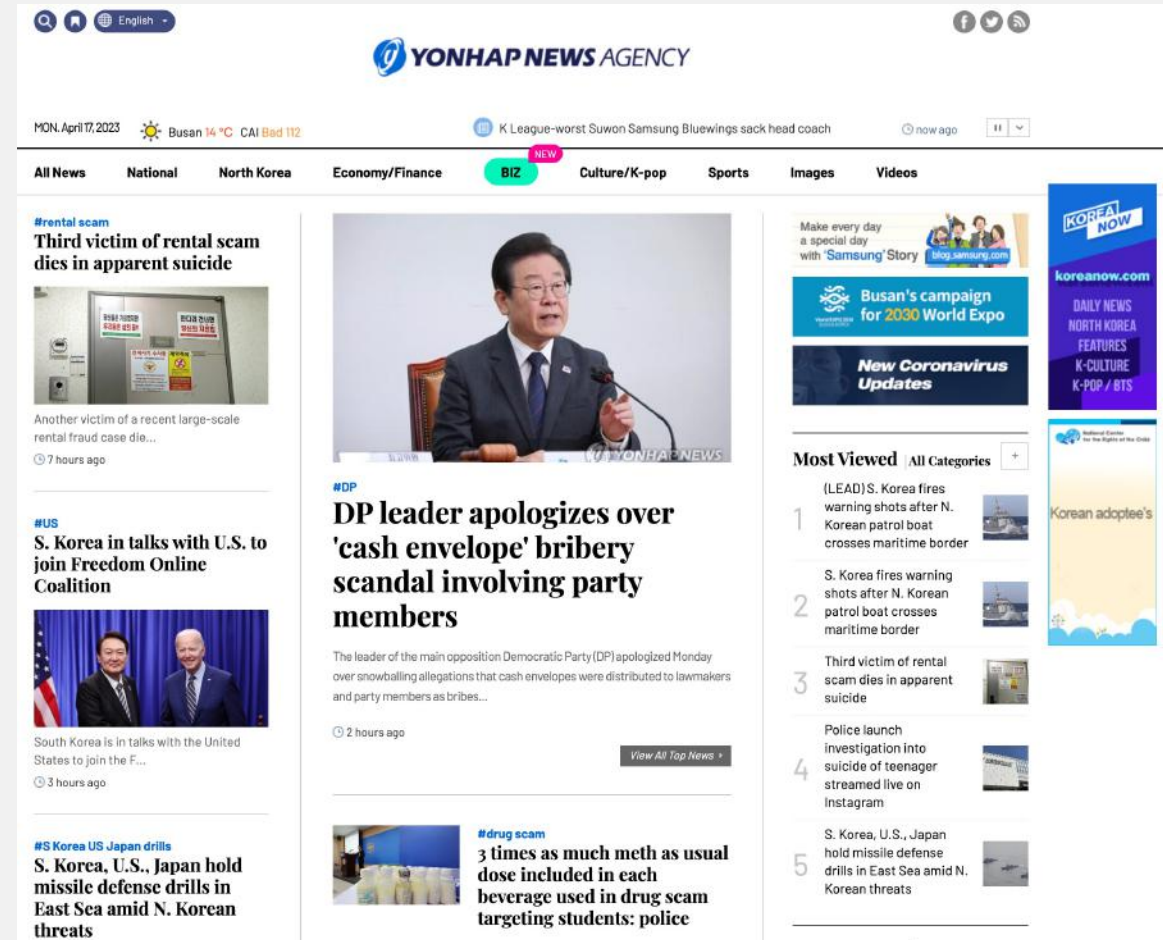
## **2. Media systems in East Asia in a nutshell**

## Task #2 – Find the differences



<https://english.news.cn>

18/04/2023



<https://en.yna.co.kr/>

Reporting on East Asia

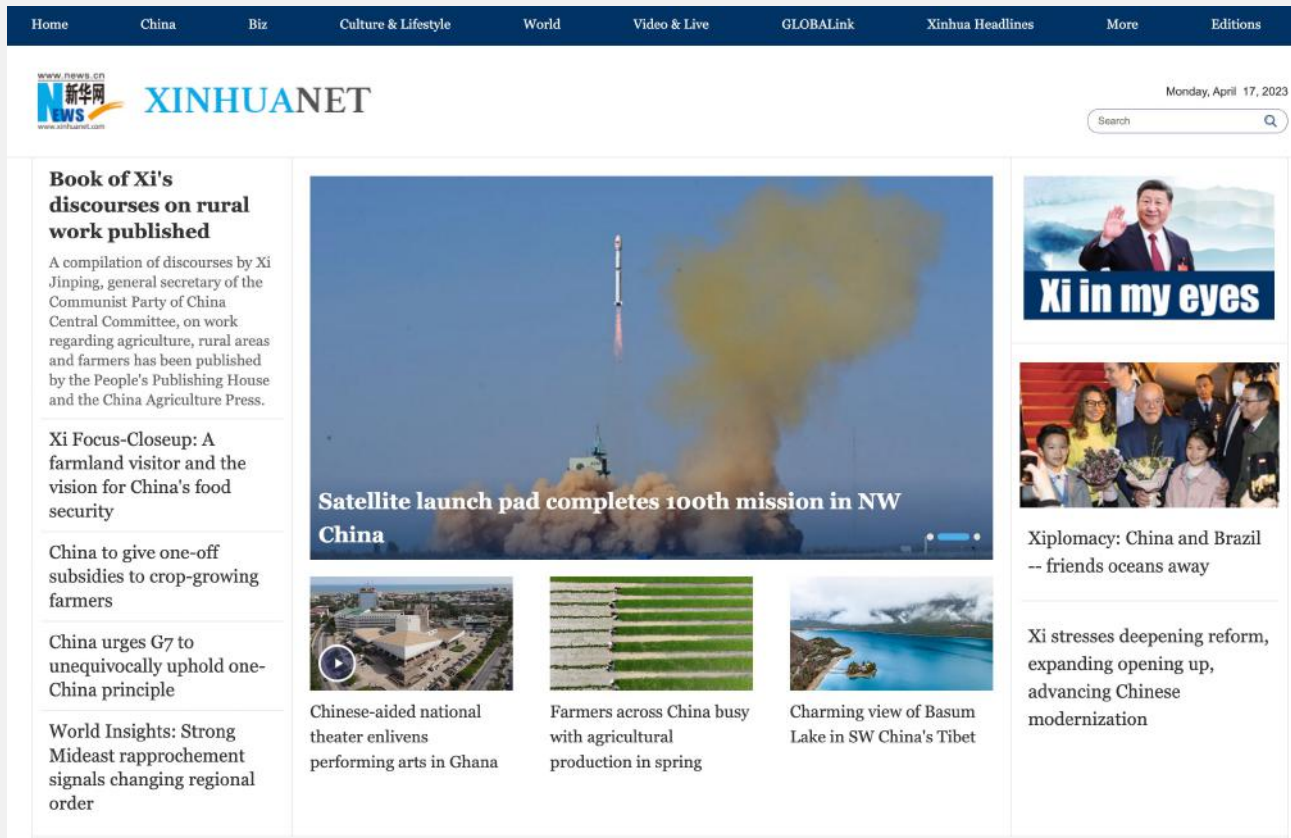
27

## Task #2 – Find the differences

1. Look at yesterday's home pages of China's and South Korea's leading news agencies.
2. For about 5 minutes, talk to the person sitting next to you about the differences in the two news agencies. What are, to you, the two most striking differences?
3. Post your responses on menti.com (5219 6447)

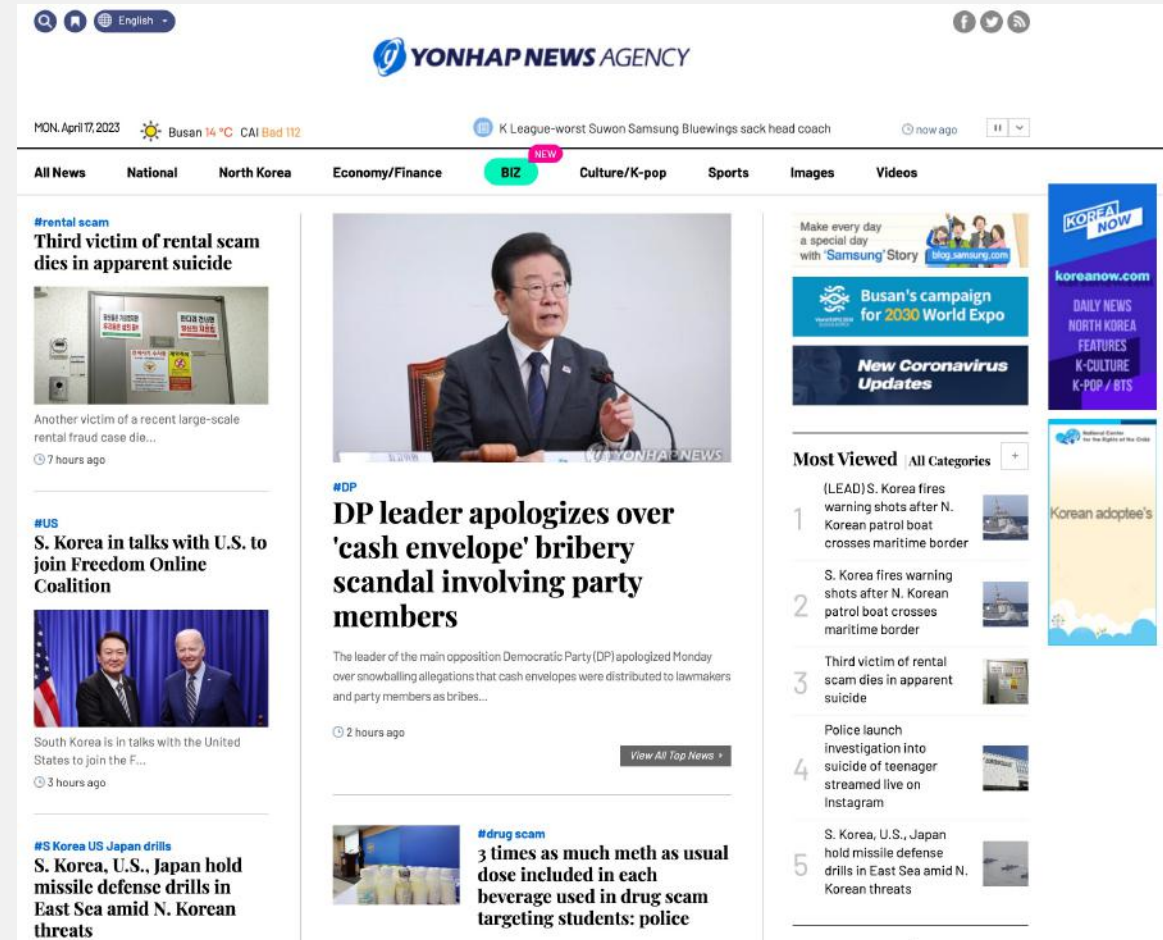


# Task #2 – Find the differences



<https://english.news.cn>

18/04/2023



<https://en.yna.co.kr/>

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29

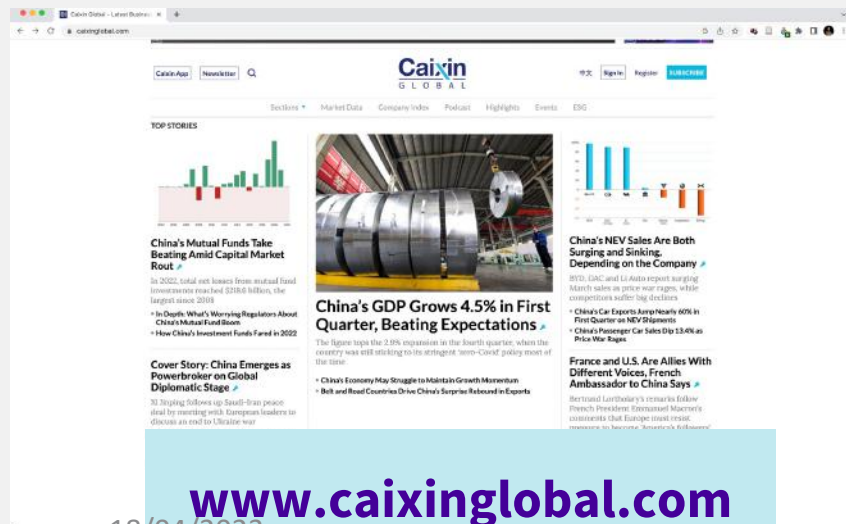
# The media in China

- There is no independent media in China. All news organisations are connected to the CCP/State. At the national level, newspapers, magazines, news agencies and broadcasting companies **operate as mouthpieces of the Party**.
  - Some media in Hong Kong, such as the *South China Morning Post*, have enjoyed some degree of autonomy, but Beijing has been trying to tighten up its control of the media in Hong Kong in recent years.
- There has been brief periods in China's recent history where Beijing has **experimented with loosening media restrictions** (particularly during the mid 1990s and the very early 2000s), but under Xi Jinping's rule the ideological control of the media has tightened up.
- The CCP operates a highly professionalised and well-funded **global network of multilingual information channels** with the goal of flooding the information space of pro-China narratives (or, in Beijing's view, countering anti-China narratives).

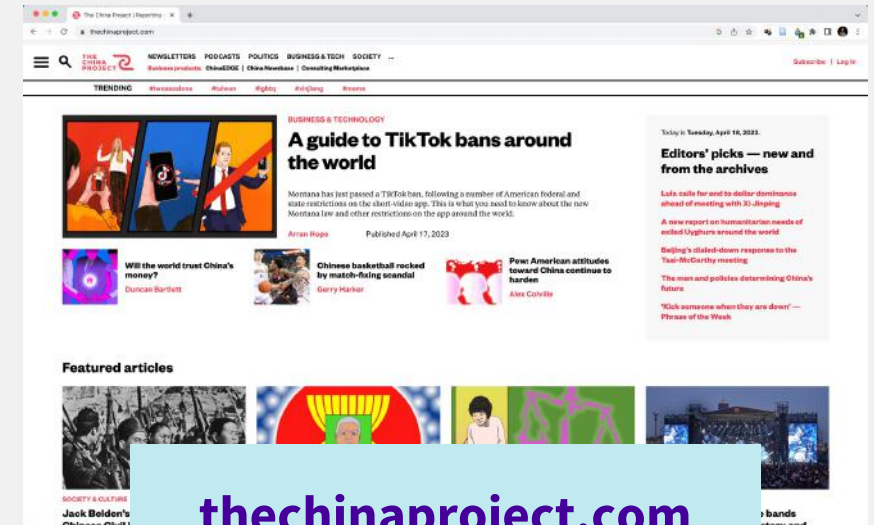
# English-language source on/from China



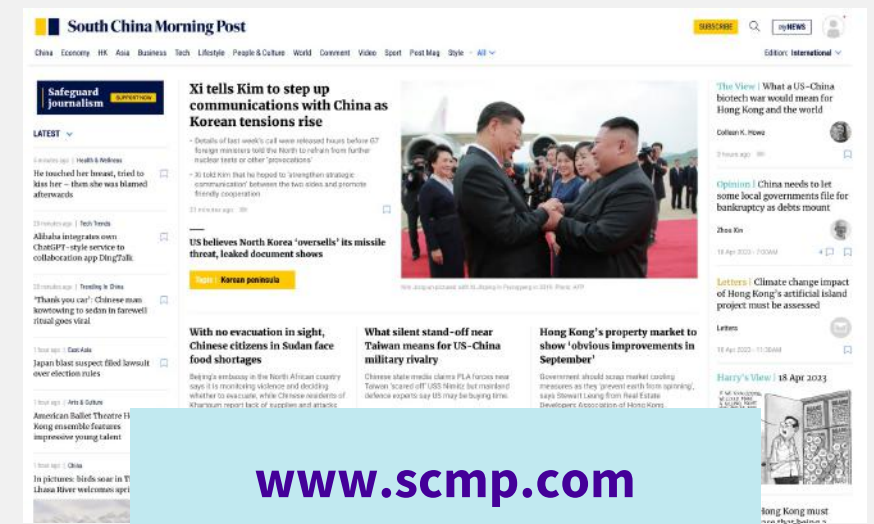
[www.chinadaily.com.cn](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn)



[www.caixinglobal.com](http://www.caixinglobal.com)



[thechinaproject.com](http://thechinaproject.com)



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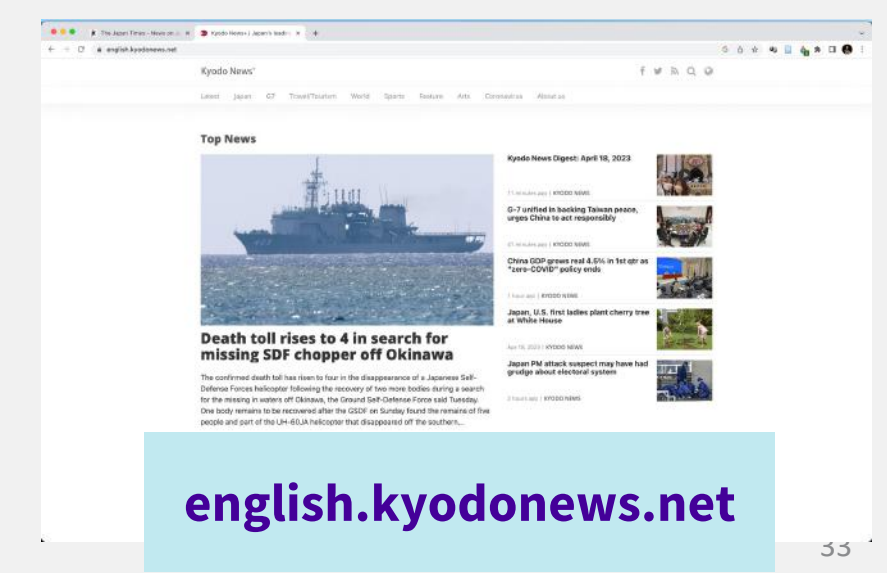
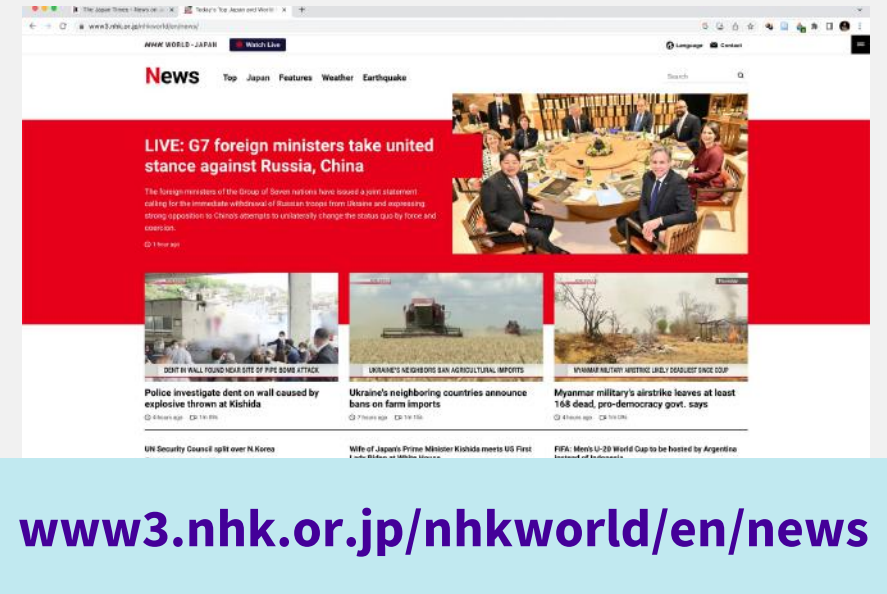
18/04/2023

Reporting on East Asia

# The media in Japan

- Japan has one of the **most saturated media markets** in the world, yet it remains highly insulated and therefore Japanese news companies are relatively unknown outside the country.
- The news market is dominated by **five national media groups** (Yomiuri, Nikkei, Fuji, Mainichi, Asahi, from most conservative to most liberal) that own massive conglomerates that include both print and broadcast media. The national broadcaster (NHK) and independent magazines are also influential.
- Government-media relations in Japan are regulated by a **unique system of press clubs** (*kisha clubs*) that have been described as “information cartels” because of the massive influence they have in information flows.

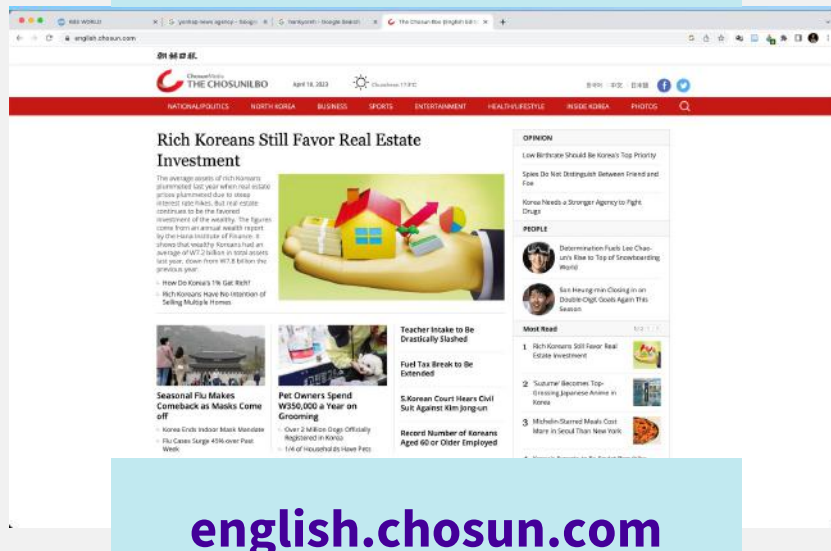
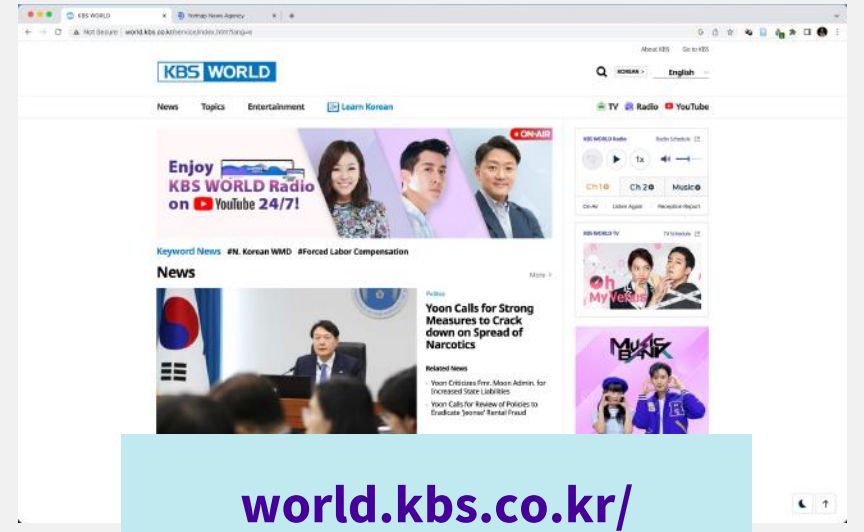
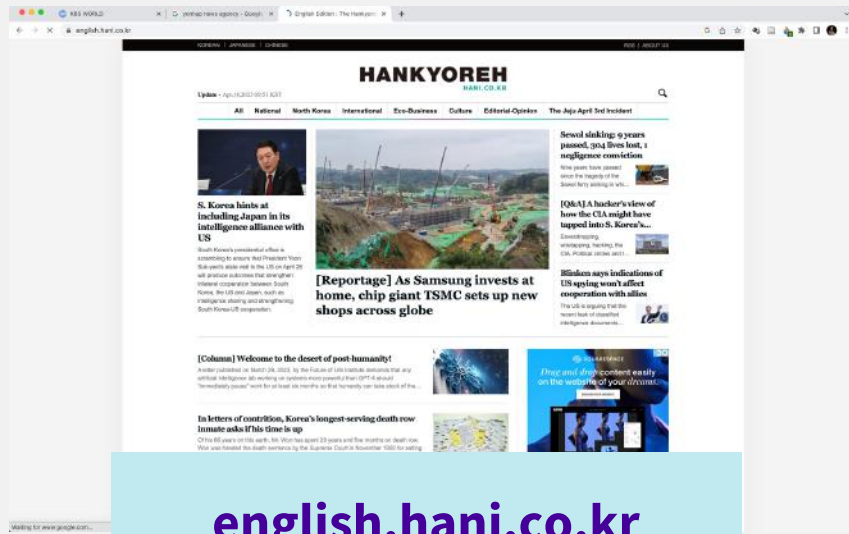
# English-language source on/from Japan



# The media in South Korea

- Similar to Japan, South Korea has a dynamic media market, well-known abroad for its entertainment industry. News outlets have **high levels of political parallelism** and close connections to industry conglomerated (*chaebol*).
- De-regulation of the media sector in the 1990s and again in the 2010s has meant high levels of concentration in the media sector, which has resulted in the strengthening of the dominance of **conservative voices in the media**.
- South Korea was one of the first countries where citizen journalism developed. This allowed a space for “alternative” voices, such as the now mainstream OhMyNews (Oh!), that challenged the dominance of large media groups.

# English-language source on/from South Korea



18/04/2023

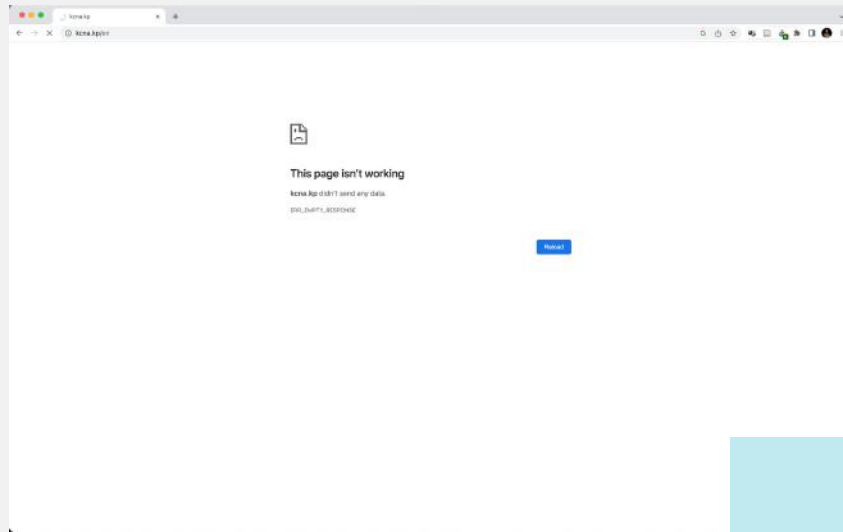
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35

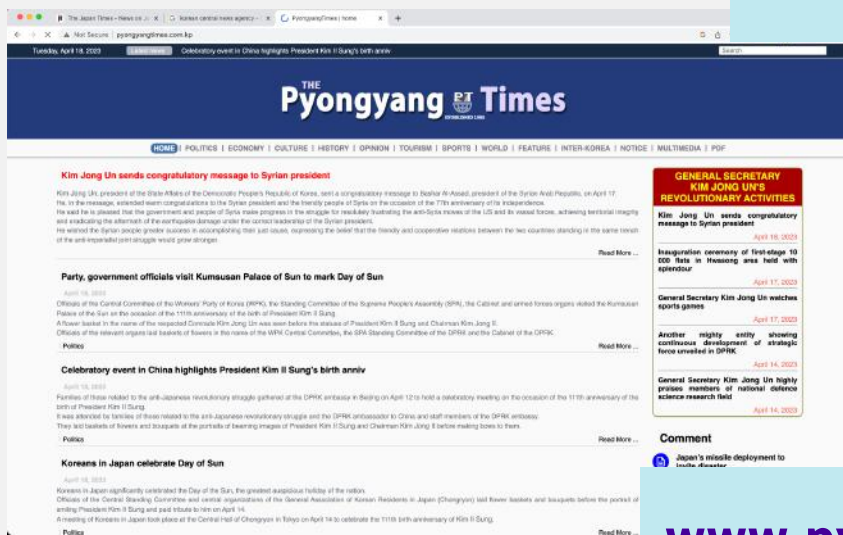
# The media in North Korea

- There are **no independent media organizations** in North Korea. All media organizations are under the control of different branches of the Workers' Party of Korea, the ruling party in the country.
- Because of the very tight control over information in and out of the country, State-controlled media such as the national news agency (KCNA), the state broadcaster (KCTV) and official newspaper of the WPK (*Rondong Sinmun*) hold a **quasi monopoly on information about the country**.
- Only a bunch of foreign journalists are based in the country, including the Associated Press and some Chinese reporters, but most “independent” news needs to be **smuggled out** of the country.

# English-language source on/from North Korea

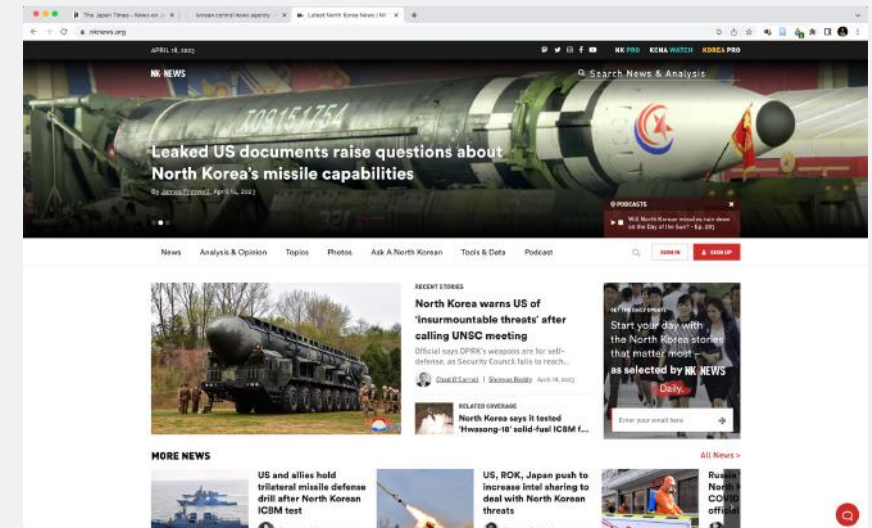


kcna.kp/en



18/04/2023

www.pyongyangtimes.com.kp  
Reporting on East Asia



www.nknews.org

37

A hand holding a pen over a document with a red overlay.

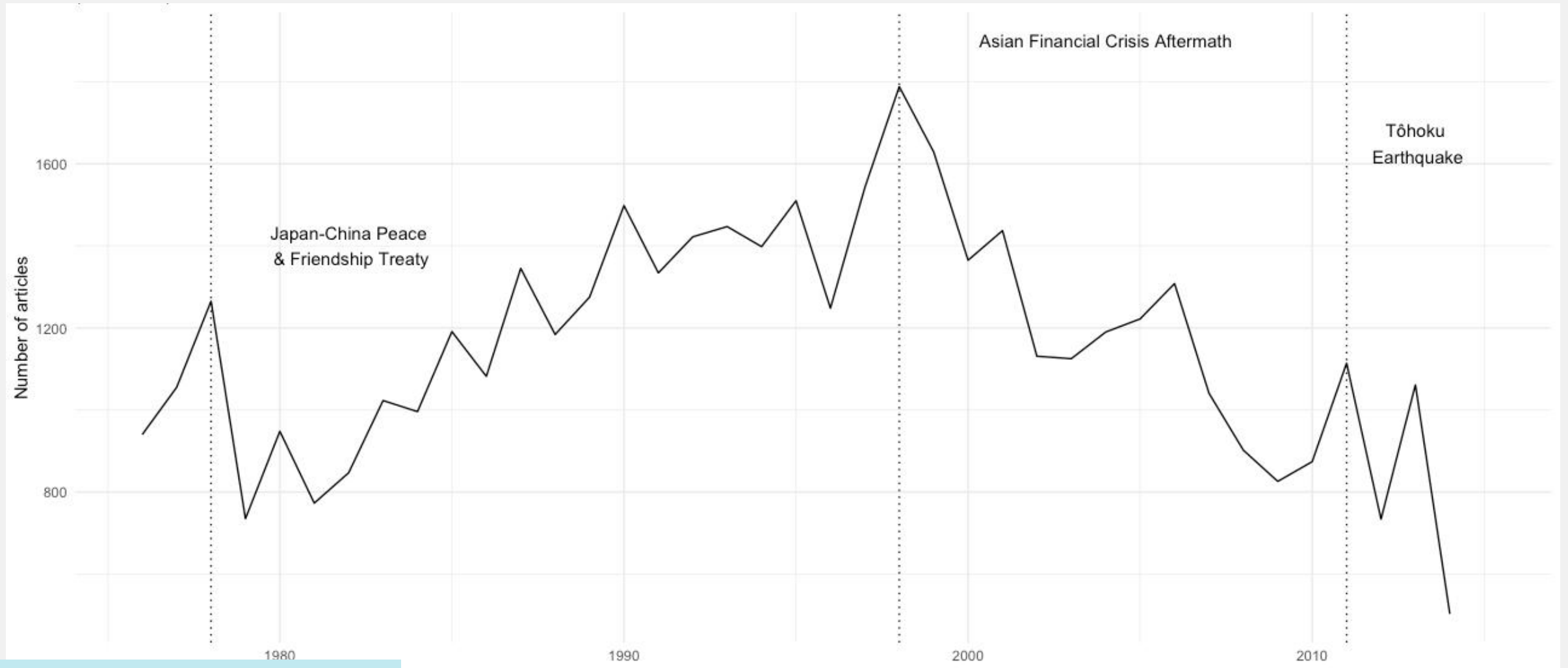
### **3. News coverage of East Asia in global media**

# An example: news about Japan in *El País*

- Founded in 1976, *El País*, has long been considered the **newspaper of record** in Spain.
- It has a **strong foreign desk**.
- Ideologically, the newspaper falls somewhere between the **left and the center-left**.
- Between 1976 and 2014, it published **50,000 articles about Japan**.



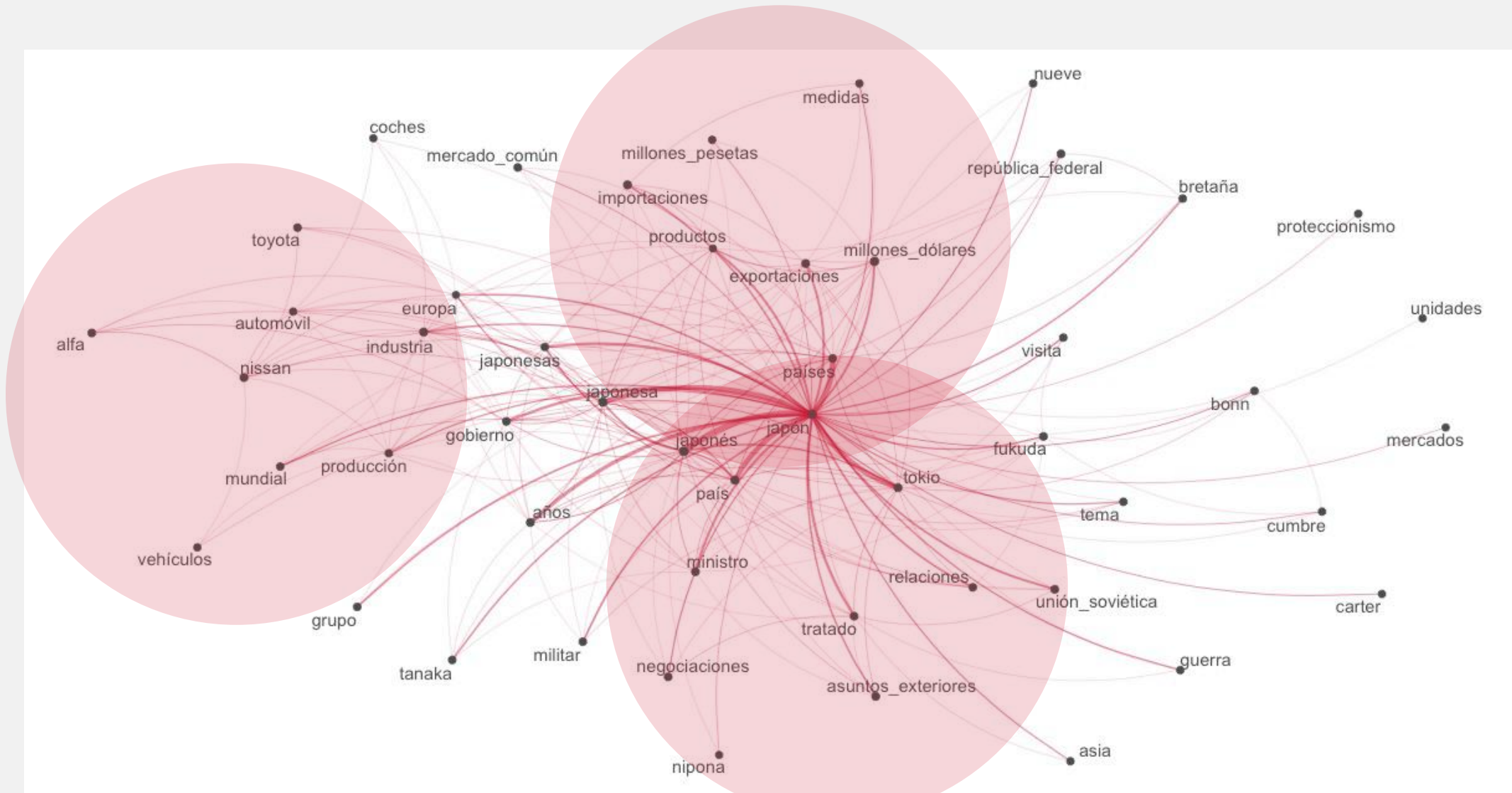
# Number of Articles Mentioning Japan in *El País* (1976-2014)



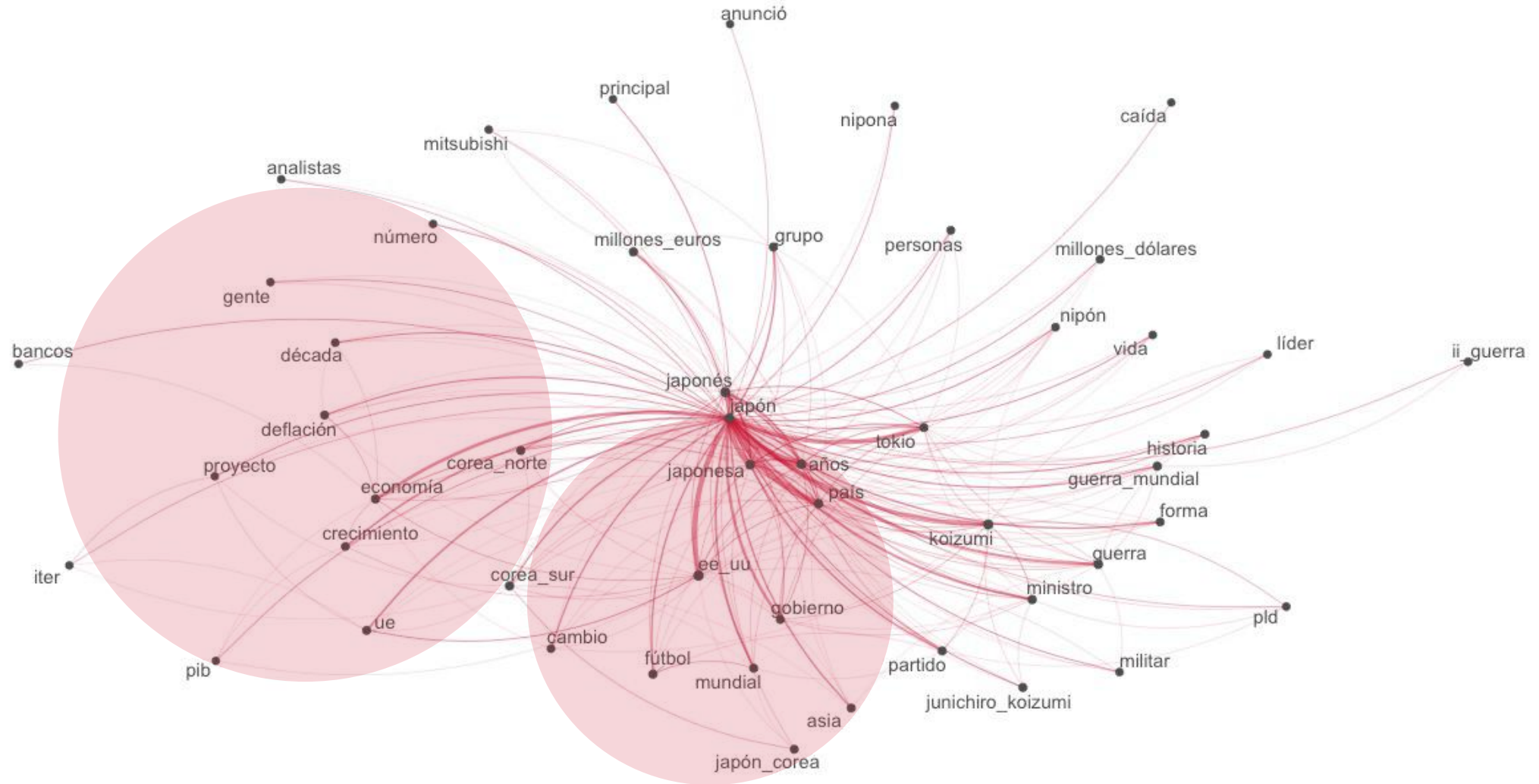
**News coverage is  
episodic**

18/04/2023

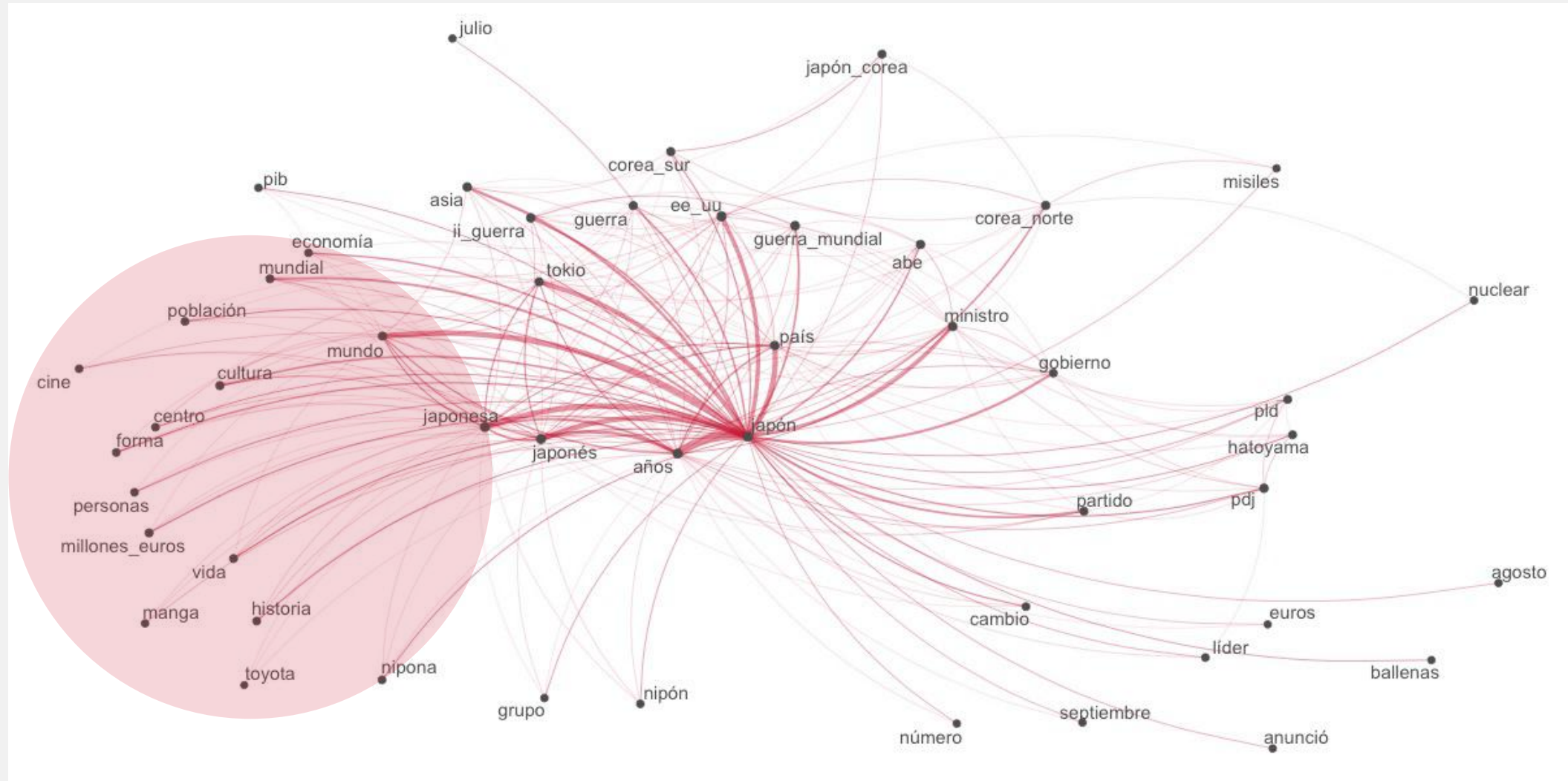
# Word co-occurrence in articles mentioning Japan (1976-1980)



## Word co-occurrence in articles mentioning Japan (2001-2005)



## Word co-occurrence in articles mentioning Japan (2006-2010)



# East Asia in Global Media

- Most news coverage of East Asia outside the region is focused on **hard news**, with a predominance of stories about the economy and politics. An exception would be news stories about popular culture.
- In Europe and North America (the so-called ‘West’), news coverage is also **episodic and highly anecdotal**. This is not an exclusive characteristic of news about East Asia, but of many other world regions.

# East Asia in the news in the last week

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Asia | China | India

### North Korea says it tested "most powerful" missile to date

3 days ago

North Korea missile tests

**CNN** World Audio Live TV Log in

### Former J-pop star alleges sexual abuse by late Japanese music mogul Johnny Kitagawa

By Helen Regan, Sophie Jeong and Alex Stambaugh, CNN  
Updated 7:50 AM EDT, Thu April 13, 2023



Kyodo News/Getty Images

A roadside screen in Tokyo's Yurakucho area reports on July 10, 2019, the death of Johnny Kitagawa, founder of Japanese talent agency Johnny & Associates.

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### Brazil's Lula lands in China for state visit

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### A punch in the face for Xi caricature: Taiwan air force badge goes viral




Reporting on East Asia  
By Sarah Wu and Yew Lun Tian

# East Asia in Global Media

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- In Europe and North America (the so-called ‘West’), news coverage is also **episodic and highly anecdotal**. This is not an exclusive characteristic of news about East Asia, but of many other world regions.
- News coverage about East Asia tends to suffer from similar reporting clichés and biases that are suffered by other world regions (think of Sub-Saharan Africa, for example), such as **oversimplifying and over-reliance on official sources**.

# Common problems with (global) news coverage – Reliance on news sources

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1 minute read · December 19, 2022 12:24 PM GMT+1 · Last Updated 4 months ago

## China issues guidelines for data management - Xinhua

Reuters

 World Africa Americas Asia Australia China Europe India Middle East United Kingdom

## China entering 'new stage and mission' for Covid-19 controls, says official, following protests

By [Wayne Chang](#) and [Xiaofei Xu](#), CNN  
Updated 10:43 PM EST, Wed November 30, 2022

18/04/2023


Reporting on East Asia

 ALJAZEERA

*Seoul says it fired warning shots and broadcast warnings to expel a North Korean vessel that crossed a disputed maritime border.*



South Korean military personnel sail on an armed patrol boat off Yeonpyeong, which lies on the South Korean side of the Northern Limit Line [NLL], in the Yellow Sea on April 7, 2014 [File: Damir Sagolj/ Reuters]

16 Apr 2023  

South Korea's military has fired warning shots to expel a North Korean vessel that crossed the two countries' disputed maritime border, officials said.

The South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said on Sunday that it fired warning shots and broadcast warnings to turn back at a North Korean patrol boat that breached the Northern Limit Line (NLL) at around 11 am Saturday (2:00 GMT).

# East Asia in Global Media

- Most news coverage of East Asia outside the region is focused on **hard news**, with a predominance of stories about the economy and politics. An exception would be news stories about popular culture.
- In Europe and North America (the so-called ‘West’), news coverage is also **episodic and highly anecdotal**. This is not an exclusive characteristic of news about East Asia, but of many other world regions.
- News coverage about East Asia tends to suffer from similar reporting clichés and biases that are suffered by other world regions (think of Sub-Saharan Africa, for example), such as **oversimplifying and over-reliance on official sources**.
- More unique to how East Asian countries are reported about are issues such as **orientalism and essentialism (a form of stereotyping)**.

# Common problems with news coverage in East Asia - Orientalism

The Telegraph

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China: Discover the secrets of an enigmatic land

By Neil Connor, TRAVEL WRITER  
20 November 2015 • 12:00am

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For many, China remains a fascinating enigma. Within the same nation is the ancient city of Xi'an, home to a pulsating Muslim quarter and the Terracotta Warriors; the soaring skyline of Shanghai; the iconic [Great Wall](#); and Beijing's Tiananmen Square, an unmistakable statement of power from the founding fathers of the People's Republic.


18/04/2023

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Search Tuesday, April 18, 2023

## Xinhua Headlines: Interplay between traditional and modern enriches lives of China's ethnic minorities

Source: Xinhua Editor: huaxia 2023-02-22 23:03:31




from the Lahu ethnic group

\* In the course of China's modernization drive, ethnic minorities are rediscovering their traditions and creating a better life by tapping into their unique development potential.

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Aero engine service company confident in China's economic outlook

# Common problems with news coverage in East Asia - Essentializing

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**URGENT**

PSYCHOLOGY | Cultural differences

## Why don't the Japanese cry?



Survivors at Kesennuma. | Eph.

latest earthquake news

- Radioactive water from Fukushima overflows 12 protection barriers
- Empress Michiko of Japan hails her daughter-in-law's improved health
- Tepco announces a new radioactive leak in one of the Fukushima tanks
- Six Fukushima workers exposed to radioactivity from a leak
- A South Korean minister calls the Japanese government 'immoral' over Fukushima
- Underwater barriers to prevent radiation from leaking in Fukushima do not work
- A magnitude 5.3 earthquake shakes the Fukushima nuclear power plant again

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## Why don't the Japanese cry?

Juan José R. Calaza - Economist and mathematician

03 20 11 | 07:30

There is no point in exaggerating, the era of the kamikazes has passed, but even so, the civility, dignity, discretion and organization of the Japanese in the face of the catastrophe they are experiencing is exemplary. It is true that the ancient

A hand holding a pen is positioned over a stack of papers. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay. The text 'Break (!)' is written in white, bold font across the middle of the image.

**Break (!)**

A hand holding a pen over a document with a red overlay.

## **4. Analyzing (and writing) news about East Asia**

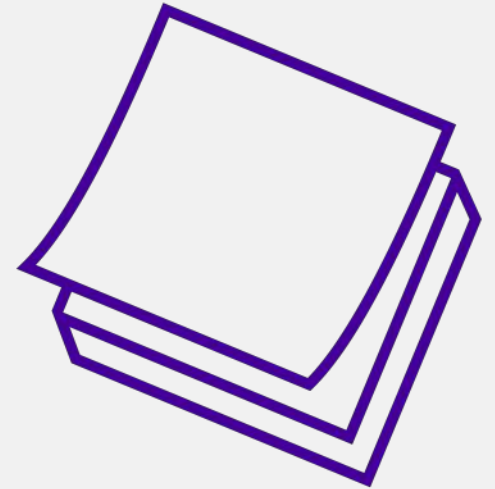
## Activity 1 – Dissecting news coverage

1. You are going to be working in **groups of 3 people** for this activity.
2. In the shared folder for today's session, you will find a file called "NewsStories.docx", which includes **three stories** published by three East Asian media organizations.
3. Read the stories on your own (10 to 15 minutes) and, with your group members, discuss the content of the articles (15 to 20 minutes) following the guide provided in the next slide.
4. After the group discussion, we will have a chat about the stories together.

## Activity 1 - Dissecting news coverage

Using the post-its you've been provided with, discuss the following items related to the news stories:

- What **journalistic genre** do you think these samples are?
- Which one of the articles would you label as “**most impartial**”?
- Which one of the articles would you label as “**most biased**”?
- What is the main “**contentious topic**” in this story?
- What is *The Japan News*’ framing strategy?
- List two or three **adjectives** that, to you, **stand out** in how they are used in the articles.



## Activity 2 – Write your own commentary

1. You are working for **Agencia EFE in Seoul**. Your boss has asked that you write a 500 word commentary on the Yoon-Kishida meeting for EFE's English language newswire service.
2. Working on your own, **write the headline and opening paragraph** of your commentary (100 to 150 words) based on the three news stories you read today. You'll have 20 minutes for this.
3. When you are done, and if you'd like some **feedback**, email your story to me: [d.madrid-morales@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:d.madrid-morales@sheffield.ac.uk).

# Writing a news commentary

- The news commentary falls somewhere between an **opinion piece and interpretative article**.
- You can think of a commentary as an **analytical opinion piece**. In this way, a commentary falls somewhere between the editorial (the view of a news organisation on an issue) and an opinion piece (the individual view of a journalist on an issue).
- News commentaries are rather common in English-language media, but have no direct equivalent. In the context of Spanish-language media, “crónica” or “análisis” would be the closest similar genres.

# Today's Learning Outcomes

By now, you should feel more confident...

1. ... examining key aspects of **inter-Asian state relations** in the twenty-first century that are often discussed in the news media.
2. ... naming some of the most prominent **English-language news sources** from/about East Asia (China, Japan, South/North Korea).
3. ... listing **common shortcomings** in the news reporting of East Asian countries in global media.
4. ... **recognizing biases** in how the news media in East Asia report on other countries in the region.