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Abstract

English:

This thesis deals with the question of identity-constructing norms in crisis management. It develops a two-level identity theory to look at the case of the 2017-2018 North Korean crisis and applies the methods of content and qualitative analysis to it. The thesis clearly defines the North Korean identity and also proves that the existing one-level identity theories are sometimes too simplistic to explain the patterns of crisis development. Finally, the thesis sheds light on new topics for further research such as the concept of normative peace and the role of sports diplomacy and Olympic Games in crisis management.

German:

Die Masterarbeit analysiert die Rolle von Identität im Konfliktmanagement. Um diese Analyse durchzuführen, entwickelt die Thesis eine neue „two-level identity“ Theorie und verwendet qualitative und Content-Analysis Methoden. Die Thesis definiert die Nordkoreanische Identität und zeigt, dass die heutzutage existierenden „one-level identity“ Theorien manchmal viel zu vereinfacht sind, um die Krisenentwicklungen zu erklären. Außerdem schafft diese Masterarbeit neue Möglichkeiten für das Recherchieren in den Bereichen Sportdiplomatie und Rolle der Olympischen Spiele im Konfliktmanagement.

List of Abbreviations

- DPRK – Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
- ICBM – Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
- IOC – International Olympic Committee
- KCNA – Korean Central News Agency
- KWP – Korean Worker’s Party
- ROK – Republic of Korea
- UN – United Nations
- UNGA – United Nations General Assembly
- UNSC – United Nations Security Council
- USA (US) – United States (of America)
- USSR – Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics

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Introduction

The problem of the North Korean nuclear-missile program has been a headache for the international community for more than a decade. 2006 became a new milestone in the history of nuclear proliferation with North Korea conducting its first nuclear test. Today the globalized world must deal with a country that has persistently ignored the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The North Korean question has become even more relevant in light of recent negotiations between Donald Trump, Moon Jae-in, and Kim Jong-un. The North Korean elites put a number of their own security demands to the United States of America (US), whom they see as the main threat to their national security, as the research will show. The US, however, demands in return a complete denuclearization of the regime, refusing to negotiate otherwise (McCormack 2004). This, in return, results in periodical escalations of the situation on the Peninsula with North Korea refusing to abandon its nuclear weapons. A remark by Russian President Putin that "North Koreans will eat grass, but will not give up on the program" perfectly describes the situation (Independent 2017).

How should one then approach a case like North Korea? Nowadays one cannot just only rely on classical neorealist or neoliberal approaches, using the mainstream materialist narratives in dealing with security challenges on the Korean peninsula. The North Korean problem has been there for more than several decades. Sunshine policy, containment, vision 3000, strategic patience, trustpolitik and a countless number of other names that are not relevant today – these strategies and approaches of the United States and South Korea failed time and again. The reason was that they were trying to solve the problem without paying attention to the core of the problem – the North Korean identity. New ideas are required. What is the North Korean identity and how does it stand out? How do North Korea and its leaders perceive the world? How should one understand North Korean logic? All these questions lead us to the main **research question** of the thesis.

In the beginning of 2018, the situation on the peninsula has improved so significantly that international relations experts started talking about awarding a Nobel Peace Prize to the contributors. However, the decision-makers had to face serious difficulties in organizing productive negotiations. In order to understand how the crisis management worked in that context, it is essential to look at the events through the prism

of two-level identity theory that will be presented in this dissertation. **Do identity constituting norms influence the pattern of crisis (de-)escalation on the Korean Peninsula?** Answering this question will also open new approaches to the North Korean nuclear program as well as to negotiations with Pyongyang. The *hypothesis* of this thesis is that **these norms have a very significant influence**.

The thesis will apply the linguistic constructivism paradigm and the method of content analysis to the issue of North Korea, focusing on North Korean culture, self-identification, and perceptions of others as well as the perception of North Korea by others, in order to challenge the mainstream realist and liberal approaches. The main hypothesis of the thesis will be proved by analyzing different cases in which two types of sources – media coverage and public statements of the regional players will be used. Based on the results of this case study, general theoretical conclusions will be given in the last chapter of the dissertation. Possible policy recommendations can also be derived from the results of the study.

As this thesis seeks to answer the question central to its topic and to prove that the roots of the periodic escalations of the security situation on the Korean peninsula lie in identity changes, it will consist of several blocks. Therefore, the research will firstly address the North Korean perception of the outside world in order to explain motivation and reasons that the DPRK used in creating its nuclear arsenal, on the one hand. On the other hand, the thesis will investigate on how the image of the DPRK is perceived in other countries having a particular interest in the region (implying such actors as South Korea, Russia, China, the United States and Japan). Thus, by having a clear comparison, the dissertation will see how it affects the security situation on the Korean peninsula.

The topic of this *research* is and will indisputably remain *relevant* for several reasons. First of all, the ongoing chain of North Korean missile and nuclear crises is a problem that still has to be solved by the international community. However, as it has already been mentioned, it is obvious that the methods currently applied in that context are not working, as the problem is still there. Thus, the topic of this research is of a great importance not only in academic but also practical sense. Secondly, this dissertation is different, if compared to other publications in the field, as it will be show in the chapter on literature review. The reason is that it tries to find a new approach to the North Korean issue by applying a new methodology as well as a new theoretical framework to the issue.

Most of the researchers, including a number of renowned specialists, tend to use neorealist approaches and many publications on the question of North Korean identity are either outdated (Park 2000, Quinones and Tragert 2004), rather biased (Cha 2013, Bechtol 2014) or not comprehensive enough (Bennett 2013). Thirdly, theoretical results derived from this study can serve as the basis for further research on the topic of regional security in Northeast Asia and on the Korean peninsula.

The dissertation **consists** of five main chapters aside from the introduction, bibliography and conclusion. The first chapter includes parts on literature review and theoretical aspects of the research. The second part looks at the factors that have shaped the North Korean identity and at how North Korea sees itself in the official documents published by the DPRK's government and in its media. The next three chapters will look at the conflict development patterns, changes in the second level of the DPRK's identity as well as causal linkages and explanations of decision-makers' actions in different conflict phases in 2017-2018. The concluding chapter will elaborate on theoretical and practical consequences of the research and discuss possible policy implications.

Even though the samples are taken from the most recent events, it is important to stress that the dissertation will also cover the period starting from 2006 in an overview in the first chapter (when the North Korean government officially conducted its first nuclear test). The author will use this date as a research milestone, as this event completely changed the military balance and security situation on the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, the research will also historically analyze certain events and processes that are beyond the designated timeframe of the content analysis in order to look at the factors that have influenced the social construction of the North Korean identity.

Chapter 1: Literature Review and Theoretical Foundations

Literature review section

This chapter will provide a short overview of the existing literature on the topic in order to demonstrate the relevance of the conducted research. It will look at the contemporary literature on the issue of North Korean as well as works on conflict management. Publications on the DPRK can be normally classified into three main groups. The main difference between the groups is the way the authors see the regime and the ways that other states should adopt in interacting with the DPRK. The first group is more hawkish, arguing mainly from neorealist positions and using very state-centric approaches. The second one is more moderate in its analysis of the regime, as the authors argue from either neoliberal or defensive realist positions. The third group is critical of the existing materialist approaches, arguing from constructivist positions and pointing out the importance of the identities construction on the peninsula. Finally, it should also be mentioned that the existing literature on conflict management focuses on empirical approaches and materialist paradigms. It does not really look at the influence of identity constituting norms in crisis management, which creates an important research gap that needs to be filled.

Materialist approaches

As it has been mentioned, the first group of researchers normally argues from the positions of (offensive) neorealism. Neorealism in general assumes that the basic motive of states' actions is survival. Proponents of offensive realism argue that states are trying to ensure their security by maximizing their power and, if possible, becoming hegemons (Mearsheimer 2001). This group includes such authors as Viktor Cha, John Sweeney, and Paul French, who generally view North Korea in a very negative way and quite often suggest rather hawkish methods of dealing with the regime. The problem of this group is that it in many cases ignores the interests of the North Korean elites, who are mainly responsible for the nuclear program. What this group normally suggests is to increase pressure on the regime, introduce more sanctions and enhance the existing sanctions regime, since the authors are highly critical of the current government in Pyongyang (Cha 2013, French 2014, Bechtol 2014). They also insist on limiting humanitarian aid and do not consider economic help and cooperation being a feasible option for dealing with the

North. Most of them also predict that the regime will collapse very soon (which has not happened even after 27 years of its post-Soviet existence), arguing that a regime change is the only possible solution of the nuclear problem (Cha 2013, O 2016). Finally, these authors also focus a lot on the human rights issue in North Korea, arguing that the regime must be punished for its misdeeds in this sphere (Cha 2013, Sweeney 2014). In practical sphere, this approach was clearly seen in the approaches of the Republican George W. Bush and Donald Trump administrations in the United States (as well as conservative Lee Myung-Bak and Park Geun-hye administrations in South Korea). Interestingly enough, most of the researchers in the group do not pay that much attention to the national interests of North Korea, contrary to main realist assumptions of every state being rational and having specific motives for action.

The way this group sees the North Korean regime is rather simple since there is a clear process of "securitization" of the DPRK in their works. Securitization is a concept that allows states to transform certain issue into important matters of security so as to justify own actions (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998, 25-32). Most of the authors in this group tend to focus on the neorealist or offensive realist paradigm, they portray the DPRK only in a negative way often automatically assuming a coming collapse of the regime (Bechtol 2014, Cha 2013, Rublee 2014, Sweeney 2014). Bechtol, for example, in one of his most recent works on North Korea suggests a number of different strategies for deterring and countering North Korean provocations. He actively criticizes the DPRK for its actions and gives policy recommendations for the case of a possible collapse of the North (Bechtol 2014). The part of the book that was targeted at explaining the North Korean behavior argued that the regime was trying to hide its own weaknesses by provoking its opponents (Bechtol 2014, 46-48). Victor Cha in his *Impossible State* shows a similar approach, although offers a deeper historical analysis of the situation that the DPRK finds itself in today. Cha describes the regime as abnormal, hostile, inherently evil, and "impossible", arguing that collapse for the regime is inevitable (Cha 2013). Cha also suggests deterring the North Korean regime and offering "complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement" of the nuclear program instead of negotiating with the North (Cha 2013, 400-428). Rublee analyzing the consequences of North Korean nuclear operationality also refers to the DPRK as a rather unstable and unpredictable state that has no allies (Rublee 2014). Sweeney describes the DPRK as "Kafka written in an alphabet no one can read", describing its leadership's actions as "hysterical threats" (Sweeney

2013, 15). Even the authors, who actually admit that North Korea has at least its own security issues and national interest (not even considering the identity), are still highly critical of the regime and do not see it as a partner worth negotiating with. Moore, for example, acknowledges that “addressing the DPRK’s reasonable security demands” is important, but still stresses that North Korea is a “totalitarian cyber-feudal military dictatorship” (Moore 2014, 242-243). He also adds that the DPRK is a “terrorist” regime, which “has not shown itself worthy of the burden of responsibility that goes along with becoming a nuclear weapons state” (Ibid). To sum up, researchers in that group mostly see North Korea as an unstable and irrational actor that is often not worth negotiating with. Another common pattern is that these authors do not address the issue of the North Korean security interests or identity too often.

The second group of authors also refers to a number of classical materialist paradigms (like neorealism and neoliberalism), but they are more balanced in their views and do not blame the DPRK for all negative developments on the Korean peninsula. These authors normally argue from the position of defensive realism, pointing toward beliefs and interests of the North Korean elites. They also quite often refer to assumptions of neoliberalism, taking other factors into consideration, such as, e.g., economic cooperation with the DPRK as a way of improving the situation on the Korean Peninsula. This group includes such researchers as Rüdiger Frank, Walter Clemens, Andrei Lankov, Gavan McCormack, John Delury, Chung-In Moon, and, to a certain extent, Kim Jina. They are more tolerant of the logic of the regime in the North than the neorealists. These researchers often propose economic cooperation and/or negotiations instead of just putting more pressure on the regime and trying to escalate the situation to a point of no-return (Frank 2016, Clemens 2010, Lankov 2013, McCormack 2004). All of them acknowledge the danger of the North Korean nuclear progress, but rather count on diplomatic solutions, encouraging bilateral and multilateral contacts between parties (Kim 2014, Clemens 2010). In policymaking, one should say that two South Korean presidents, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun were representatives of this policy line, becoming really prominent for their pro-North Korean sunshine policy. Current South Korean President Moon Jae-in seems to be open to this option as well. Nevertheless, the second group still is very state-centric as it does not focus on the questions of the DPRK image and its self-perception. It rather prefers to deal only with the question of North Korean national interests. This results in a paradox when traditional policy recommendations do

not bring the expected effect since policymakers have no idea what they deal with. This paradox was nicely formulated by a Russian specialist in the field, Lankov, who said that for North Korea “the sticks are not long enough, the carrots are not sweet enough” (Lankov 2013, 203). To choose proper sticks and carrots, one needs to understand who they are working with.

Literature in the second group focuses a lot on North Korean national interests and security concerns, suggesting a different image of the DPRK. Frank, who clearly reflects on the security concerns of the North Korean elites, suggests that the nuclear program is an ultimate life insurance for North Korea. He is an active proponent of economic engagement with the North, which he sees as a key instrument to improving the situation on the peninsula. According to Frank, funding “business relations and market activities” that are “drivers of real social and values changes” is essential for the changes in North Korean society and policies (Frank 2016). Lankov has a similar position, arguing that the DPRK has to resort to “survival diplomacy” and explaining the logic of survival of the regime as well (Lankov 2013, 111-185). Lankov, however, in his works stresses that although the regime gains currency from economic engagement, this engagement also erodes the regime’s social basis by opening it more to the outside information (2014, 217-221). Clemens also sees the DPRK as a rational actor and believes that taking domestic affairs and the DPRK’s security concerns into consideration is an important part of dealing with the North Korean nuclear program. In his understanding, “ideas and free will” can play a more important role than hard power (Clemens 2010, 103). McCormack in his publications suggests another interesting perspective on the North Korean security concerns, not only by arguing that North Korea is totally rational, but also suggesting that it was the United States and Japan that have pushed the DPRK to the nuclear edge (McCormack 2004, 2007). Kim also clearly stresses that it the demands of the DPRK are rather clear and very consistent and, thus, have to be taken into consideration when negotiating (Kim 2014, 40-41). Thus, most of the authors in this group, although being critical of the nuclear program *per se*, still advocate North Korean security concerns and argue that when dealing with North Korea, it is essential to look in the heads of the elite.

Constructivist approach

The third group is represented by a constructivist approach of such authors as, for example, Bruce W. Bennet, Han. S. Park, Roland Bleiker, and Derek Bolton. Jina Kim, to

a certain extent, can be categorized as a researcher belonging to this group, albeit she conducts a larger part of her analysis taking a neorealist paradigm into account while dealing with North Korean security interests. Since many conservative researchers inspired by realist paradigms consider North Korea irrational, using a constructivist approach shows a different perspective, which consequently demonstrates a different result. Taking that perspective ensures an easier understanding of the North Korean logic, which provides politicians with new possibilities of building a more efficient policymaking line. However, this group of scholars mostly focuses on North Korean motivations to develop nuclear weapons, not on the identity of the country and its perception abroad. The literature on the question of the North Korean identity is rather outdated or not comprehensive enough (see, for example, Park 2000; Bennet 2013). Moreover, the theoretical framework of linguistic constructivism has not so far been applied to the North Korean case. This dissertation, however, analyzes perceptions of North Korea in East Asia and its self-identification using this paradigm, which should be seen as a contribution to the existing academic research on the topic.

A proper analysis of the North Korean problem in the constructivist framework is, unfortunately, a rather rare case. Bennet, for example, in his work on North Korean thinking about possible consequences of the reunification addresses different factors influencing the North Korean information policy (Bennet 2013). He does not analyze the North Korean identity *per se*, but addresses main concerns of the North Korean elites and rank-and-file people. Quinones and Tragert, however, in their only work on North Korea give a very good overview of the North Korean identity, taking into account different factors that have influenced it throughout the Republic's history (Quinones and Tragert 2004). The authors argue that North Korea sees itself as a very proud nation and they stress the importance of such factors as ethnic nationalism, external pressure, and influences of different ideological paradigms for its identity. Apparently, the international community and mass media view North Korea without paying any special attention to these factors.

Kim's research on the negative identification of North Korea is actually one of the rare cases of a properly conducted research on the North Korean identity question. Her book *The North Korean Nuclear Weapons Crisis* has a similar approach, arguing that North Korean negative identification is one of the main reasons why Pyongyang is so unwilling to meet social expectations of the international community, including

denuclearization (Kim 2014, 8-9). That is the reason why, she believes, North Korea was given a “rogue identity” by other liberal democratic states (2014, 129-131). Bolton in his article on the question of the DPRK’s identity also believes that “notions of independence, non-subservience and self-reliance” are an integral part of the North Korean identity that hinders the negotiations (Bolton 2017). Finally, it is essential to mention a major work in the field published back in 2004 that represents one of the milestones in constructivist approach to the issue of North Korea. *“Divided Korea: Toward a Culture of Reconciliation”* by Roland Bleiker contains some interesting thoughts on the needs for a new concept of Korean security or “culture of reconciliation”. Today, one still has to talk about a new “security culture” on the Korean peninsula as the question of North Korean nuclear program is not solved. Bleiker, criticizing materialist state-centric approaches, also argues that the main reason for the confrontation on the peninsula is the social construction of antagonistic identities (Bleiker 2005). That is the reason, he believes, why the American policymakers are stuck with the North Korean problem as they are too focused on the “securitization” of the DPRK.

Summing up, it is plausible to say even though the constructivist approach to the North Korean issue raises a number of interesting questions, it has not been comprehensive enough in looking at how identity frameworks influence conflict management and diplomatic arrangements in that case (such as, e.g., personal meetings between leaders of the countries). This creates a major research gap in the existing literature on the topic, as other materialist approaches often do not even take constructivist ideas into consideration. This dissertation, thus, will focus exactly on these questions in trying to see how changes in different levels of identity affect crisis development.

Concept of identity in crisis management

The research will mainly deal with one of the most important concepts in the constructivist paradigm – the concept of identity. Identities have a very strong impact on how parties to the crisis build their relationship, as well as on how they see the counterparts, define their policy goals and approaches. It is clear that there are several dominant views on the definition of identity. Primordialist approaches define identity as “attachments”, which are normally rather stable and change very slowly since they are fixed in different ways, including language and public opinion (Shils 1957, Geertz 1963,

Kuo and Margalit 2012). Individuals, therefore, focus more on their “closeness” to each other and the community as well. This approach, however, is not very effective for the theoretical framework of the dissertation because of its rigidity, as the thesis deals with images of North Korea as well as with the question of self-identification.

The second group of scholars arguing from the position of instrumentalism, however, focus more on an egocentric side of the people in their identity analysis (Brass 1991, Eriksen 2001, Wan 1978). People are, instrumentalists claim, influenced by instrumental considerations when they assume a certain identity and, thus, a strategic rationale of an individual can easily change their identity. This, however, is not the case of the DPRK, considering specifics of the existing political regime in that country. The identity of North Korea, as well as North Koreans, is heavily influenced by the state and external factors, so its citizens cannot change their identities that easily being guided by their own strategic rationale. Finally, another influential approach in the field, which is situationist, has its roots in the field of social psychology. Situationists claim that identity is defined primarily by external stimuli, which influence and change behavioral patterns of people unconsciously. The identity is assumed as the result of the willingness to correspond with the image created by external factors, for example, stereotypes or standards imposed by the elites (Halev and Morse 2003; Wheeler and Petty, 2001; Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady 1999). This approach suits the existing empirical evidence provided in the research, especially looking at the behavior of North Korean elites. Still, the problem with this approach that even if points out the fact that identities can be changed rather fast unconsciously, it fails to explain a corresponding shift in people’s policy views. Therefore, the thesis needs a more comprehensive definition of identity.

Finally, the existing literature on crisis management strategies does not really deal with the question of identity constituting norms and their impact on conflict management. Most of the researchers in the field, again, use purely materialist approaches. Thus, the questions of identity construction identity constituting norms are very often overlooked or simply ignored. The case of North Korea in that regards looks even more interesting, as there is no direct violence in the conflict per se. The existing approach to conflict management in academic literature also often omits the media and public statements factors in identity-formation process. These factors, however, play an essential role in regulation of both violent and non-violent conflicts. Information flows that leaders receive from different sources can always influence the decision-making process in positive and

negative ways. For example, certain decisions that are massively criticized by the media may be postponed. Or, when a leader of a different country makes strong hostile/reconciliatory public statements (e.g., Trump and Moon's, as the empirical chapters will show), it affects the willingness of the counterpart to negotiate.

Oberschall, for example, looks at the role of constitutional peacebuilding, powersharing governance, disarmament, and reconstruction in his book on divided societies while analyzing conflict management (2007). A similar approach is suggested by Mitchell and Banks, who mainly focus on different tools of conflict resolution and do not take the influence of external factors (such as the role of the mass media or public statements in identity construction and conflict management) into consideration (1998). Dayton and Kriesberg, Pietsch, Butler do not focus on this aspect of conflict management as well, as they analyze violent or ethnic conflicts, whereas the Korean case is pretty much unique as it is not really violent (Dayton and Kriesberg 2009, Pietsch 2017, Butler 2009). However, Pietsch once mentions the role of media in conflict regulation, although also analyzing it from a materialist prospective and arguing that it merely serves as a tool for spreading information on people's needs or reconnecting disrupted communication between groups (2017, 235-237). The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy in its chapter on crisis diplomacy asserts that crisis management is mainly focused on negotiations, mediation, and use of military force (Constantinou, Kerr, and Sharp 2016, 472).

One of the most essential problems in the current literature on conflict management is that it does not look at the role of identity in conflicts. There are a lot of publications focusing on the conflict of identities, especially with the cases of violent ethnic conflicts in Israel and Yugoslavia (see, e.g., Fiol, Pratt, and O'Connor 2009; Wilmer 2002). That it is not the case for Korea, as most of the publications are about advancing norms of tolerance and engagement when dealing with North Korea (Son 2007, Bleiker 2005). Many others look just generally at the role of big players (or great powers) such as the US, China, Russia, and Japan adhering to mainstream realist positions (Cha 2013, Bechtol 2014). As the central concept of realist paradigm is power, the traditional view is that armed conflicts between states constitutes major and recurring threat to national security and that material capabilities and military force are the main security currency (Butler 2009, 27). This dissertation, however, clearly shows that these assumptions are not the case by looking at the role of identity in conflict management *per se*, at why it can create opportunities for de-escalation and how it can do so. As

Kornprobst and Bjola rightfully stress, mutual enmity between the US and the DPRK is “deeply ingrained into the identity narratives of the two states” (2018, 197). The identity question, thus, is even more important to analyze in the case of North Korea, as there is a research gap in the field. It is hard to explain the case of 2017-2018 North Korean crisis using mainstream approaches, as one will see from the research results.

Concluding the literature review, it becomes clear that the research conducted in this dissertation is extremely relevant. Lack of up-to-date comprehensive analyses of the issue can result in policy miscalculations, so further investigation on the topic is crucial. By looking at how much the conflict pattern on the peninsula is influenced by identities and identity-constituting norms, one can understand how effective materialist paradigms are in analyzing the issue and giving policy recommendations. Moreover, it also shows what factors should be taken into consideration when dealing with a conflict. Therefore, this thesis not only analyzes a topical case in the field, but also creates new opportunities for further research on similar topics.

Theoretical framework

Linguistic constructivism

While dealing with North Korean security issues, many policymakers and experts in the field have firmly established social constructs in their heads, as the research has established from the first chapter. Quite often those are negative constructs and, therefore, researchers use realist paradigms to justify their harsh position on dealing with the regime. Today, the negative perception of North Korea is something rather typical both in academic literature and media coverage. Journalists often spare no efforts on describing how dangerous the regime is and explaining why all of its actions are illegal, as one will see from the research conducted in the empirical chapters. Nevertheless, one never takes into consideration, for example, why it is prohibited to launch observation satellites for the DPRK, whereas it is not in case of the US. Although North Korea does not have a clean political and human rights record, it does not violate the Outer Space Treaty by launching an observation satellite (Harrison 2016). Nevertheless, it ends up being sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council. There are many other examples similar to it. Nevertheless, certain policymakers, experts and especially mass media prefer to ignore those constructs and resort to North Korea bashing instead of a balanced

analysis of the situation. Some scholars and policy experts even resort to suggesting military strikes as a viable option, which might lead to a disaster on a global scale (Luttwark 2018).

In order to deal with these issues in the security context, the theoretical framework of this dissertation will be based on the ontology of social constructivism. Linguistic constructivism is a particularly useful way of applying the content analysis methodology used in the dissertation. The reason is that this framework allows developing a more accurate understanding of ideas and their role in politics. This is exactly what has been ignored in attempts of dealing with the North Korean case for so long. The constructivist paradigm will be used as a way of understanding the North Korean way of thinking behind the country's foreign policy actions. This theory can explain how the North Korean identity has been historically constructed by its perceptions of the region and other external actors interested in it. It will also demonstrate what social content is involved in the production of North Korean foreign policy. As this dissertation focuses on social content involved in policymaking, including state interests, this paradigm will be able to show what the key ideas of North Korea foreign policy are and how they are described. Such a framework will ensure an effective analysis of both the identity and perceptions.

However, using a constructivist approach does not mean ignoring other theories, implying more materialist paradigms, such as neorealism and neoliberalism. For example, neorealism will also be used when it comes to the empirical part of the research to demonstrate how the DPRK foreign policy line works in practice, as most contemporary North Korean and American policymakers follow typical neorealist approaches. This research will, in addition, demonstrate why a constructivist paradigm is more appropriate in understanding North Korean actions in the (de-)escalation pattern, as the other two mainstream theories fail to fully explain this logic.

As this thesis conducts a content analysis of different texts it uses the framework of linguistic constructivism. Linguistic constructivism is one of the sub-types of constructivism that focuses on the role of language in the construction of social reality. Normally, conventional or "standard American" constructivism emphasizes the role of "social norms" and "identities", whereas the European constructivism focuses more on linguistic construction of social reality (Behravesch 2011). This thesis, however, will try to

reconcile the two approaches. It will look at the question of the North Korean identity by analyzing language through the prism of content analysis. The deep connection between the language and social construction of identities is reflected in the existing academic literature on the topic. As Debrix argues constructivist explanations of social reality “are reliant upon the relationship between language and (its) rules” (Debrix 2015, 7-9). He also stresses that language is “the result of the agent’s socially developed needs and deeds” (Ibid). The linguistic turn in constructivism has never been just about “the discovery of ‘text’ or ‘language’” (Kessler 2017). From that perspective, one should look language is “put to use by social actors as they construct the world order” and understand that a “linguistic meaning consists in the correlation of language to the world established by collective intentions of a language community” (Dunne, Kurki, and Smith 2013, 187; Bo 2015, 87). Thus, linguistic meanings of words are always correlated to the way the world (or regional) community wants to see an object (an actor or a phenomenon) in a certain way. The object is, therefore, consequently described exactly in that particular way. That is essential for understanding the way the methodology of this thesis is applied.

Two-level identity theory

This dissertation, as the literature review chapter has shown, needs a comprehensive definition of identity to work with. Therefore, it will adopt a variable-approach suggested by a group of members of American Political Science Association as a starting point for developing its own theoretical contribution to academia. In their work “Identity as a Variable” they suggest a framework, which is based on several types of contents, namely four (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott 2006). These contents include constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons and cognitive models. Constitutive norms deal with the general rules that define a certain identity, showing that any identity can be rather stable. Social purposes show specific goals that the people assuming an identity want to reach. Relational comparisons show the correlation between an assumed identity and other identities out there. Finally, cognitive models represent a worldview of the individuals that “makes sense of social, political and economic conditions”. In addition to that, the model also takes contestation into consideration, since the (collective) meaning and content of identities are never fixed. The framework rather focuses on the meaning of collective identities, without resorting to the salience variable. For these reasons, the dissertation will adopt the described framework in order to enable

the usage of more precise definitions in relevant cases of the qualitative analysis of the factors that have influenced the North Korean identity.

If identity is seen as a multidimensional phenomenon, then it is reasonable to assume that it may have multiple levels as well. Constructivist theoretical approaches also normally refer to a certain number of levels, when it comes to defining different terms (e.g., norms or values). Thus, a two-level approach to the question of identity is necessary for the purpose of research in this thesis, as it will look at the two main parts of the North Korean identity in the situation. The first level is the main one, as it is more or less stable, whereas the second level is more fluid. With this assumption, the thesis will analyze how identity constituting norms can influence crisis management.

The theory therefore, logically creates two chapters in the thesis. The first chapter will deal with the primary level of the North Korean identity, analyzing its historical, ideological, and cultural aspects. The second chapter, in contrast, will look at the second level of this identity, dealing with the influence of media-coverage and public statements of the domestic and foreign decision-makers on the identity. Thus, such an approach to the identity theory shows that despite the rigidity of the first level of identity, countries may still be flexible in international negotiations seeing, for instance, a political “window of opportunity” due to the fact that their second level of identity is more adaptable. This term refers to a period of time when positive political actions can be taken to achieve the desired outcome (see, e.g. Kingdon 2011). In the consequent empirical chapters the dissertation will clearly demonstrate the relevance of the assumption made in this paragraph. Thus, another important theoretical consequence in that regards is that that the small players in conflict management also have a very important role, as bigger players are normally stuck in the paradigm of power politics.

Methodology: content analysis

The project is defined by its interdisciplinary nature. Therefore, it is rooted in international relations research, on the one hand, but also uses methods and approaches of contemporary history, looking at developments and changes influencing the North Korean identity throughout its history. Research methodology in this thesis consists of two main blocks. The first block will use a combination of qualitative, quantitative, and historical approaches in order to see how the image and identity of North Korea developed in a historical retrospective. It will try to understand, discover, and describe the main factors

historically corresponding to the North Korean identity. This will consequently imply the analysis of main historical events, developments, ideas, and ideologies that have influenced and shaped North Korea identity so far.

The second methodological block will use only quantitative methods of content analysis by looking at two main categories negative and non-negative coverage in media and public discourse. It will also use five different variables for both categories (different negative and positive words). Since such an approach implies analyzing the content of media messages and official reports in order to see how North Korea perceives the outside world and how other actors perceive North Korea. By conducting a content analysis, in that case, the researcher will, for example, count the occurrences of the word “threat” in designated documents and publications throughout the indicated period of research (2017-2018). This will be done in order to look at the negative context and, correspondingly, the occurrence of the word “peace” will indicate the non-negative context.

Since certain keywords will be used as variables for analyzing the content of media coverage and official statements, it will become clear what the correlation between the perception and (de-)escalations is. The variables (counted words) that will be used further on were chosen on the basis of their meaning as well as frequency in the text. Many of them are used in order to describe the identity of an actor in a non-direct way (such as “*military*” or “*threat*”, for example). Nevertheless, they are very important in order to comprehend the way media and decision-makers perceive different actors. Derivatives from variables (such as, e.g., *destroy* – *destruction* – *destructive* – *destructively*) were also counted, whereas words used in different connotations or contexts (e.g., *prevent destruction*) were not counted.

Analysis aspects	Part I	Part II
Type of texts analyzed	Media publications in the selected countries	Public statements by officials of the selected countries
Connotations used	Negative and non-negative	Negative and non-negative
Number of variables analyzed	Fixed, 10 per country in each case	Not fixed, depends on the case

Table 1. *Aspects of the content analysis*

There will be two types of texts analyzed in the dissertation – media coverage and official statements of relevant political actors in the selected countries. The important part is that the analyzed words (variables) are used for transmitting two types of meanings – negative and non-negative. Thus, the research can demonstrate if there is a fixed social

construct of North Korea that exists in the heads of journalists, media experts, academic researchers, on the one hand, and policymakers, on the other hand. Moreover, it will show what social constructs exist in North Korea about the world and how they change.

The dissertation looks at three main phases in the conflict – escalation, peak, and de-escalation. These stages correspond to different time frames and important political events. As one will see, when the new President of South Korea was elected in May 2017, the crisis starts escalating as North Korea conducts a missile test. Then, it reaches its peak in September 2017, when the DPRK heats up its rhetoric and consequently conducts a nuclear test, causing a massive diplomatic scandal. Finally, tensions ease in January 2018 with parties taking steps to reconciliation in the period of the Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. A simple graphical representation of the crisis looks as following (with an assumption of 0 being a “no tensions” stage, and 5 being a “violent conflict” stage):

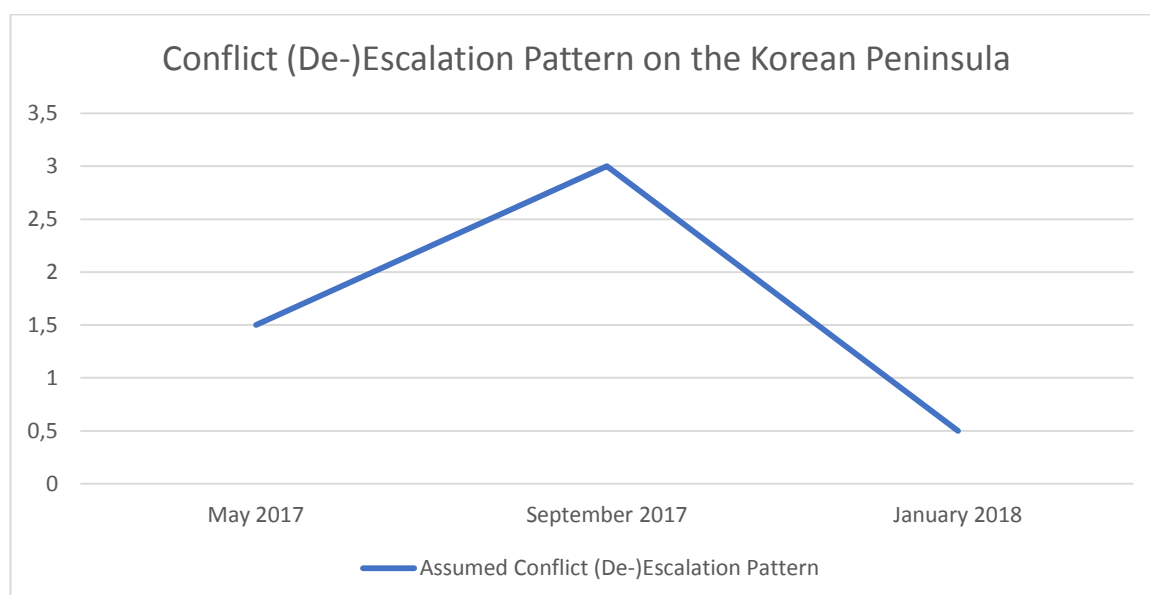


Figure 1. *Assumed conflict (de-)escalation pattern in Korea (2017-2018)*

Finally, the selection criteria for publications and public statements analyzed must be mentioned. The media publications as well as public statements used in this work come from the parties actively involved in the negotiation process on the North Korean issue. In this research, these are assumed to be members of the former Six-Party Talks – North Korea, South Korea, United States, China, Russia, and Japan. These countries have most interest in the region, and, therefore, looking at the public statements of their decision-makers as well as what their mass-media says seems to be logical. The newspapers that were chosen to be analyzed in this dissertation are looked at because of two main factors.

It is either their massive circulation (New York Times, Asahi Shimbun, Yonhap) and/or close affiliation with the government (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Rodong Sinmun, Renmin Ribao).

Negative/ Non-negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: Moon Jae-in election	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: The 2017 DPRK nuclear test	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: Negotiations on the Olympic games
	<i>Variable 1</i>			
	<i>Variable 2</i>			
	<i>Variable 3</i>			
	<i>Variable 4</i>			
	<i>Variable 5</i>			
Negative subtotal				
	Variable 1			
	Variable 2			
	Variable 3			
	Variable 4			
	Variable 5			
Non-negative subtotal				
Keywords total				

Table 2. Content analysis matrix

Thus, if such a methodological approach is used, the results of this research will give a clear perception of the North Korean image domestically and externally as well as the North Korean perception of the world. It will also show what role North Korean images and its identity play in the patter of conflict (de-)escalations. That is the reason why the dissertation will not only use classical methods of political science, but a combination of different tools including qualitative and quantitative methods, including historical and content analysis. Analyzing the North Korean case is essential, as it is one of the key challenges to the existing regime of nuclear non-proliferation and regional security. By comparing the results of the content analysis on different levels, the research will be able to demonstrate how big the gap between the two perceptions is and how the crisis situation develops (marking the escalation and de-escalation patterns). Moreover, it will become clear how the existing understanding gap influences the conflict pattern on the peninsula and in the region.

Chapter 2: Identifying Identities – 50 Shades of North Korea?

This chapter will deal with the first or the foundational level of the North Korean identity. As it has already been mentioned in the theoretical framework of this dissertation, different components of national identity such as history, ideology, and culture will be analyzed in order to find constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons and cognitive models of the North Korean identity. The research in this chapter will be based on the existing academic literature, translated speeches of the North Korean officials as well as available publications in the English language from North Korean state media such as, for example, Rodong Sinmun (Worker's Daily) or Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Thus, it will be able to outline the main aspects of the first level of the North Korean identity.

Historical aspect

First, this chapter will analyze the historical aspect of the North Korean identity. Taking this aspect into consideration is essential, while dealing with the North Korean identity today, as it has been largely influenced by the rich and very dramatic history of the Korean nation. There is a number of important identity-forming elements in different periods of Korean historical development including ancient, modern, and contemporary history. Certainly, it cannot be disputed that the North Korea today is not the North Korea of 1950. Nevertheless, even a brief historical analysis of political and societal changes in (North) Korea shows how certain elements of the identity formed and how the country can develop today and tomorrow. Therefore, the thesis will look at major factors in the historical development of Korea and North Korea in particular that contributed to the formation of the contemporary North Korean identity (for example, isolationism or siege mentality).

To begin with, division of Korea as well as the existence of North Korea is not a new phenomenon historically. Back in the 7th – 8th centuries, there were two Koreas like today – Balhae Kingdom and Silla Kingdom that geographically more or less resembled the two existing Korean states today. Interestingly enough, in its historiography North Korea often refers back to the existence of the Balhae Kingdom on the contemporary North Korean territory, trying to underline a certain tradition linking these two states historically (Quinones and Tragert 2004, 45-56). As a unified country, however, Korea

formed only under the Goryeo dynasty in the early 9th century, which later (in the 14th century) gave a way to the Joseon dynasty that lasted until the occupation of the country by Japan.

Korea's foreign policy as well as political, economic and cultural development were massively influenced by the neighboring Chinese state in the period of its unified existence. During these two very long periods of Korean history, especially under Joseon, reclusiveness became a part of Korean national identity. After the Japanese and Manchu (or Qing) invasions of Korea, foreigners were frowned upon in the country, as Quinones and Tragart argue in their book (2004, 67). They were seen mainly as a source of instability and harm. Therefore, in the 17th century Joseon started conducting a more and more isolationist policy, becoming known in the West as the "hermit kingdom", a name that is now quite often used to describe North Korea in mass media and academic literature (see, for example, articles on The Diplomat, or Cha 2013, French 2014). Thus, isolationist and xenophobic tendencies in North Korea have deep historical roots.

One of the most recent chapters of modern Korean history saw the occupation of the country by Japan in 1905 and the Korean War in 1950-1953. The Japanese rule of Korea cemented the existing distaste for foreigners and anti-Japanese sentiments in Korean society, resulting in resurgence of Korean nationalism. Both Koreas today stress how horrible the period of the occupation was and anti-Japanese sentiments are still seen in academic and public discourse both in the DPRK and the ROK. When the country was liberated by the Americans and the Soviets, two superpowers tried to exert their influence in the region, which resulted in consequent creation of two Koreas. This was again seen as a powerplay of two foreign powers that had nothing to do with Korea. Therefore, the Korean identity (especially in the North due to ideological factors) was dramatically affected by the great power politics. Many Koreans felt that they were mere victims of somebody else's will, and that their country was a "shrimp between whales" (Quinones and Tragart 2004, 73). This feeling was exacerbated in the North Korean case, as the Korean War broke out, and most of the cities in the DPRK were literally wiped off from the face of the earth by the Air Force of the United States. Such an unfortunate turn of events resulted in the development of a siege mentality in the North and a deep-rooted distrust, when it comes to bilateral relations with the USA.

Lankov and Clemens agree that North Korea definitely has a syndrome of "siege mentality" (Lankov 2013, 114-117; Clemens 2010, 109), which can be inferred from the statements of North Korean officials as well. The country developed nuclear weapons to secure the existing political regime, but now is being pressured and isolated even more, as the result. The DPRK in this condition sees itself being cornered and, therefore, conducts an even more aggressive foreign policy line. Developing nuclear weapons means excellent deterrence possibilities for North Koreans. They have learned lessons from the downfall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Muammar Kaddafi in Libya. Denuclearization is not seen in North Korea as a secure policy line for the country anymore.

Looking at contemporary history it becomes clear that geopolitical events and external pressure still play a major role in defining the North Korean identity in the existing system of international relations. The sanctions regime that was introduced by a number of countries as well as the UNSC largely contributes to the existing "siege mentality" in the DPRK. The number of resolutions passed by the UNSC that sanction North Korea is not comparable to any other similar cases like India, Pakistan or Israel (UN Security Council 2018). The current sanctions regime includes 9 different resolutions: S/RES/2397, S/RES/2375, S/RES/2371 (2017), S/RES/2321, S/RES/2270 (2016), S/RES/2094, S/RES/2087 (2013), S/RES/1874 (2009), S/RES/1718 (2006). In order to gain a deeper understanding of what this "siege" means for the country, one should look at the statements made by different North Korean officials during annual UNGA meetings in the New York. As the research in this part deals with contemporary history, it will cover the most recent statements starting from 2011. Moreover, additional information from the statements made by Kim Jong-Un will be used as well.

By looking at the statements of the DPRK's foreign ministers and vice-ministers in the UNGA, one could easily understand the way North Korea portrays itself. The DPRK sees itself as a "strong", "responsible" and "thriving socialist state" (Pak 2011; Ri 2013, 4-7), its efforts in launching satellites and missiles as "legitimate and peaceful" (Park 2012, 3) and nuclear program as a "war deterrent" (Ri 2016, Ri 2017). Foreign Minister Ri in 2016 mentioned the following: "As long as there exists a nuclear weapon state in hostile relations with the DPRK, our national security and the peace on the Korean peninsula can be defended only with reliable nuclear deterrence" (Ri 2016, 5). Despite all criticism, the DPRK believes that it "is a responsible nuclear weapon state" (Ri 2017, 6).

If one follows the North Korean perception, it becomes clear that there are certain patterns repeated in the DPRK's messages time and again. First, the DPRK considers itself being blockaded by the United States, arguing that American foreign policy has always been "hostile" toward the DPRK and criticizing it in all of its statements (Ri 2016). Moreover, in most recent statements starting from 2014, the DPRK describes the UNSC as a body, which is manipulated by the US and is used against the DPRK, arguing for a SC reform (Ri 2014, Ri 2015, Ri 2016, Ri 2017). The DPRK does not see the SC as a legitimate organ of international justice, stressing that "international justice is never achieved by itself" (Ri 2016, 5). Finally, responding to the criticism of the human rights activists, who see North Korea as one of the most irresponsible and repressive countries in the world, North Korean officials say that the issue of human rights is very "politicized" and is used by the US to undermine the internal stability of the DPRK (Ri 2013, Ri 2014, Ri 2015, Ri 2016).

Based on these statements, one could easily see how the DPRK defines its national security and relevant challenges, looking back on its history. The country, therefore, believes that the main national security threats and challenges are the aggressive US foreign policy toward the DPRK; joint US-ROK military drills; UN Command (or American troops) presence on the Korean peninsula; and "politicization" of the human rights issue. Another intriguing detail, however, is that the DPRK representatives to the UN simply stopped talking about possible negotiations on the nuclear issues after 2011, when Kim Jong Un came to power. In the first statement of vice-minister Pak in 2011, one could still find references to negotiations on the nuclear program and necessity of six-party talks (Pak 2011). That is not the case for all of the following statements issued after 2012. Moreover, Kim Jong-un in his official statements has also underlined the importance of the nuclear weapons program for a number of times. A recent example includes his speech during a meeting of the Central Committee of the Korea Workers' Party (KWP), when he said that North Korean nuclear weapons were "a powerful deterrent firmly safeguarding the peace and security in the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia" (Pearson 2017). Summing up, contemporary North Korea sees itself as a responsible nuclear power that must be left alone. This new approach is defined not only by a change in the leadership after Kim Jong-il's death, the DPRK's history or national security reasons, but also by a number of psycho-ideological factors as the research will show further.

Ideological aspect

When looking at the formation of the North Korean identity, the other very crucial aspect is the influence of different ideologies on this identity in the course of its development. There are still many wrong assumptions about the existing regime in Pyongyang, as they are based on wrong facts. Some policymakers do not have a clear idea of how the North Korean state functions and what their ideology is. In that regards, for example, simplistic statements like ones about the DPRK being a communist state are not only wrong, but also show the general lack of knowledge of the person making such a statement. The current North Korean ideology is a sophisticated mixture of Confucianism, ethnic nationalism, communism, and *juche* (including *songun* and *byungjin* that are explained later). This part of the chapter will look at the place of these different ideologies in the North Korean identity and assess their roles in its formation.

Confucianism of all the mentioned ideologies probably has the deepest roots, although its influence is not as strong today. Confucianist thought and traditions came to Korea around 200 B.C.E, and had a very serious impact on Korean society, legitimizing the existing system and the rule of different Korean kings. The logic of Confucianism was rather elegant, simple, and appealing to many people. Confucius advanced (apart from ethics and etiquette) such concepts as loyalty and filial piety, which were endorsing the existing societal hierarchy in Korea (Quinones and Tragert 2004, 61-63). Confucius was also one of the first Chinese philosophers to come up with the idea of the mandate of heaven that legitimized the existing system of hereditary rule both in China and Korea (Quinones and Tragert 2004, 63-64). Nobility was very keen on adapting such norms, although the Korean aristocrats changed some aspects of Confucianism to their liking.

Of course, Confucianist traditions have not been explicitly preserved in the same way they were invented back in the days. Nevertheless, their influence is indisputable. The contemporary political system of North Korea is clearly similar to what Confucius has suggested, as the Kim family is the ruling dynasty, so to speak. All North Korean leaders so far have come only from the Kim family – Kim Il-sung (father), Kim Jong-il (son), and Kim Jong-un (grandson). The main ideological basis for the existing political regime in the DPRK is clearly explained in the document that is called “Ten Great Principles of the Establishment of the Unitary Ideology System”. This document lays foundations for absolute obedience in North Korean society, as well as for the principle of

hereditary succession in the DPRK (International Criminal Law Bureau 2016, Preambles 1 and 7).

With the division of the Korean peninsula, its Northern part of it fell under the Soviet influence. Consequently, all left-wing nationalist movements were massively supported by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the North, while the South became hugely anti-communist with its right-wing President, Rhee Syng-man. In the period of the Cold War, communism obviously made North Korea feel more hostile to such capitalist powers as Japan, South Korea, and the USA. Moreover, the ideology of communism deepened the existing feeling of collectivism in North Korean society that had already been rather strong due to Korea's feudal past. Communist ideas were later on modified by Kim Il-sung in the 1960s with a stronger reference to principles of self-reliance and state sovereignty, resulting in the creation of *juche*. Thus, Pyongyang distanced itself from Moscow and Beijing, showing its independence. Today, according to Article 3 of the DPRK's Constitution, *juche* still is the main ideological basis for the country: "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is guided in its activities by the Juche idea and the Songun idea, a world outlook centered on people, a revolutionary ideology for achieving the independence of the masses of the people" (Socialist Constitution of the DPRK, 2016).

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the death of Kim Il-sung in 1994, Kim Jong-il introduced a new policy line called songun (military first). This ideology further contributed to the "besieged fortress" syndrome, as it massively encouraged rapid militarization of society and legitimized huge economic losses that the DPRK suffered through. Famine and economic collapse of the 1990s were justified by arguing that it was necessary to use resources to enhance military capabilities for the sake of national security (Cha 2013). Kim Jong-il's successor, his son Kim Jong-un, however, slightly modified this policy line by calling for byungjin (parallel development). This approach puts equal emphasis on people's economic well-being and national security. Kim Jong-un's approach alleviates constant military pressure on the everyday life of the country, but still pays a tribute to the role of the army in North Korean society.

Another very important aspect of the North Korean identity is a strong element of ethnic nationalism, which is also present in South Korea. As Quinones and Tragert put it, "being Korean is both a source of pride and obligation" (2004, 49). The Korean

nationalist movement has mainly gained its power during the period of the Japanese occupation and, therefore, still has a certain xenophobic anti-Japanese sentiment (Frank 2017, 29-34). One can also clearly see how proud North Koreans are of their country, when reading news reports from the KCNA and Rodong Sinmun (see some samples in Annex 3). The DPRK is always portrayed as a “strong”, “prosperous”, “independent”, and “peaceful” nation by the North Korean media (Delury and Moon 2014, 427). Most of the reports in these newspapers talk about how other nations respect North Korean achievements, whereas “imperialist” Americans, South Koreans and Japanese try to undermine the DPRK’s prosperity. South Korean government is often referred to as “puppets” and “lackeys” of the imperialists and South Korean population is pitied greatly.

A different illustration of North Korean nationalism is the fact that the dominant communist ideology has mutated in Pyongyang throughout the 1960-1970s, transforming into Kim Il-sung’s *juche* ideas (Frank 2017, 49-52). North Korean elites wanted their own type of communism, not willing to follow the lines of Moscow and Beijing. Consequently, portraits of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin were removed from all the buildings, being replaced by the images of the Kim dynasty. From the early 1970s the ideological basis of North Korean socialist theories is Kimilsungism–Kimjongilism (that is, *juche*).

North Korean nationalism plays the most important role in times of crisis and negotiations with Pyongyang (Bolton 2017). Of course, nuclear weapons are essential in military sense, but they also play a symbolic role for the rank-and-file North Koreans. Possessing nuclear weapons is seen as something that this small Northeast-Asian country can be proud of. Whenever there is an escalation of the crisis on the Korean Peninsula, North Koreans point out that their “small” but “proud” country has to face threats from a gigantic economic and geopolitical power, the United States. Thus, their unwillingness to negotiate on nuclear weapons is supported by psychological factors as well. In that regards, it essential to understand how North Koreans see their nuclear weapons – not only as a means of survival as Lankov argues (Lankov 2013), but also as a great achievement of their country that many people died for in period of famine of the 1990s. North Koreans themselves call it “the arduous march” (Pares and Hoare 2005, 72). The famine itself, thus, has also become an element of ideological propaganda among North Koreans, as it was seen as a sacrifice for the sake of the nation’s security.

Cultural aspect

The last important element that is also closely intertwined with North Korean nationalism is the cultural aspect of the DPRK's identity. Considering the fact that the existing regime in Pyongyang is not a democratic one, one should bear in mind the fact that culture serves as a mere tool for supporting the ideas of *juche*. According to Article 52 of the North Korean Constitution "the State shall develop *Juche*-oriented, revolutionary art and literature, national in form and socialist in content. The State shall encourage creative workers and artists to produce works of high ideological and artistic value and enlist the broad sections of the masses in literary and artistic activities". As Pares and Hoare rightfully argue, different branches of culture are encouraged, however "not for their own sake or as an outlet for individual ability and sentiment, but primarily as an element in official policies" (2005, 85-86). Thus, the DPRK citizens try to show how unique their country is and how proud they are to be North Koreans, solidifying the existing sentiment of ethnic nationalism in the country.

Cultural differentiation from other countries is clearly visible in different areas of the DPRK's cultural policies. If one takes a look at the Korean language in the North, it has much less foreign influence than the Korean language in the South. While the inhabitants of Seoul increasingly use such derived words as *haendeupon* (hand phone), *hatdogeu* (hot dog), *kaerieo* (career), their compatriots in the North replaced almost all derivatives from other languages with native Korean words in attempt to create linguistic purity (Pares and Hoare 2005, 85). Although there are some obvious social and cultural influences from China and Japan (Quinones and Tragert 2004, 46-158), North Koreans fiercely reject this and claim that even if there were any influences, these were immediately refined and adopted to needs of Korean society (Pares and Hoare 2005, 95). The influence of Western "imperialist" culture is frowned upon and is officially banned by the state. Article 43 of the DPRK Constitution states: "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea shall develop a truly people-oriented, revolutionary culture which serves the socialist working people. In building a socialist national culture, the State shall oppose the cultural infiltration of imperialism and any tendency to return to the past, protect its national cultural heritage, and develop it in keeping with the existing socialist situation" (Socialist Constitution of the DPRK, 2016).

Still, there are informal parts of culture that exist on their own and are not regulated (Pares and Hoare 2005, 95-105). A rather interesting example is negotiation culture of North Koreans. Clemens describes their approach to negotiations as a very high context one (2010, 104-106). He notes that human relations in North Korean understanding should not hinge on something, they must not be conditional. Koreans, he elaborates further, see “friendship between the highest levels of leadership” as something extremely crucial and believe that it is “personality behind the law”, not the law itself, that should be the action framework (Clemens 2010, 104). In this context, the negotiations offer made by Kim Jong-un to Donald Trump in March, 2018 is an illustrative example of this thesis. If a very high context and informal approach to negotiation is used, the two parties (the USA and the DPRK) might reach an effective agreement. This question, however, remains to be open.

To conclude, today North Korean culture is essential for the country’s propaganda machine. It is actively supported by state, although artists and cultural workers do not enjoy freedom of expression. The main purpose of cultural policy of the DPRK is to fuel Korean nationalism and support cultural differentiation from other states, so as to bar North Korean citizens from any external influence. This is clearly reflected in a North Korean motto “*We have nothing to envy*” that later on became a title for a novelized book by Barbara Demick (2010). Cultural uniqueness and pride is an essential part of the North Korean identity that the DPRK cherishes very much. The cultural difference between the DPRK and ROK citizens is so big that it creates major integration problems for North Korean refugees (International Crisis Group 2011, 11-21). Nevertheless, informality of the DPRK culture in other aspects allows international negotiators to approach North Koreans in a more delicate and subtle way. There are existing historical examples of this informality used by Jimmy Carter in his negotiations with Pyongyang. Carter was out of office when he visited the DPRK and negotiated rather informally, but this significantly contributed to the establishment of the so-called Agreed Framework in 1994 that froze the North Korean nuclear program (Clemens 2010, 123-133). Therefore, the informal negotiation culture must be carefully considered, when dealing with North Koreans.

Conclusions on identity study

Summing up, one can clearly see that the North Korean identity is indeed complex and has been formed under enormous pressure from the outside. First and foremost, North

Korea and its population highly value their independence and remain extremely nationalist. Its endeavors in building nuclear arsenals are claimed to be absolutely legitimate, considering a very hostile approach of the United States to the issue. Therefore, the country sees its nuclear program as a safeguard of its own sovereignty. Secondly, isolationist and autarkic tendencies are not new phenomena that emerged in the DPRK after the collapse of the socialist block in 1991, but are deep-rooted in North Korean history. Thirdly, throughout its development, the North Korean identity has been influenced by a great variety of different ideologies, so in that regards its identity is very fragmented today. Contemporary DPRK is a very nationalist political entity with a longstanding tradition of Confucianist societal norms, as well as with a strongly collectivist society. Collectivism, that was an essential part of feudal Korea, was reinforced by ideologies of communism and, particularly, *juche*. Fourthly, North Korean cultural self-differentiation also contributes to its ethnic nationalism and the existing syndrome of “siege mentality”. Official cultural policies are mostly used as a tool in the hands of the KWP for the sake of state propaganda that influences the North Korean perception of the outside world. On the other hand, the DPRK’s culture has a very informal approach to interpersonal relations as well as diplomatic negotiations. North Korea values personal relations between leaders more than official papers signed by different countries. Therefore, the country is highly suspicious of the effectiveness of the existing international law framework, which results in its unwillingness to abide by its norms. Finally, the regime believes that it remains to be a completely rational actor. A thorough analysis of the statements made by the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Pyongyang confirms this. All these parts corresponding to the different parts of the North Korean identity are represented on the next page in a matrix.

The DPRK sees its foreign policy line as an essential part of the survival diplomacy. It has security concerns due to the “aggressive foreign policy” of the United States that exerts pressure on the regime by introducing more and more sanctions and threatening to consider military options. Many academics see this as a rather legitimate claim for building up the arsenal and do not consider North Korean regime irrational as well (McCormack 2007, Lankov 2013, Bolton 2017, Clemens 2010). The DPRK’s desire to survive as a political entity is the most important driver of the North Korean foreign policy. This shows a rather high level of identity rigidity. If the North Korean identity was absolutely inflexible, however, it would mean that there is no practically no negotiating

space, which is not the case. The North Koreans can often show flexibility in their negotiation positions, with the most recent example of the ROK agreeing on holding an inter-Korean summit with the DPRK in April 2018. Thus, in order to explain this flexibility, the research will look at the second level of the North Korean identity in the next chapter.

North Korean identity				
<i>Historical aspect</i>	Historical traditions of isolationism (“hermit kingdom”)	Geographical secludedness (sim. to the Kingdom of Balhae)	History of colonial suppression (Japanese rule)	“Siege mentality” and survival rationality (rivalry with the USA)
<i>Ideological aspect</i>	Strong ethnic nationalism	Collectivist society (feudal traditions and communism)	Juche (self-reliance) and songun (military first)	Confucianist societal norms (influence in early history)
<i>Cultural aspect</i>	Cultural purity and self-differentiation	Informal culture and importance of interpersonal relations in negotiations	Culture perceived as a means of political education (state propaganda)	

Table 3. Matrix of the basic level of North Korean identity

Chapter 3: Crisis Escalation and the Role of Identity Constituting Norms

This chapter is going to look at how identity-constituting norms have affected the situation on the Korean peninsula in terms of crisis escalation. First, it will look at how the identities of the parties influenced the development of an unravelling conflict in May 2017. Moreover, it will suggest certain causal explanations of these developments, as it is important to understand why certain actors (especially, the DPRK, ROK, and the US) make particular decisions and how these decisions affected the situation. In order to do that this chapter will look at the role of the media coverage in the conflict as well as the role of public statements of the different parties.

Content analysis of the public statements

Although the reports of mass media are an integral part of the identity formation processes, one cannot ignore public statements of politicians and political institutions in that regards. The reason is simple, as it is the politicians who are the decision-makers. Normally, media follow the lead of the decision-makers, although they also actively contribute to the formation of the second level-identities. Therefore, it is crucial to look at their statements in order to see how they correlate with the conflict (de-)escalation pattern as well. This sub-section will, for those reason, deal with public statements made in the designated period in order to assess their influence in the period of de-escalation.

Particular examples are interesting in that regards. The US and North Korea made especially aggressive public statements. The press-secretary of the US President in May 2017 said that the President was “building a coalition in the region to isolate North Korea both economically and diplomatically to get the threat — to take that threat down” (White House, 2017). The North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after adopting of additional sanctions, responded by saying the following (which represents a magnificent example of typical North Korean public statements): “The DPRK government determines such crazy hostile acts being committed by the U.S. and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718(2006) on the DPRK under the pretext of sanctions as a heinous crime against humanity aimed to trample down the sovereignty of the DPRK and its people’s right to existence and thus pull the country back into the life of dark age, disregarding the basics of the international law and common sense of legitimate trade deals among countries, and therefore totally rejects such kinds of “resolutions”. (MoFA

DPRK 2017). One of the only statements that sent an actual reconciliatory message was made by the South Korean President in his inauguration address. Moon stated that he would “remain committed to doing all [he] can for the settlement of peace on the Korean Peninsula” (Moon 2017a).

	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>
	<i>Sanctions</i>	8
	<i>Destroy</i>	2
	<i>Provocation</i>	4
	<i>Threat</i>	13
	<i>Pressure</i>	4
Negative subtotal		31
Percentage		50%
	<i>Dialogue</i>	8
	<i>Peace</i>	10
	<i>Cooperate</i>	5
	<i>Solution</i>	5
	<i>Improve</i>	3
Non-negative subtotal		31
Percentage		50%
Keywords total		62

Table 4. Content analysis of the public statements made by the parties in May 2017

While looking at the results of the content analysis, it is important to keep in mind that some of the variables (words) might not described the DPRK per-se, but rather a context in which it is mentioned. In May 2017, the decision-makers were not sure how to deal with the situation, as the non-negative and negative variables have the same share. Although it is clear that the DPRK perceives other parties as a “*threat*” and others perceive it as a “*threat*” as well, with the variable being mentioned 13 times.

Content analysis of the media-coverage

Media coverage of Korean crises is always very active, as these events often involve a lot of controversies and major diplomatic disputes. Since people get most of the information from mass media, newspapers and news agencies play an essential role in constructing the image of social and political entities in our heads. The same is applied for the case of

North Korea. The assumption of this research is that this media-coverage also, therefore, affects the identity of nations, although not the primary level of identities, but the secondary level. As it has been mentioned in the theoretical part of the research, the secondary level of an identity can be influenced by different factors (including media-coverage and public statements of the decision-makers), because it is not as rigid as the primary level.

Positive/Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>
	<i>Military</i>	53
	<i>War</i>	10
	<i>Destroy</i>	2
	<i>Threat</i>	57
	<i>Concern</i>	15
Negative subtotal		137
Percentage		43%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	32
	<i>Peace</i>	46
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	25
	<i>Solution</i>	39
	<i>Talk</i>	42
Non-negative subtotal		184
Percentage		57%
Keywords total		321

Table 5. Content analysis of the international media-coverage in May 2017

From the results of the content analysis in May 2017, it is clear that the DPRK is seen majorly in a military context or referred to as a “*threat*” or “*concern*”. The overall negative subtotal is 43%, which is a pretty high result, but still explainable, considering the first level of the DPRK identity in the world. Nevertheless, the country was also seen as a possible negotiating partner, if one looks at the number of such variables as “*negotiation*” or “*talk*”. The content seen in the North Korean media coverage, however, was different, being much more negative, 70%. The DPRK state-owned newspaper described major actors such as the United States or South Korea as “*aggressors*”, “*provocators*”, and “*imperialists*” quite often. Obviously, such an aggressive and largely negative content of the media-coverage has also negatively influenced the second-level

identity of the actors. These results are especially interesting, when compared with the results of the content analysis of the public statements.

Positive/Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>
	<i>Imperialist</i>	4
	<i>War</i>	21
	<i>Confront</i>	6
	<i>Aggression</i>	8
	<i>Provocation</i>	5
Negative subtotal		44
Percentage		70%
	<i>Dialogue</i>	1
	<i>Peace</i>	9
	<i>Ties</i>	2
	<i>Unite</i>	3
	<i>Improve</i>	4
Non-negative subtotal		19
Percentage		30%
Keywords total		63

Table 6. Content analysis of the North Korean media-coverage in May 2017

Causal explanations of the conflict escalation

Several causal explanations can be made in that regards that explain why the situation escalated. Obviously, the political factor was very strong on its own with the DPRK conducting missile tests. The crisis on the peninsula started escalating as soon as the former conservative South Korean President, Park Geun-hye was ousted from her office and new elections took place, which brought a liberal candidate, Moon Jae-in, to the presidential palace in Seoul (Campbell 2017). He officially became the President on May 10, and only a few days after that the North Korean military carried out a ballistic missile test, on May 14 (BBC 2017). Missile tests are not rare in the context of North Korean crises and are usually condemned, but do not get as much attention as nuclear tests. That test, however, marked a very important development in the DPRK's nuclear program, as "the test could suggest a longer range than previously tested devices" (BBC 2017). In

other words, the DPRK reached a dangerous threshold level of acquiring a fully developed-ICBM technology.

Taking the escalation context into consideration, it is logical to assume that the North wanted to see what kind of crisis solutions the new administration in the South would come up with. The timing of the test, however, seemed to be very strange, as the newly elected South Korean president clearly stated that we would be advocating North engagement policies. The reasoning of the DPRK behind that particular missile test, therefore, may still be open to discussion.

The missile test, as usual, was strongly condemned by all parties to the crisis (BBC 2017). Still, the DPRK ignored the warnings of the international community and did not stop the tests or start negotiations. The situation started getting even worse in the following months, as the DPRK tested yet another missile in July and claimed that it could possibly “reach anywhere in the world” (CNN 2018). It caused an explosion of international public opinion with some experts arguing that the DPRK now has “a new negotiating position” (Ibid). Although the accuracy of this statement might be questionable, as the North Korean government often tends to exaggerate its achievements (Cha 2013, 90-112), the North has still visibly progressed in the sphere of missile development. This test was, therefore, seen as a serious threat not only to Japan and South Korea, but also for the national security of the United States (CNN 2018). Thus, the response of the relevant national administrations was mostly rather aggressive, which explain a rather high number of negative values in the content analysis of the public statements (50%).

Interestingly enough, even in that situation, political consequences of a missile test could not be compared with the consequences of a nuclear test, as it will be demonstrated in the next chapter. The escalation of the conflict, however, was further exacerbated by negative public statements and a massively negative media-coverage of the situation. In order to see how the DPRK responded to the crisis developments, it is enough to look at the results of the analysis. When the international media was largely pessimistic about the DPRK with 48% of negative coverage, the North Korean media provided their readers with hysterically negative image of other countries, reaching 70%. The second level of the North Korean identity has become largely negative, which obviously prevented any opportunities for negotiations or personal meetings between the leaders of the countries.

This, consequently, brought about further deterioration of the situation when the crisis reached its peak in January 2018.

Chapter 4: Crisis Peak and the Role of Identity Constituting Norms

This chapter will look at the peak of the crisis analyzed in this dissertation. As it has already been mentioned in the section on theory and methodology, the dissertation looks at three main phases in the conflict – escalation, peak, and de-escalation that correspond to three different time frames. Looking at the crisis peak is crucial in order to see what influenced the decision-makers in making aggressive public statements and political actions. It also helps to understand how the de-escalation was made possible.

Content analysis of the public statements

The pattern in the public statements analysis seems to differ to a certain extent from what one observes in the media coverage, but it is still similar. The relative numbers of negative variables are the same both in May and September. This, however, can be explained by long reconciliatory speeches made by President Moon in September 2017. Generally, however, parties to the conflict (the DPRK and other actors) often describe each other as “*threats*” and refer to actions of the others as “*provocations*”. This clearly shows that the conflict reached its peak and that the parties see each other in a negative way. Politically, the peak of the conflict corresponds to the September 2017 nuclear test conducted by North Koreans. Consequently, statements even more threatening than the ones in May 2017 followed.

Back in September 2017, President Trump threatened to completely destroy North Korea while giving a speech in the UNGA: “The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea. Rocket Man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime” (Trump 2017). Japanese Prime-Minister Abe was also tough in his criticism saying that already back in the days “North Korea betrayed the good faith of all those KEDO members” and that “Japan will face up to North Korea’s nuclear and missile threat” (Abe 2017). Other decision-makers were not as harsh in their language, but also condemned North Korea. The DPRK reacted immediately with Kim Jong-un himself saying that “After taking office Trump has rendered the world restless through threats and blackmail [...] He is unfit to hold the prerogative of supreme command of a country, and he is surely a rogue and a gangster...” (National Committee on North Korea 2017)

	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: <i>The 2017 DPRK nuclear test</i>
	<i>Sanctions</i>	8	10
	<i>Destroy</i>	2	6
	<i>Provocation</i>	4	4
	<i>Threat</i>	13	8
	<i>Pressure</i>	4	5
Negative subtotal		31	33
Percentage		50%	50%
	<i>Dialogue</i>	8	7
	<i>Peace</i>	10	12
	<i>Cooperate</i>	5	9
	<i>Solution</i>	5	2
	<i>Improve</i>	3	3
Non-negative subtotal		31	33
Percentage		50%	50%
Keywords total		62	66

Table 7. *Content analysis of the public statements made by the parties in May and September 2017*

The only decision-maker, who was still making positive public statements and saw the other party as a negotiating partner, was Moon Jae-in. Although during the peak of the crisis the South Korean President said that his government tries to convince other countries “for stronger sanctions and pressure to make the North stop its provocations and bring it to the negotiating table” (Moon 2017b), he also sent a conciliatory message to the DPRK. In the same speech he stated: “We do not want the collapse of North Korea. We will not seek unification by absorption nor will we seek an artificial unification. If the North makes a decision even now to stand on the right side of history, we are ready to assist it in cooperation with the international community” (Ibid). These statements had a profound effect on the second level of the North Korean identity and on the DPRK’s willingness to negotiate.

Content analysis of the media-coverage

The data presented on this page demonstrates rather interesting results that be used for giving causal explanation of the conflict development. First of all, it shows that the

assumption made about the conflict pattern in the very beginning of the 3rd chapter is right. The negative coverage of the DPRK more or less follows the pattern of conflict. In the very first phase of the crisis, the negative coverage of the DPRK estimated up to 43% of the total media-coverage in May 2017. Later, with more and more negative coverage (58% in September 2017), the conflict started reaching its peak.

If one looks at the details of the content-analysis on the next page, it is interesting to see how some variables change. The variable “*destroy*”, for example, at the very beginning of the conflict was not used that often – 2 times only. Consequently, conflict escalation follows the increased usage of “*destroy*” – in September 2017 it was used 26 times, a very dramatic increase. Another interesting example in that context are the variables “*talk*” and “*solution*”. Both of them also support the assumptions made in the previous chapter chapter, as the frequency of the variable “*talk*” first falls from 42 to 27 as the conflict escalates. A similar pattern can be seen with the variable “*solution*”, as its share falls dramatically from 39 to 9.

Positive/ Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: <i>The 2017 DPRK nuclear test</i>
	<i>Military</i>	53	52
	<i>War</i>	10	25
	<i>Destroy</i>	2	26
	<i>Threat</i>	57	58
	<i>Concern</i>	15	22
Negative subtotal		137	183
Percentage		43%	58%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	32	20
	<i>Peace</i>	46	48
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	25	29
	<i>Solution</i>	39	9
	<i>Talk</i>	42	27
Non-negative subtotal		184	133
Percentage		57%	42%
Keywords total		321	316

Table 8. Content analysis of the international media-coverage in May and September 2017

When one looks at the North Korean media-coverage of the situation, the results of the content-analysis also seem to support the assumption made in the previous chapter. Although, the initial level of negative coverage was pretty high (70%), it can be explained by the general negative attitudes of the DPRK toward the US and other regional players that are seeded deep in the primary level of the North Korean identity. This coverage became even more negative in September, reaching the level of 80%. What is interesting, however, is that the absolute number of negative variables remained more or less the same, but the absolute number of non-negative variables fell from 19 to 11. For example, it is clear from the results that the DPRK did not see the US and its allies as trustworthy negotiations partners as well. The number of such words as “*negotiations*”, “*talks*”, and “*diplomatic*” went down to 0. Remarkably, once again the behavior of the media had a connection with the escalation pattern as well as public statements of the leaders as one will see from the next sub-chapter. The pattern is not as clear as in the first analyzed time period (in May 2017), however, still can be traced.

Positive/ Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: <i>The 2017 DPRK nuclear test</i>
	<i>Military</i>	4	9
	<i>War</i>	21	15
	<i>Destroy</i>	6	7
	<i>Threat</i>	8	10
	<i>Concern</i>	5	3
Negative subtotal		44	44
Percentage		70%	80%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	1	0
	<i>Peace</i>	9	9
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	2	0
	<i>Solution</i>	3	2
	<i>Talk</i>	4	0
Non-negative subtotal		19	11
Percentage		30%	20%
Keywords total		63	55

Table 9. Content analysis of the North Korean media-coverage in May and September 2017

Causal explanations of the crisis peak

There are several important points that explain why the crisis reached its peak exactly on September 3, 2017. One of the most obvious reasons is a nuclear test that was conducted on that very day. This test, that the government of North Korea claimed to be a hydrogen bomb test, caused much more tensions than simple missile tests or simple nuclear tests conducted before that. The DPRK was put under a very strict sanctions regime, probably one of the strictest in the UN history. This included banning all natural gas supplies to the DPRK, as well as harshly restricting the supply of crude oil and introducing even more financial sanction in the S/RES/2407 (2018) resolution. The situation on the Korean peninsula was so critical that certain academics and experts even expressed their public support for military strike plans that the Trump administration was considering as a possible solution during the peak of the crisis (Luttwak 2018, Peters 2017).

Another factor that massively contributed to the escalation of the conflict was a number of very aggressive public statements by some of the key decision-makers. The nuclear test by the DPRK was actively discussed in the 72nd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. During its annual debate the US President, apart from referring to the DPRK as a very dangerous and hostile country, also said that the United States can “totally destroy” North Korea (Trump 2017). The North Korean government answered almost immediately, with Kim Jong-un himself threatening the United States with a war and calling Donald Trump a “mentally deranged dotard” who will be tamed “with fire” (The National Committee on North Korea 2017). This, consequently, resulted in two key parties to the crisis (the US and the DPRK) trading insults instead of trying to negotiate, which escalated the situation even further.

By the beginning of January, the situation on the Peninsula was so tense that even tweets of the US President that insulted and ridiculed Kim Jong-un were seen as dangerous (CNN 2018). The second level of the North Korean identity was negatively affected by both public statements and the DPRK’s image created in international media. The pattern that could be traced in the press was similar to the one discovered in public statements. With the increasingly aggressive rhetoric of the decision-makers media coverage became almost hysterical with the percentage of negative content springing up by 15% (in comparison to May), as one can see from the results of the content-analysis.

The last but not least was the fact that the pattern of negative public statements was uneven. When the main parties to the crisis such as the DPRK and the US, as well as Japan, were trading insults, while China and Russia remain relative neutral the only “window of opportunity” for negotiations was created by the South Korean President Moon Jae-in. He remained firm in adhering to the sanctions regime but still saw the DPRK as an equal negotiations partner. This consequently resulted in a shift in the second level of the North Korean identity, creating opportunities for the de-escalation of the crisis.

Chapter 5: Crisis De-escalation and the Role of Identity Constituting Norms

This chapter will look at the de-escalation of the crisis analyzed in the dissertation. The de-escalation of the conflict in this case means the consequent participation of North Korea in the 2018 Winter Olympics, cessation of weapon tests and war drills, as well as invitations sent by Kim Jong-un to President Moon and President Trump to meet in April and May. The chapter will also refer to the results of the content analysis that deal with the public statements and media-coverage that were relevant to the period. Most importantly, it will give causal explanations of the crisis (de-)escalation and show the overall pattern of crisis development.

Content analysis of the public statements

The situation in January 2018 was very different from May and September 2017, as more peaceful remarks followed from different parties to the crisis. Interestingly, however, it was not North Korea and the US coming to terms, but North and South. South Korean President Moon had been advancing diplomatic means of solving the crisis throughout the whole crisis period, as it has been stressed in the two previous chapters. This created a political “window of opportunity” for the North Koreans to start negotiations and de-escalate the situation. As soon as Kim Jong-un expressed his will to have the North Korean delegation attending the Olympics in Pyeongchang, Moon immediately agreed, saying that “If peace begins in PyeongChang, I will turn it into a stable system that takes root. To solve the North Korean nuclear issue and settle peace, I will pursue more dialogue and cooperative projects” (Moon 2018).

One can also clearly see that the perception of the DPRK by the decision-makers also started to improve. There were no more statements from the White House with the threats to “destroy” North Korea. Both parties also stopped trading insults. The “mentally deranged dotard” that was to be tamed “with fire” – that is, Donald Trump – was now seen as a negotiating partner. A dramatic fall in negative statements about the North from 50% to 25% helped Kim Jong-un in adjusting his negotiating positions. Another positive sign was an increase in the share of the variable “*improve*” by more than 4 times.

	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: <i>The 2017 DPRK nuclear test</i>	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: <i>Negotiations on the Olympics</i>
	<i>Sanctions</i>	8	10	10
	<i>Destroy</i>	2	6	0
	<i>Provocation</i>	4	4	2
	<i>Threat</i>	13	8	9
	<i>Pressure</i>	4	5	4
Negative subtotal		31	33	25
Percentage		50%	50%	25%
	<i>Dialogue</i>	8	7	16
	<i>Peace</i>	10	12	30
	<i>Cooperate</i>	5	9	8
	<i>Solution</i>	5	2	8
	<i>Improve</i>	3	3	12
Non-negative subtotal		31	33	74
Percentage		50%	50%	75%
Keywords total		62	66	99

Table 10. Content analysis of the public statements made by the parties in 2017-2018

Content analysis of the media-coverage

The media in this case once again followed the lead of the decision-makers. In January 2018, the relative number of negative variables falls from 50% to 29%, which clearly demonstrated the de-escalation of the conflict. All the parties start putting much more emphasis on “*talks*” and “*solutions*” in that context. The absolute number for these two variables skyrocket with an increase from 9 to 27, and 27 to 121 respectively in comparison to September 2017. The tone of the publications became different as well. Yonhap, for example, wrote on January 17, 2017: “Seoul hopes that the ongoing inter-Korean talks, which are mostly limited to the Olympics, will pave the way for denuclearization talks between Washington and Pyongyang” (Yonhap 2018). Whereas back on September 15, 2017, it followed the presidential lead: “President Moon Jae-in condemned North Korea's latest missile launch on Friday, saying dialogue with the communist nation is "impossible in a situation like this" and warning that the South is

capable of destroying the North "beyond recovery" (Yonhap 2017). These changes have also affected the second level of the North Korean identity, making it more open for further negotiations.

Positive/ Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: <i>The 2017 DPRK nuclear test</i>	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: <i>Negotiations on the Olympics</i>
	<i>Military</i>	53	52	24
	<i>War</i>	10	25	20
	<i>Destroy</i>	2	26	4
	<i>Threat</i>	57	58	22
	<i>Concern</i>	15	22	10
Negative subtotal		137	183	80
Percentage		43%	58%	23%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	32	20	37
	<i>Peace</i>	46	48	47
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	25	29	33
	<i>Solution</i>	39	9	27
	<i>Talk</i>	42	27	121
Non-negative subtotal		184	133	265
Percentage		57%	42%	77%
Keywords total		321	316	345

Table 11. Content analysis of the international media-coverage in 2017-2018

Very surprising are also the results of the content analysis of the North Korean media coverage. Normally *Rodong Sinmun* is highly critical of the US and South Korea, which was not the case in January 2018. The relative number of negative variables drops from 80% to 37%, more than two times. The official state media starts stressing the importance of negotiations with the South after the respective statements made by Kim Jong-un. That is clearly seen from the results too, as in September 2017 there were no mentions of the variable “*negotiations*” whatsoever, whereas in January 2018 this number grew to 15. A similar situation can be seen with the “*talk*” variable, as during the crisis peak this word was not mentioned at all. These shifts clearly demonstrate that the DPRK’s perception of the opposite parties has significantly improved as a consequence of the identity changes.

	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: <i>Moon Jae-in election</i>	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: <i>The 2017 DPRK nuclear test</i>	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: <i>Negotiations on the Olympics</i>
	<i>Military</i>	4	9	7
	<i>War</i>	21	15	11
	<i>Destroy</i>	6	7	5
	<i>Threat</i>	8	10	4
	<i>Concern</i>	5	3	7
Negative subtotal		44	44	34
Percentage		70%	80%	37%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	1	0	15
	<i>Peace</i>	9	9	9
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	2	0	6
	<i>Solution</i>	3	2	18
	<i>Talk</i>	4	0	11
Non-negative subtotal		19	11	59
Percentage		30%	20%	63%
Keywords total		63	55	93

Table 12. Content analysis of the North Korean media-coverage in 2017-2018

Causal explanations of the crisis de-escalation

At the peak of the crisis there were not many “windows of opportunities” for crisis management. De-escalation of the crisis in this context came as the result of hard work by President Moon Jae-in and his positive diplomatic messages to the North. The South Korean government managed to use the only political “window of opportunity” that it had in the situation – the upcoming Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. The concept of using the Olympic Games as an opportunity for diplomacy has been around for quite some time, so this is not something new (Beacom 2012, 15-39). Even the IOC defines its cause as creating “a window of opportunity for dialogue and reconciliation”, that is, reaching the Olympic Peace (International Olympic Committee, 2018a). Thus, when Kim Jong-un suggested a possible visit of the North Korean delegation to Pyeongchang in his 2018 New Year Address, Moon Jae-in realized that this would be an ideal case for using sports

diplomacy (Economist 2018). What basically happened, is that Moon Jae-in used the shift in the second level of the North Korean identity in order to orchestrate negotiations between Seoul, Pyongyang, and Washington.

The behavior of North Korea in this context is also understandable, as with the peak of the crisis it saw that the only opportunity to negotiate with the US was through approaching the South. The situation in September 2017 was getting way too dangerous. The first level of the Northern identity played a key role here, as it is known for its survival diplomacy tactics. The unpredictability of the US President combined with slow changes in the second level of the DPRK's identity as well as Moon's diplomatic efforts created a perfect storm.

The 2018 Olympics resulted in an enormous progress in the North-South relations, as the sports teams of both countries marched together using the flag of a Unified Korea (International Olympic Committee 2018a). With a number of talks held between South and North Korea during the period of preparation in late January – early February, the ground was laid for the upcoming summit between Kim Jong-un and Moon Jae-in in April 2018 (Economist 2018). Mutual insults disappeared from the public statements of the decision-makers and the number of threats radically decreased, whereas North Korea officially declared that it would refrain from any other military tests (Revere 2018).

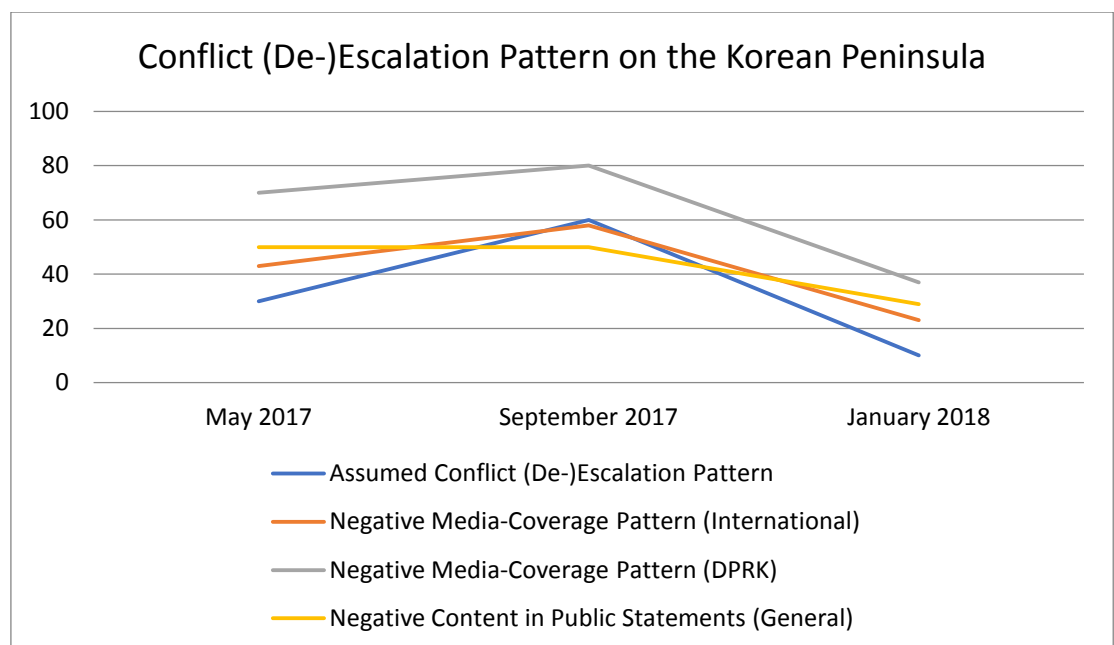


Figure 2. Final pattern comparison, including both media-coverage and public statements patterns

What is especially interesting in that context is the fact that it was South and North Korea, not the world hegemon, the United States, who managed to get what was needed in the situation. Political interests of both Korea paradoxically overlapped, as they were trying to ease tensions between each other and find a way to negotiate with the United States by involving it in the conflict management process. This clearly shows that materialist paradigms, especially, realist theories cannot explain the situation well, as the proponents of *Realpolitik* argue that only the strongest states get what they want to achieve (Haslam 2002, 168). The United States is economically and militarily superior to both North and South Korea combined, but still it was more or less diplomatically isolated in the situation with the Olympics negotiations. Therefore, it had to stand aside and rely on the bilateral talks between the North and the South in order to manage the conflict (Economist 2018).

Summing up the research results in all the three chapters, there is a number of important observations that can be made. First, it becomes clear that the conflict development pattern is strongly influenced by identity-constructing norms, especially when it comes to the de-escalation stage. Thus, the influence of both media-coverage and public statements is very significant in that context. Despite the generally negative perception of the DPRK based on the primary level of its identity, the secondary level of its identity changes depending on the information flows (media-coverage and public statements) that have been analyzed in this thesis. One can even talk about *information multiplier effect* in that context. That is, the more positive information there is the mass media and in the public statements of decision makers, the more likely it is to cause positive political side effects and result in conflict de-escalation. The same goes for the negative side effects.

Secondly, another interesting observation is that classical materialist paradigms and, particularly, the concept of *Realpolitik* do not explain the case of the 2017-2018 North Korean crisis very well. The (de-)escalation of the conflict was the result of common North and South Korean efforts, as both countries used the Olympic “window of opportunity” in order to conduct negotiations. The role of the United States (despite its economic and military power) as well as the role of other actors was rather limited in that context.

Finally, the research cannot claim that information factors play a more important role than political acts of the decision-makers in the context of conflict management. Nevertheless, looking at the role of identity-constructing norms and at how information flows can cause identity changes, as well as positive and negative developments in conflict management, one should not ignore their role when dealing with such cases as North Korea.

Conclusion

With the increasing interest of the media to the North Korean issue, one should keep in mind one thing. That is, never to be overly optimistic about the developments in the region, when one deals with such a complex research topic as North Korea. The situation with negotiations on conducting the US-DPRK summit in 2018 is a good proof of that, with Donald Trump not being sure if he was supposed to meet Kim Jong-un or not. Still, a rather diplomatic North Korean response to Washington's political actions and the DPRK's expression of readiness to negotiate gives some hopes for more positive developments in the future. Indeed, the crisis development pattern analyzed in this dissertation clearly shows that political events on the Korean peninsula can be cyclic.

The results of this research have serious theoretical implications and are politically interesting as well. The dissertation has set out to examine if identity-constituting norms played an essential- role in the (de)-escalation of the 2017-2018 North Korean crisis and it has successfully done so. While looking at the case of North Korea, it becomes clear that identities and perceptions, as well as identity-constructing norms can change the negotiating behavior of the DPRK. It is, nevertheless, important to indicate that the research has encountered difficulties in accessing a number of public statements made by particular decision-makers (especially the ones made by the DPRK and China), as not all of them were accessible online. Nevertheless, after finishing the empirical part of the research, this dissertation has clearly reached its goal of answering the research question posed in the introduction. The thesis tried to discover if identity constituting norms influence the pattern of crisis (de)-escalation on the Korean Peninsula. The main hypothesis of the thesis was that the influence of these norms is very significant.

In order to answer the research question and test the hypothesis, a number of research tasks were accomplished. First of all, the thesis has indicated the main components of the prime level of the North Korean identity in a number of fields by using the methods of historical research and qualitative analysis. The North Korean identity is a very interesting mix of multiple factors. It includes historical traditions of isolationism, geographical seclusion, and history of colonial suppression, major security concerns as well as collectivist society, ideas of Kimilsunginism-Kimjongilism, feelings of strong ethnic nationalism, Confucianist societal norms, and importance of interpersonal relations. Moreover, it also includes respect to the role of the military in society and is

based on “siege mentality” and survival rationality, as well as ideas of cultural purity and self-differentiation. All these factors combined form the primary level of the North Korean identity that looks very rigid. This identity explains the logic of the North Korean foreign policy described by some as “survival diplomacy” (Lankov 2013, 111-185).

This image of one-level identity, however, is too simplistic, as it would imply negotiating inflexibility of the DPRK, which is not the case. Therefore, one should keep in mind that identity is a multidimensional phenomenon, as it has been stressed in the chapter on the theoretical framework. One of the most important theoretical findings of this thesis is that there is also a second level to the concept of identity, and that it can change under the influence of outside factors. For this reason, it is also important to look at the role of media-coverage and public statements during crisis periods. They can change the second level of the actor’s identity. Thus, in order to test the hypothesis, the research had to analyze the role of media-coverage and public statements using the methods of content-analysis.

The qualitative interpretation of the content analysis results shows that identity-changing norms can influence crisis management both in positive and negative ways. The case of the 2017-2018 North Korean crisis clearly demonstrates it. Although, there have not been any exceptionally aggressive or violent actions neither from the side of the United States, nor from the DPRK, negative content of the media-coverage as well as public statements from May 2017 till January 2018 exacerbated the situation. Threats to destroy each other, as well as other mutual accusations were the main factors in that regards. There was as well an example of a contrary effect. Even though there were no any pro-active policy measures by any of the actors in January 2018, there were a larger number of positive (and neutral) statements from the key decision-makers. One could also observe less negative media-coverage of the situation in the press that followed the lead of decision-makers. The real policy measures came only in February and March 2018, when due to massive efforts of the South Korean negotiators the North issued negotiation invitations to the South Korean and American Presidents. This, however, would not have been and was not the case in September 2017, when the decision-makers were trading insults and mass-media had a very high degree of negative-coverage of the corresponding parties. Thus, decision-makers are influenced by the mass media and statements made by other key players, which confirms the validity of the research’s hypothesis.

These findings have serious implications for the existing literature in the field, since talking and negotiating with the DPRK is often dismissed as a waste of time. This thesis clearly shows the invalidity of this argument. As it becomes clear from the results of the content analysis conducted in this dissertation (North Korean) decision-makers are very sensitive to the public statements of the politicians from other countries as well as to the media-coverage of the ongoing events. Thus, short-term identity and perception changes can prove to be crucial in that regards. As the classical paradigms cannot fully explain crisis development in this particular case, one can understand why it is important to look at the North Korean question in the context of the DPRK's identity. Moreover, it is essential to take the effect of identity-constituting norms in crisis management into consideration.

Another important theoretical conclusion that can be drawn from the thesis is that superpowers do not always play a decisive role in crisis management. The case studied in this thesis clearly shows that it was the common effort of the DPRK and ROK (smaller states), not the diplomatic efforts of the US that changed the situation. This clearly shows that materialist paradigms, especially realist concepts like *Realpolitik*, fail to explain important aspects of conflict development and conflict management. In new realities smaller states can create or solve problems that superpowers sometimes cannot deal with. Therefore, contemporary crisis management requires new thinking and creative approaches that use a wide range of tools, ranging from classical ones (like sanctions) to something noncharacteristic (like sports diplomacy).

Finally, this thesis opens new avenues for future research. Similar investigations on the role of identity-constructing norms in crisis management can be conducted in other cases (e.g., India-Pakistan, Ukraine-Russia, or Israel-Palestine). Moreover, if one keeps in mind that in this particular case, parties used the Pyeongchang Olympics as a political “window of opportunity”, further research on the concept of normative peace and on the role of sports diplomacy and Olympic Games in crisis management will be required. There are many questions to be answered in this field. By the end of January 2018, tensions on the Korean peninsula started to ease and after the Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, the situation does not look as grave as it used to. The upcoming negotiations between decision-makers will show if the Olympic peace is a real concept or just a mere illusion.

Annexes

Annex 1: International Media-Coverage of the DPRK (3 Cases)

<i>New York Times</i>				
Positive/Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: Moon Jae-in election	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: The 2017 DPRK nuclear test	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: Negotiations on the Olympic games
	<i>Military</i>	14	8	9
	<i>War</i>	2	4	4
	<i>Destroy</i>	1	6	2
	<i>Threat</i>	17	9	10
	<i>Concern</i>	5	10	1
Negative subtotal		139	37	26
Percentage		52%	84%	32%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	11	0	8
	<i>Peace</i>	3	3	7
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	6	2	10
	<i>Solution</i>	2	2	1
	<i>Talk</i>	14	0	30
Non-negative subtotal		36	7	56
Percentage		48%	16%	68%
Keywords total		75	44	82

Asahi Shimbun

Positive/Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: Moon Jae-in election	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: The 2017 DPRK nuclear test	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: Negotiations on the Olympic games
	<i>Military</i>	14	9	5
	<i>War</i>	2	10	5
	<i>Destroy</i>	1	9	0
	<i>Threat</i>	17	25	5
	<i>Concern</i>	5	3	1
Negative subtotal		39	56	16
Percentage		42%	61%	21%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	8	5	2
	<i>Peace</i>	14	4	14
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	8	15	5
	<i>Solution</i>	10	1	5
	<i>Talk</i>	13	11	34
Non-negative subtotal		53	36	60
Percentage		58%	39%	79%
Keywords total		92	92	76

Rossiyskaya Gazeta

Positive/Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: Moon Jae-in election	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: The 2017 DPRK nuclear test	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: Negotiations on the Olympic games
	<i>Military</i>	14	12	7
	<i>War</i>	2	3	3
	<i>Destroy</i>	0	4	1
	<i>Threat</i>	6	9	2
	<i>Concern</i>	3	4	3
Negative subtotal		25	32	16
Percentage		39%	64%	26%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	5	5	20
	<i>Peace</i>	5	2	5
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	3	5	2
	<i>Solution</i>	18	1	11
	<i>Talk</i>	8	5	7
Non-negative subtotal		39	18	45
Percentage		61%	36%	74%
Keywords total		64	50	61

Renmin Ribao

Positive/Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: Moon Jae-in election	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: The 2017 DPRK nuclear test	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: Negotiations on the Olympic games
	<i>Military</i>	3	13	3
	<i>War</i>	1	4	3
	<i>Destroy</i>	0	2	1
	<i>Threat</i>	1	4	4
	<i>Concern</i>	1	3	2
Negative subtotal		6	26	13
Percentage		12%	38%	28%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	6	7	1
	<i>Peace</i>	17	26	8
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	6	2	2
	<i>Solution</i>	8	4	6
	<i>Talk</i>	7	4	17
Non-negative subtotal		44	43	34
Percentage		88%	62%	72%
Keywords total		50	69	47

Yonhap

Positive/Negative	Keywords	Number of times mentioned (May 2017) Context: Moon Jae-in election	Number of times mentioned (September 2017) Context: The 2017 DPRK nuclear test	Number of times mentioned (January 2018) Context: Negotiations on the Olympic games
	<i>Military</i>	8	10	0
	<i>War</i>	3	4	5
	<i>Destroy</i>	0	5	0
	<i>Threat</i>	16	11	1
	<i>Concern</i>	1	2	3
Negative subtotal		28	32	9
Percentage		70%	52%	11%
	<i>Negotiation</i>	2	3	6
	<i>Peace</i>	7	13	13
	<i>Diplomatic</i>	2	5	14
	<i>Solution</i>	1	1	4
	<i>Talk</i>	0	7	33
Non-negative subtotal		12	29	70
Percentage		30%	48%	89%
Keywords total		40	61	79

Annex 2: List of Analyzed Media-Materials

References to the official websites of the newspapers can be found in the bibliography list.

May 2017

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Pledge of honesty

*On my honour as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna,
I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received
unauthorized assistance on it.*

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09/2016 - 07/2018

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Master of Advanced International Studies

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- Current GPA: **3.85/4.00**
- **Erasmus+** Scholarship, exchange with **Korea University** (GSIS) (2017)
- Waiver for **Academic Excellency**
- **President of the Debating Society** (2017-2018)

09/2017 - 12/2017

Seoul, South Korea

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09/2012 - 07/2016

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- **Exchange** program with **Dongguk University** (College of Social Science)

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Professional and voluntary experience, internships

05/2018 – 08/2018

Supervision: T. Rudenko

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OSCE Secretariat, Office of the Special Representative and Co-Ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (**Assistant to Senior Co-ordination Adviser**, Intern)

- *Preparing a simulation program for law enforcement forces and NGOs on combating human trafficking in Central Asia*
- *Working with legislative databases and proofreading documents*
- *Speechwriting and performing other administrative duties*

03/2018 – 05/2018

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ÖRK/Austrian Red Cross, Vienna (Marketing and Communications

Volunteer)

- *Supporting the ÖRK activities during public events*
- *Distributing information materials*
- *Interacting with the general public and informing them about the ÖRK activities (in cooperation with other marketing team members)*

06/2017 – 11/2017

Supervision: A. Borovoy

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EKSMO Publishing house (Translator, German/English/Russian)

- *Translating and proofreading books of different genres*
- *Developed writing, editing and time-management skills*

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SSAP (SGAF), Ekaterinburg (Internship, Event Manager)

- *Accompanied foreign guests in the city and within the organization;*
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Languages:

- Tatar, Russian, Kazakh – Native speaker
- English – C2, **Cambridge Certificate** (Cambridge Advanced English, Band A), **TOEFL** (113/120)
 - *The Oxford House College Language Program, United Kingdom.*
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 - *Europa Studien Projekt Language Program, Austria.*
- Korean, Czech – B1

Advanced public speaking and presentation skills (The Diplomatic Academy Best Speaker Award 2017).

Excellent computer literacy (Microsoft Office, EViews 10, as well as basic JavaScript, HTML, and CSS knowledge)

Publications

- **10 printed** publications and **5 articles** published online ([International Studies Project](#), [Polemics](#), [Stanford International Policy Review](#)) with focus on **Regional Security, North East Asia, and Post-Soviet countries.**
- **2 book translations** (from German/English into Russian)
- **UNESCO Certificate (the 3rd Place in the category “The Best Report: Personality, society and world” of “The 5th Annual December Conference on Human Rights, 2015”)**