

Buffett Undergraduate Research Fellowship Opportunity

The Changing Face of Foreign Correspondence: Identity, Proximity, and Longevity in Anglophone Journalism Coverage of North Korea

Faculty Mentor: Helen Cho, Visiting Assistant Professor, Asian American Studies (Evanston campus)

Project Synopsis: In recent decades, the proliferation of new media outlets and the rise in citizen journalism have led to questions about the viability and need for foreign correspondence. This is particularly true for Anglophone news coverage of North Korea, as international journalists are rarely able to travel to the country. At the same time, as the journalism industry continues to reckon with and enact diversity through hiring, there is a shift away from hiring a white, male foreign correspondent who parachutes in for a brief period to eyewitness major events. Instead, the number of 'local' journalists working in Anglophone news bureaus has increased.

These changes raise important questions about the influence a journalist's ethnoracial identity, geographical proximity, and longevity of tenure have on Anglophone media's coverage of North Korea. First, this study asks, what is the role of a journalist's ethnoracial identity, particularly their linguistic and cultural knowledge of the Koreas, in the coverage they produce? Second, how does a foreign correspondent's coverage of North Korea change from their initial arrival to their departure from Seoul? The longer journalists are on the job, they may have more time to cultivate sources and develop a greater awareness of their cultural context. However, a new foreign correspondent can bring a new set of questions and story ideas to the job. Answering this question also allows us to examine changes to Anglophone coverage of North Korea over time. Finally, this study asks about the role of geographical proximity in reporting on North Korea. What does a comparison of reporting on North Korea, based on geographical proximity, tell us about the role of location and eyewitnessing?

Project Term: Summer only

Project Location: This is a hybrid project. There will be initial in-person meetings on campus, but most work will be completed remotely.

Ideal Applicant: Research assistants will be asked to identify Anglophone news organizations, including the foreign correspondents and 'local' journalists, that regularly covered North Korea-related news within a specified timeframe. Using several news databases, they will retrieve and compile all relevant news articles and broadcasts from the media organizations. This includes reading through the articles or watching video clips to filter content and create a robust data set.

The main research task involves working with Dr. Cho and the other research assistant to design a codebook to answer the research questions for this study. This involves coding a small sample of articles and testing for intercoder reliability and qualitative analysis of the articles using methods like critical

discourse analysis.

Students who have prior experience with quantitative computational text analysis, such as structural topic modeling, would be preferred. Ideally, students will have experience with quantitative or qualitative (e.g., critical discourse analysis) data coding. In addition, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and/or Russian language skills are a plus.

Number of Available Positions: Two

