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The Role of Foreign Correspondents in Cultural and Science Diplomacy

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Introduction

The media have historically been seen as builders of nations, namely through unifying experiences by providing a platform for citizens to exchange opinions on common public matters (Habermas, 1962/1989; Siapera, 2004) but also through comparative experiences by providing a platform to discuss their differences or similarities from citizens and systems of other nations. Foreign news reporting allows people to be aware about events and issues around the world, and can influence how people as well as institutions communicate and interact among themselves and with those of other nations (Obijiofor & Hanusch, 2011).

Decades ago, government officials and diplomats began to recognise the influence foreign correspondents (FCs) held as they provided home audiences with news from abroad. According to Archetti (2011, p. 2), "the image of the world foreign correspondents construct through their reports also constitutes the common knowledge base on which government officials and diplomats will take their decisions". Throughout recent years, the role of foreign correspondents and challenges they face have changed, prompting questions about the profession, given their task of shaping the "image of a country to the eyes of foreign audiences" (Archetti, 2011).

Scholars (Siapera, 2004) argue that foreign correspondents see Europe as their "first public" because firstly, the EU must spread its message through the media, and secondly, FCs are the vehicles used by European governments to talk to other governments and the public inside and outside Europe.

With the European Union in general and different European countries in particular maintaining a strong focus on culture and scientific diplomacy initiatives, it is imperative to explore how foreign correspondents covering these issues affect the perception of the European Union and its member states to audiences abroad. This policy brief attempts to examine the role foreign correspondents play in covering culture and science diplomacy, as well as highlight trends, challenges and opportunities for foreign correspondents currently stationed abroad.

The following issues then are explored: How do foreign correspondents shape the image of a foreign country or a multinational institution such as the EU to home audiences, particularly through coverage of science and cultural diplomacy activities? And what could be done in a normative way on behalf of those countries or institutions to improve that image?

By interviewing journalists based in London, Brussels, Paris and Berlin, this policy brief sheds light on the work of foreign correspondents regarding science and culture writing, the level of access they have to sources abroad and current trends of foreign appetite for stories regarding science and culture. Given the recent trends regarding the impact of financial limitations, advances in communications technology and social media on foreign correspondents, it is imperative that this policy brief highlights a greater understanding of the challenges facing correspondents - particularly those covering countries inside the European Union. With a focus on coverage of science and culture diplomacy topics, this brief aims to demonstrate the work of foreign correspondents in communicating these topics to foreign audiences, as well as the role they do (or do not) play in shaping a country's image to foreign publics.

Research Parameters

Foreign correspondents play a vital role in delivering current news from countries abroad to audiences in home countries. Given their task of communicating news that is relevant to the country they are hosted in and to the audiences they are writing for, foreign correspondents often contribute to the perception of foreign countries to publics. Despite this, however, research about foreign

correspondents' impact on diplomatic practice is very limited and this will be reflected in the number of references used for this policy brief.

Initially, for the research of this brief, contact information of foreign correspondents based in the 4 cities where interviews were conducted was gathered. Then, via email, the sample of the most 'appropriate' foreign correspondents based on the criterion of the country of the medium that they were reporting for were contacted to assess their interest in participating in an anonymous interview about their employment, particularly in regard to their coverage of science and cultural diplomacy topics. Interviews were then set up with those willing foreign correspondents. The initial sample was later expanded via the snowball method in order to obtain the desired number of interviews.

For this study, a particular focus was set on interviewing Brussels-, London-, Berlin-, and Paris-based foreign correspondents reporting for media based on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Some participants, however, did not hail from this area. Home countries (defined as the country in which the foreign correspondent's primary media organization was based) included: Egypt, Russia, Cameroon, Iraq, Mexico, Algeria, Japan, Lebanon, India and Turkey. This diversity of featured home countries allows a unique look into the work of foreign correspondents, particularly both within and outside of the European Union.

A survey with qualitative and quantitative measures was distributed to interviewees via in-person interviews, and were recorded. The 48-question document included multiple choice, short answer open-ended and ranking formats which provided unique insight into the practices and experiences of foreign correspondents.

The questions covered topics including: employment experience, coverage of science and culture topics, challenges facing foreign correspondents (including finances, workplace environment, personal motivations, etc.), the availability and level of access to sources in host countries, and factors that influenced the work of foreign correspondents (such as employer finances and motivations, personal values and beliefs, and space constraints). These questions provided a more holistic outlook into the role of foreign correspondents and what factors influence their work.

A big number of these questions also focused on story development and coverage of matters relating to science and culture. Thus, foreign correspondents were asked to discuss many aspects of researching, writing, publishing and promoting a science or culture story, including access to sources, influential factors, autonomy over articles and social media and online promotion of personal work.

Evidence and Analysis

Europe has witnessed a silent revolution in the last 30 years as the EU has extended its powers and members and became the world's biggest economic power, trade bloc and aid donor. The effects of this on news coverage and media presence in Europe are abundant. As journalists follow power and money, the European capitals became home to some of the biggest international press corps in the world.

The analysis of this policy brief turns first to the background and profile of the European foreign press corps. It analyses different factors affecting their coverage, resources devoted to European foreign bureaus, the numbers of parachuted correspondents and old-timers, and public versus commercial media.

The analysis continues by looking at the different news sources of foreign correspondents, and where they overlap, complement and contradict each other. The different national institutions and embassies as well as other smaller 'official sources' are analysed together with a number of unofficial ones, such as think tanks, NGOs and lobbies.

Moreover, the main challenges of communicating culture and science stories from a European country or the EU headquarters in Brussels are candidly discussed through interviews with Foreign Correspondents. Which are the dominant news frames and why are culture and science such a hard sell for foreign correspondents sometimes? We look at the problems that are related to media routines and practices, such as pack reporting, disciplinary structures and other institutional influences, power structures, and professional conventions.

Finally, the brief looks at the current trends of foreign correspondence in Europe. Do more and more sophisticated communications tools help to get better international culture and science coverage from Europe? Or does the audiences' increasing apathy and the downsizing of the foreign bureaus offset these advances? And how do the seemingly unstoppable media trends of convergence, commercialisation, concentration and globalisation affect the way culture and science stories from Europe and individual European countries are reported?

Who are they?

Franks (2005, p.1) explains how "globalisation, the interdependent nature of modern society and the precarious state of international relations post 9/11" necessitates that everyone should be interested in foreign news coverage. So, who are these 'professional strangers' stationed in Europe, the world news leader, and how do they try to make their stories that are clearly important in today's interconnected world interesting for audiences?

According to the latest survey data (Terzis, 2015), there are approximately 7000 journalists working for approximately 150 different media in EU countries. The journalists surveyed and interviewed for this policy brief represented diversity in their respective nationalities, work experiences, places of employment and languages. A number of them were actually 'locals' - i.e. nationals of the country in which they were reporting. A wide range of work experience was also represented by interviewees, with professional journalism careers ranging from 5 years to more than 35 years. Some of the foreign correspondents were officially retired. Despite retirement, they continue their journalistic writing and work as part-time foreign correspondents. The 'part-timers' and freelancers actually represented a substantial portion of the sample. The correspondents were also diverse in their work experience, with employee organisations including: print media, online, public and private television, magazines and news agencies. Another surprising factor was that the number of media organisations respondents worked for ranged from one to 20, which emphasizes a point made by Archetti regarding the increasing number of freelance journalists working as foreign correspondents (Archetti, 2013). Terzis also observed a large movement toward freelance work, noting it may inject some fresh perspectives but may also result in lack of professionalism (2015).

The reasons for covering an abroad post also varied among participants: some journalists received an offer by their media organization that a post was available, some had an expertise/personal interest in the country language, some had personal ties or relationships to the host country, others had a personal interest to go abroad as a foreign correspondent and other journalists cited multiple reasons.

However, when examining the range of media organizations, years as a foreign correspondent and years as a professional journalist, it is evident that foreign correspondents do not all share the same background nor reason for going abroad to work in this line of profession.

For the purpose of this policy brief and its recommendations, some important trends were revealed through the surveys. The first one is the fact that more and more foreign correspondents are nationals of the country that they are reporting from, and thus they have much better access and understanding of mainly the cultural stories as well as the scientific stories compared to foreign nationals that have been sent to the country and might not speak the local language well enough and do not have the appropriate access that those stories might require.

A second important trend is the increase of freelance foreign correspondents. Because of the nature of their employment, freelancers will always be looking for new types of stories (such as those of culture and science) that mainstream media and news agencies might not cover.

A third is the increasing number of single foreign bureaus, even for big media organisations. That is a trend that would have a negative impact on the coverage of culture and science stories due to the fact that those journalists would not have the time or sometimes the expertise to cover those stories, except perhaps during the 'quiet' news periods during New Year and summer.

Finally, the fourth trend that might have an impact is the fact that more and more foreign correspondents work for more than one media outlet, sometimes even based in different countries. This might result in an 'echo chamber' effect that certain culture and science stories are reported again and again in several media, while other stories that are reported by foreign correspondents who work only for one medium receive lower coverage.

What makes it onto their news agenda?

The patterns of foreign news coverage have been studied on a global scale in the past in 1979 and in 1995. It was found that geographic proximity and national links with politics and economics dictated the majority of news coverage, and that regionalism and politics are the major factors which influence international news reporting, no matter which region of the world is examined (Koponen, 2003; Obijiofor & Hanusch, 2011).

Among the interviewed journalists in the four cities, topical coverage areas were varied, with many of the correspondents indeed arguing that politics and economics and the relation of the event with the country back home are the main criteria for selecting a story. Topics covered include: politics, culture, human interest, current affairs, people, economics, science, gender equality, defense, general news of the host country, sports and migration. As the only employee from a news organization based in Brussels, an Egyptian correspondent reiterated that he covered everything. "News agencies cover everything. We don't have a selection. News is news", he commented.

The conducted interviews included specific questions about topics of science and culture in their reporting. The amount of personal coverage given to these topics greatly ranged among interviewees. Regarding cultural stories, the percentage of yearly stories ranged from 2% to 100% (for one London-based correspondent that was specialised in arts reporting). In terms of science stories, the range was less dispersed, with a range of 0% to 20%. A Brussels-based foreigner offered a comment regarding the consumption of these stories, noting that readers often prefer culture stories "because it's easier to read than science".

Common threads weaved together the typical culture stories of the respondents, including exhibitions, museums, events and festivals (especially those that were related to the correspondent's home country). A London-based journalist also mentioned coverage of cinema and films. Books and other literary developments were featured culture as well. Specific to Paris, the fashion week, celebrities and events (such as the Cannes Film Festival) were also large topics of interest for culture stories. While the topics on science were diverse, general themes and story areas largely revolved around "green" issues (including the environment and sustainability), health issues, nuclear developments and technology. News from UNESCO were also mentioned as topic areas.

Certain interviews clearly showed the impact of journalism, particularly in the cultural realm. A Brussels-based foreign correspondent extensively covered a story about the fortieth anniversary of a mining accident in Brussels during the 1950s, in which she discovered that a large population of miners affected by this work accident were Italian. Through her research, she learned more about the workers and her coverage brought attention to the sight of the accident, that was being potentially repurposed. Through her storytelling and advocacy, she played a vital role in preserving the site, as well as creating and establishing a museum about the mining accident. When asked if she was given

enough space to cover the story, she replied, “I took it; because I thought that story was important.” This example illustrates the level of influence foreign correspondents can hold in their host and home countries.

For the purpose of this policy brief, two elements are of highest importance. Firstly, the subjects/clusters of stories covered in the foreign news are relatively limited, as they focus on economics and politics, and in some instances on culture or entertainment (Nosty, 1997; Kevin, 2003). Secondly, as the literature identifies and our study confirms a process of making foreign news nationally relevant is at play (Obijiofor & Hanusch, 2011), but not necessarily always for culture stories and most of the times not for the science stories either. Those can be seen as part of the culture and entertainment values and news selection criteria. Furthermore, entertainment coverage (for example sport or music contests) is EU-wide, but even this theme of coverage is inconsistent (Preston, 2009), with few exceptions such as at the Eurovision song contest or the European Football Championship.

When does culture and science makes it and where do the stories come from?

With regard to when culture and science stories are pitched, correspondents gave a diversity of answers that included both stories being pitched and/or assigned to them. A vast majority of respondents iterated that they actively seek ideas for culture and science stories. As a Paris-based Algerian correspondent stated: “Yes, I proactively search for those stories all the time, I am trying to read articles to be inspired.”

When asked to rate the general interest level of science and culture news among audiences (including employer organisations) from either the respective host country or the EU over the last five years, nearly half of the correspondents claimed the interest level remained about the same, while the other half ranged from drastic increase to drastic decrease. Nearly all interviewed reporters also shared that they follow other media that provide coverage on science and culture, particularly local media in their host countries. So when culture and science stories appear in several of the local media, those stories tend to be reproduced by foreign correspondents. Other issues included the free access of culture events by foreign correspondents, a good marketing strategy and press kit by the PR office of the cultural or scientific institution and the timing of the culture or science event/announcement.

Furthermore, a portion of the questionnaire focused on where culture and science stories hail from, particularly with reference to countries and sources of information. In answering the question “Which countries produce more culture and science stories?” the results varied, including: Italy, Great Britain, Turkey, and Germany. The most common response, however, was resoundingly France. Moreover, a foreign correspondent mentioned that the presence of UNESCO world heritage sites in a country usually influence the number of stories as well.

Another vital item for foreign correspondents is access to sources. The questionnaire posed a multitude of questions to respondents about their access to and perception of credible sources. When asked how respondents generally choose among sources, the responses varied from “intuition and analysis” to other media to the invitations received to attend events and meetings. A London-based journalist said she used the Internet to gather sources; “Nowadays it is very easy if you want to write about anything – your first call is the Internet.” A Brussels-based Egyptian remarked that journalists often don’t have the “luxury” of choosing among sources; instead, they must simply make it with what and who is available to them. A Paris-based correspondent shared the usefulness of social media: “I especially go on social media (Facebook and YouTube) to go and see what is trending and get my inspiration from what is online”.

With regard to specific sources for science and culture stories, journalists had mixed responses. Some do not have these specific sources they routinely turn to. Others shared media sources, institutes and news agencies for aid in composing these stories. Agreement was consensual, however, in terms of the trustworthiness of sources for science and culture stories. A majority of

respondents remarked that trustworthiness depends on the source - particularly, its reputation and "official" status.

A significant discord was also evident in the answers to the question, "Do you use social media to gather information for culture and science stories, background information or to promote your stories?" The Italian correspondent remarked "to promote - yes," but clarified that social media cannot be trusted for gathering information. A correspondent stated, "Yes, I do use social media a lot and it can be very inspiring." A correspondent based in Paris furthered, "Yes of course! We cannot do our work without social media now". Other responses ranged from "all the time" to "not really." Some respondents, however, strongly disagreed. Another correspondent responded "Not at all. I do not want to waste my time with social media." A Paris-based Lebanese correspondent clarified, "No, because I don't consider them as independent and credible enough," noting that it is often unknown who is behind the social media accounts.

Correspondents were also questioned about the importance of strategic communicators, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and contacts with other journalists for their work. In terms of material and statement provided by NGOs and think tanks for culture and science stories, responses varied from "very useful" to not being considered independent or credible enough. As a Japanese respondent commented, "It is useful, but not enough. Such news has to be crossed with other sources to be credible." The Italian correspondent, however, noted that the material is useful in providing journalists with an indication of what's happening. The perceived credibility of NGOs and think tanks also varied greatly. Where information from these sources is essential for some stories, others - like the Japanese correspondent - remarked, "NGOs and think tanks are often partisan." As the Paris-based Egyptian correspondent shared, "They can give you good and, most of the time, honest information, although sometimes they may promote a story for their own benefit (especially communications agencies), but it is acceptable". The London-based journalist clarified that strategic communicators (press officers, etc.) are often used, but "you don't get your real facts and figures from them". The journalist explained, "they can give you some information, but it is not enough".

When asked "How important are contacts with other journalists for culture and science stories?", answers overwhelmingly signified how crucial these contacts are. "They are essential. When they see a story that I might be interested in they send it to me, and I do the same. In this way, we create a sort of network where we are to help elevate each other's work, so it is very much essential", remarked an Egyptian correspondent based in France. An interviewed Algerian correspondent also noted "very important, but the problem would be to know the right person for the right story, and that is a bit more complicated". A Brussels-based correspondent in Brussels, however, explained that contacts with other journalists for culture and science stories are less important than for stories regarding political and economic issues.

The questionnaire also asked correspondents about the sources that serve as the main reasons to start investigating culture and science stories. For culture stories, sources such as "cultural institutes", "other official sources" and "coverage of national media in my host country" were the most selected options. Other mentioned sources included (in descending order of popularity) "government officials," "other journalists", "social media blogs" and "academics". Options of "lobbies" and "average citizens" were not ranked in any participating correspondent's list of three. When asked the same question regarding science stories, the three most common answers were: "science experts/academics", "other official sources" and "government officials" with "coverage of national media in my host country" following behind. Options of "other journalists", "average citizens" and "social media blogs", each received very limited votes. "Lobbies" was the only source not chosen.

Correspondents participating in the study were also asked to rate the accessibility of first-hand sources from government and cultural and scientific institutes in their respective host countries. The scale was from 1 (very difficult) to 5 (very easy access). First-hand government sources averaged a 3 on the scale. With the same number responding about big business, the average score was 3.18. For the eight sources ranking the accessibility of other sources, the average score was a 3.6 out of 5.

Thus, based on the respondents' answers, the difficulty of access is most evident with government sources and more accessible with other sources.

When examining the results from questions regarding where sources are attained and the perceived credibility and access of these sources, the questionnaire provided interesting and diverse responses that varied greatly. Specifically, the differing responses with regard to the reputability of sources like NGOs and social media were stark, raising questions of why and how these opinions are formed. Further examination of considerations like cultural differences and age could be fruitful and interesting paths to explore to assess if any correlation exists.

Given the distance between foreign correspondents' host and home countries, the questionnaire asked correspondents about the freedom they have when working on a science or culture story. Most correspondents reported having full or nearly full autonomy over those stories. Many remarked that they often work by themselves with little or no supervision. However, a few of the respondents noted that they routinely coordinate with editors when working on a science or culture story for the final approval. As a correspondent based in Paris explained, they coordinate with editors "...all the time! There is no point in doing anything otherwise if you don't get the confirmation that you need to cover a subject".

The survey also aimed to understand the influences certain aspects have on foreign correspondents' work. Understanding the influence of these considerations is necessary when examining how science and culture stories are framed when published. When provided with a list of considerations, respondents were asked to rate the consideration on a scale of 1 (having no influence on their work) to 5 (extremely influential). Below is a table (**Figure 1**) with the ranking of all factors, listed in a descending order of influence:

Figure 1

| <i>Factor</i> | <i>Average Ranking</i> |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Personal values and beliefs | 3.61 |
| Access to sources and information in your host country | 3.54 |
| Resource limits (e.g. travel budget) | 3.42 |
| Time limits (your time available to cover a certain issue) | 3.38 |
| Personal network of sources | 3.23 |
| Coverage from competing news organizations | 3.15 |
| Availability of press releases/PR material | 2.92 |
| Audience research/feedback | 2.88 |
| Friends and family | 2.50 |
| Your peers in the newsroom and editorial supervisors | 2.46 |

| | |
|--|------|
| Other foreign correspondents in the country | 2.31 |
| The managers and owners of your news organizations | 2.15 |
| Space limits (in the newspaper, on the news broadcast, etc.) | 2.08 |
| Advertising considerations/profit expectations | 1.23 |

With an average score of 3.61, “Personal values and beliefs” was rated the most influential factor for foreign correspondents. The least important consideration for foreign correspondents was “advertising considerations/profit expectations” with an average score of 1.23. Concerning space limits, a Brussels-based foreign correspondent commented that previously, the “main constraint [on freedom covering a story] was space,” but with the web, that is no longer a concern.

How are culture and science formulated in the international new frames?

A very important result of the research for policy purposes is that previously known polarising factors that determine the framing of foreign news do not seem to apply to the coverage of culture and science stories. Namely, the news frames of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’, negative/bad news stories, and ‘parallelism’ of the story with the political orientation of the medium are not very prevalent.

The frame that applied only for certain stories but not others was the one of domestic relevance, while frames that still apply are those of increased compression of space and time of reporting with short and simplified formats that also varied depending on the funding base (e.g. Private versus Public Service Broadcaster) or based on type of medium (e.g. print, broadcast, on-line, etc).

Though the above is still the case for arts and culture, the impact is rather limited. While in other types of stories the ease and rapidity through which information is transmitted in conjunction with the pressure on agencies and foreign correspondents to report a story instantly is leading to the essential inability for stories to be developed into balanced reports through the assimilation of multiple or a variety of sources, this is not the case for science and cultural reporting. Thus, the expected contribution to the distortion of current events or leading to the formation of misconceptions among reader and viewers; consequently hindering improvements in foreign relations, or in extreme cases, hate, does not seem to be the case.

When questioned, “Do you think the content you produce has any impact on how the audience sees the country/Europe that you report from?”, responses from correspondents varied. While some correspondents believed that their work does have an impact on shaping the perception of the country back home, the perceived level of impact was not consistent. The Paris-based Algerian correspondent questioned, “I like to think it does, but how can I be entirely sure?”, whereas another correspondent explained, “I think so, I receive many emails and calls from people to let me know how they like and are inspired by what I do”. Another one contributed, “To some degree it may help in their awareness”. Conversely, the Turkish correspondent in Paris argued, “I don’t think so, because what I am writing is not really to educate or influence them in any way. I am trying to tell them the truth and the reality about French news. So, I am not even trying to influence or to have any impact on them.” Numerous correspondents reiterated principles of objective, balanced and independent opinions. As correspondent commented, “I am trying to share the truth as much as I can, whether good or bad.”

Why? The main challenges in reporting foreign culture and science news stories

Finally, the aim of this survey focused on uncovering a greater understanding of the main challenges foreign correspondents face when working abroad and covering topics of science and culture.

Despite their vital role, foreign correspondents face many challenges, including job insecurity (that leads to for example to working for multiple media at the same time), and other resource limitations such as shrinking travel and other budgets while the expectation of 24-hour news coverage 7-days a week is still continued. Ranking resources as the third most influential factor in **Figure 1**, it is evident that foreign correspondents face limitations when trying to report from abroad. Archetti's research echoes this notion, noting financial difficulties often play a role in a general decline of foreign correspondence (Archetti, 2013).

Moreover, foreign correspondents can face different challenges than journalists based in their home countries. Correspondents often have the added task of understanding and effectively communicating foreign perspectives, particularly in regards to culture and science stories. In "Cultural Dialogue in International Security: New Thinking for Europe and America," Crow explains "All cultures depend on translating certain underlying values into the norms of social behaviour" (Philip Windsor [1995] as cited in Crow, 2011). Thus, foreign correspondents are often taxed with communicating these norms and behaviors in ways that can be understood by home audiences, who may or may not share similar values. As mentioned previously, many of the interviewed correspondents covered a multitude of topic areas in their writings, each requiring different levels of understanding and expertise to share with audiences abroad.

In addition, the necessity to rapidly deliver news is causing the contributions of foreign correspondence to diminish due to the potency of information technology which not only allows for first-hand information through citizen journalists who upload text, photos and videos directly to social media or provide to news agencies but also cuts out the role of the foreign correspondent, who is meant to provide a more wholistic account.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Given the increasing importance of media management, particularly for embassies, relationships with foreign correspondents are incredibly important for many governmental organizations, non-for-profit organizations and other institutions (Archetti, 2012a). As Archetti (2011) claims, there is a "need for governments to engage with foreign journalists in order to communicate more effectively with broader audiences".

This policy brief aimed to answer the questions: "How do foreign correspondents shape the image of a foreign country to home audiences, particularly through the coverage of science and cultural diplomacy activities? What is the relevance and appetite of these topics for foreign publics?" Through secondary research and primary questioning and analysis, it is evident that foreign correspondents cover topics relating to science and cultural diplomacy activities at varying levels, with more coverage being reported to cultural topics than those relating to science. Moreover, responses indicate that official sources and institutions are increasingly important to foreign correspondents as they compose these articles. A delicate balance is needed from journalists as they cover a science or culture story in their host country and communicate their findings to home audiences, as relevance is key.

The results confirmed that access to relevant culture and science sources plays a large role in the work of a foreign correspondent and their credibility is a vital consideration when correspondents are accessing information for their coverage. It can also be seen that personal values and beliefs and resource limits (e.g. travel budget) are other influential factors on the work of foreign correspondent. Given this level of influence, it is evident that important factors regarding employment, including the number of media organisations worked for, resource limitations and the number of stories written per

week, are not the same for each foreign correspondent. Even when examining foreign correspondents based in the same city, it is clear that not all experiences are shared.

Results from the study also highlight potential questions for future exploration. Initially, when asked about the level of influence “audience research/feedback” has on a foreign correspondent’s work, the answers averaged to a score of 2.88, between a range of 1 (having no influence on their work) to 5 (extremely influential). Though this score falls largely in the middle, specific answers from respondents raise the question of the availability of audience research and feedback to foreign correspondents. As a Brussels-based correspondent from Egypt explained, when foreign correspondents work for a news agency, their audience is different than for journalists at a media organisation. The correspondent furthered that writers for news agencies often do not receive feedback directly from the readers. This realisation reveals an important question for future studies. How does this feedback (or lack thereof) affect the foreign correspondent’s writing? Thus, future research into the role of feedback for foreign correspondents working for news agencies versus single media organizations could be fruitful to explore.

Given the increasing importance of media management, relationships with foreign correspondents are increasingly important for many inter-governmental and governmental organizations (especially embassies) (Archetti, 2012a). As Archetti (2011) claims, there is an ever greater “need for governments to engage with foreign journalists in order to communicate more effectively with broader audiences”. Thus, recommendations for policy-makers based on the results of this study include:

- a. An increased effort to engage more foreign correspondents in cultural and science diplomacy efforts. Especially in areas and with countries where other means of diplomatic efforts have been stalling (e.g. currently with Russia), culture and science stories might be the only ‘positive’ news in the international news reporting of those countries in Europe and vice versa. It is thus paramount to promote those stories to foreign correspondents because they offer sometimes the only ‘bridge for dialogue’.
- b. Place particular emphasis to contacts with freelance foreign correspondents and those working for multiple media outlets that might have been ignored until now compared to traditional mainstream big media organisations. Those journalists can produce unexpectedly large ‘returns on investment’ in relation to the coverage of cultural and scientific diplomatic efforts.
- c. Pay attention to the timing of those efforts. Scheduling them during quiet news periods allows them to not having to compete with other ‘harder’ news on politics and finance.
- d. National relevance is important for culture and science stories but not in the majority of the cases. Their ‘entertaining’ or ‘human interest’ values are sometimes equally or more important, thus the media management of those cultural and science diplomatic efforts should be focusing on those media values, when the audience does not see the national relevance perspective in the story.
- e. Cultural and science diplomacy efforts should not ignore the local media publicity, as well as publicity in key international media that produces an ‘inter-media’ agenda setting phenomenon whereby those stories are picked up by other foreign correspondents producing a snowball effect.
- f. Basic rules of rhetoric apply to cultural and diplomatic efforts whereby the credibility/trustworthiness of the source of information is considered of paramount importance and should be protected by all means by policy makers. The source should also be considered independent, possessing the expertise and having an honest (and a non-imperialistic) agenda. In that respect, strategic communication and social media campaigns are important but not sufficient, since they are viewed with certain suspicion by the majority of the foreign correspondents.
- g. Universities and academics are still viewed as trustworthy sources and should be more engaged in communicating cultural and scientific diplomatic efforts.

- h. Since culture and science do not rate very high in the news agenda of foreign correspondents who are also faced with diminishing financial and other resources, an 'aggressive' push instead of pull media management approach should be implemented that provides foreign correspondents with easy to publish press releases, free media trips and free access to cultural and science events.

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