

# Foreign Journalism in the Era of Globalization

## **An Ethnographic Study of Foreign Correspondents of the German Broadcasting Network ARD in Europe**

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## Abstract

The aim of this master thesis is to figure out the role of foreign correspondents within Europe during today's developments of globalization and digitalization, in the view of professional foreign journalists. The continent becomes closer in terms of politics, currencies and cultures, and a growing infrastructure simplifies travelling and communication. Therefore, the role and function of foreign journalists are more and more questioned. The main focus of this thesis is thereby the case of the foreign correspondence offices of the German public broadcasting network ARD. An auto-ethnographic study was used to base the analysis of this thesis on own perspectives. In a further step interviews with five foreign journalists examine the experiences of professionals in this field. The analysis is based, besides these two qualitative methods, on the theories of Siemes (2000), Cole and Hamilton (2008), and Archetti (2013). The researches' results demonstrate strong arguments for the relevance of the maintenance of foreign correspondences within Europe as the role of public broadcasters in particular is to inform, explain and classify happenings within the own country as well as in foreign areas to the audience. The nearby countries play thereby an important role due to many points of contact; for that reason professional journalists should further on hold the function to care for enlightenment.

## Keywords

Foreign Correspondents, Foreign Journalism, Globalization, Digitalization, Europe, ARD Network, German Audience, Public Broadcasting, Auto-Ethnography, Interviews

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## 1. Introduction

*“The meaning of foreign correspondents grew over the last years since our globalized world became smaller. The cultures and interests of people, states and ideologies collide more and more directly. The foreign correspondent stands – to some extent – in between those conflicts and functions as a translator. He or she provides the audience back home with the information that is necessary to generate an understanding of the world abroad.”(Stryjak, 2011)*

Jürgen Stryjak, a German journalist, reports from Cairo in Egypt. His statement is part of a letter to journalism-students, printed in his book about foreign journalism (Stryjak, 2011). His words show his absolute conviction of the necessity of his profession. This he shares with many of his colleagues as this thesis is going to show in its further parts. However, besides the voices of journalists there are also the ones of decision makers in media companies, that for economic reasons more and more often decide to reduce the number of foreign correspondents.

Reporting from abroad is no recent phenomenon, but has a long history. Especially during World War II the function of reporting directly from the places of event was proved – in real life and in fiction, as for example the film ‘Foreign Correspondent’ by Alfred Hitchcock demonstrated in 1940. The American spy thriller shows the life of an US-reporter who is sent to England and Germany to expose spies of the enemy.

Nowadays, the interest in reports from war areas is still high. Consequently, there are many journalists covering stories in conflict areas. But foreign correspondents are not only situated in those regions. Many report from areas of current peace, like North America or European countries. Politics and sociocultural topics, but also scurrilities can become content of the news, magazine reports or long documentaries in the home media.

This thesis is going to focus on those journalists who are employed by media companies. However, it has to be mentioned that there are also many freelancers reporting from foreign countries. Those bear the responsibility of periodically covering good stories which they can sell to editorials to ensure their livelihood. Also their infrastructure in terms of network, accommodation, and equipment has to be secured by themselves what makes their working situation less comfortable than working as an employed journalist abroad.

Not only does the worldwide, transcontinental foreign journalism play an important role for media companies. There is also a high amount of foreign correspondents covering stories of other countries on their own continent. This thesis is taking a look at the work of journalists

reporting cross-nationally within Europe. Those journalists are often working and living in countries of peace and consequently not investigating wars and conflicts. Of course, there are exceptions: cases like the Ukrainian conflict, the war in Yugoslavia or Ireland and the times of the Cold War were or are less secure working environments for foreign correspondents that are situated in those areas. However, countries in Europe are mostly considered to currently be in times of peace. The exception is constituted by events like terror attacks.

I was born and raised in Germany and have consequently most of my life been using media in German language. There are a lot of different TV and radio programs, newspapers as well as news websites provided for a German speaking audience, which seem to cover all relevant topics. I have always been used to a 'worldwide'-section in written media and news reports from foreign countries in TV and radio. Hearing the news presenter saying: "I am handing over to our America-correspondent in Washington" has always giving me the feeling of trust into the media and the news, as I received them at first hand, at the same time I took those foreign correspondents for granted.

Now, as I live in Sweden, I work, besides my studies, as a TV producer for the foreign correspondence office of German public TV and radio 'ARD' in Stockholm, which is covering the area of Scandinavia and the Baltic States. The work gives me insights into the structure and processes of foreign correspondences, into the challenge of investigating the topics of eight countries, filtering the information according to their relevance for Germany, and editing them for the audience. At the same time, it makes me question the role of correspondents within Europe. As I quoted Stryjak: "our globalized world became smaller", this can – at least for our continent – also mean that distances became shorter, people more similar and the function of foreign journalism due to this less important.

Digitalization plays an important role in this questioning as well, as a development of technique brings new opportunities to send video footage from one to another place, what enables German editorial offices to receive videos from, for instance, other public broadcaster or news agencies. It also creates new professions, like the one of news bloggers that report about a particular area.

Those developments led me to the idea of researching the field of foreign correspondences in Europe. I want to find out what makes them important for the media in Germany and what part of their job is not replaceable by other solutions, in their own view. My plan is to figure out the influence of globalization and digitalization on the foreign correspondents. To narrow my inquiry field down I decided to focus on TV and radio media

and look at German foreign correspondences abroad, what means that all European countries outside Germany are possible investigation areas for this thesis.

The specific focus is on the foreign correspondents of the radio and TV network ARD in Germany that report from other European areas. Therefore, my researches include an analysis through the auto-ethnography method to include my personal experiences and perspectives as a staff member of a foreign correspondence office. Furthermore, new findings are expected through interviews with five foreign correspondents working in Sweden, Great Britain, Belgium, and Poland; those are supposed to widen my perspective on the research topic and enable me to evaluate the arguments and experiences that I receive. The aim is to figure out the current role of foreign correspondences within Europe in the view of my informants, and enable a forecast of their future development.

### 1.1 Structure

This thesis will start with an overview of theoretical backgrounds regarding the field of inquiry. The first chapter therefore looks into the research about media and journalism studies, goes further to the two big development issues of this paper, globalization and digitalization, to get in a next step deeper into the material of foreign correspondences. The following theoretical framework, which is guiding the later analysis, is formed by the journalism culture, particularly of foreign correspondents.

The subsequent chapter is supposed to give background information concerning the German ARD network. It is followed by the methodology-chapter that shows which methods this thesis is using and explains the combination of the research methods auto-ethnography and interviews. It will continue with a brief discussion about the research ethics, more particularly about a double role of a researcher being a part of the research inquiry.

The analysis chapter focuses on a comparison of my perspectives with those of the interviewees. A concluding discussion presents the main results of the research and provides suggestions for further research.

### 1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions are supposed to lead me to new findings and bring this thesis to a scientific result:

1. How did the globalized world and a close Europe change the need of foreign media correspondences within the continent?

2. What influence has digitalization to the role of foreign correspondents within Europe and what are the challenges with this development?
3. Is it necessary to live on the spot instead of reporting from Germany about foreign countries?
4. Which role plays the audience when it comes to journalistic content and which mission do the journalists follow here?
5. What is a possible future of the foreign correspondents within Europe?

## 2. The Theoretical Background

The function of foreign correspondents is to hold a key position in the public communication of international events, what sometimes even includes providing the basis of governmental political decisions (Wu and Hamilton, 2004; Junghanns and Hanitzsch, 2006). As this role entails a high responsibility towards the public, this kind of journalism is also considered as a specific sub-field of journalism studies. According to this high responsibility and facing the fact that many foreign correspondences within Europe belong to public broadcasters as Terzis figured out for the example of the UK (2014, p.289), in other words are financed by the citizens, this field should in my view reasonably be subject of critical scientific research. That includes the analysis of the foreign correspondences' role in a changing environment and a questioning of them being replaceable by other models of foreign journalism, as news agencies, travelling journalists, or even digital blogs.

This chapter is supposed to make an overview of the theoretical background concerning the topic of foreign correspondences. This includes a brief look at the field of media and journalism studies, researches regarding globalization, a particular perspective on digitalization, and a look at different types of foreign correspondents, followed by the theoretical framework of this thesis – the foreign journalists' culture. The main focus lies thereby particularly on European transnational relations.

### 2.1 Media and Journalism Studies

Within the last 15-20 years a variety of new information technologies was invented and reached the society. This changed the appearance and function of media. Digital technology is nowadays small, light, and easy to transport – a development which leads to a “medialization” of societies, and entails a growing interest of the science in this field (Ayaß and Bergmann, 2011, p.14-15). The importance of media grows as almost everybody in the Western world

has access to those technologies nowadays. This at the same time increases the awareness for researches on the topic and forced media scientists to widen their field to the new technologies which became included into the term of media: short messages, social media, and other digital ways of communication are objects of researches of media sciences today (Ayaß and Bergmann, 2011, p.15).

## 2.2 The Globalization's Influence on Foreign Journalism

The globalization has an over 300-years lasting history, as its roots lie in the times of long-distance trading, the industrialization, and imperialism during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It was followed by global economies and world politics in times of the World War I and II. During the middle of the twentieth century political power blocs, transnational movements, and institutions of global economy led to a sociocultural globalization (Osterhammel and Petersson, 2003). Due to these huge steps of development – technique-wise (planes, trains, and cars decreased distances), but also culture-wise – a new awareness of a global world arose in modern societies.

Media and specifically journalism is nowadays obviously subject to globalization, as well. The digitalization offered new forms of media gathering and provided various platforms for citizen journalism. But is that just a result of the globalization development of the last centuries? Mentioning McLuhan's famous "global village", metaphor of the effects of journalism globalization, Reese (2010, p.344) argues that "as part of a larger platform of communication media, journalism contributes to this experience and thus represents a key component in these social transformations, both as cause and outcome". This globalization consists, according to Reese (2010, p.245), of new options for global players and local / regional media at the same time as globalization also enables the existence of micro-communities and monocultures through ongoing communication-barriers in spite of international opportunities. Hafez confirms this: The technology of media which enables global connections is a "necessary but not sufficient condition for global communication" (Hafez, 2013, p.2).

Focusing on the international journalism in the form of foreign correspondences, one can say that globalization enabled this field in many aspects: The easier opportunities of travelling, the development of technical equipment (of both, the media companies and the audience), and the widening access to information through internet, communication devices like phones, and - to my impression - decreasing language barriers made worldwide media networks possible and simplified their emergence.

Within Europe these points can be supplemented by the political and economic changes of the last decades. The continent consists of 47 countries; 28 of them are members of the in 1958 implemented European Union (until 1993 under the name ‘European Economic Community’). The EU-network built a new arena of cross-borders collaborations, as it provides a common parliament, currency, freedom of movement, and agreements about education collaborations (Europäische Union, 2018). Due to this union, the work and life of foreign correspondents in Europe got a strong foundation. The access to information, the collaboration with local media companies, and the transnational life is quite easy to achieve nowadays.

Also when coming back to the case of this thesis – on the basis of the German foreign correspondence offices in Europe we see an example of transnational media in the continent: There are no real borders between many countries (at least for EU-citizens) when travelling, Germans are allowed to live and work in Sweden without any application, many economical agreements regulate taxes-payments and social contributions, and technical standards are similarly high, what makes communication as well as working conditions familiar.

### 2.3 Digitalization and its Support of Transnational Reporting

Nowadays the field of foreign journalism faces a lot of competition: Besides the professional alternatives to the correspondents of media broadcasters and newspapers, and especially news agencies, there are also a lot of digital opportunities, like blogs and social media, to spread information, pictures, and videos just within seconds to all over the world. As formulated by Archetti (2013), “The phenomenon of citizen journalism and blogging support the idea that almost anyone with access to a computer can ‘report’ to worldwide audience”. This development could lead to ‘low-quality journalism’. Terzis states: “Television has become increasingly selective in what it aims to report” (Terzis, 2014, p.285). But the amount of journalists seems stable. Many national broadcasters as well as a huge number of publishing houses worldwide still invest into foreign working journalists who investigate on spot to ensure insights into foreign cultures and events and separate fake and facts.

Already in 2008, Cole and Hamilton described established correspondences as in a process of becoming an advanced version of their former one, as they tried to improve their usage through permanent experimenting. However, the collaboration and competition with other reporters continues: “newsgathering abroad appears to be moving toward a system of

multiple models co-existing and collectively providing information” (Cole and Hamilton, 2008).

This includes for example the model of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which is an alliance of public service media. To explain the system: 73 European public broadcasters from 56 countries make their content available for all others by placing it on a platform or transmit files via fiberglass cables or similar. As a result broadcasting content in more than 120 languages becomes available to a potential audience of 1.04 billion people (EBU 2018). Networks like EBU give media the advantage of globalization: “media events are today largely deterritorialized; they are consumed globally or are at least accessible well outside their geographies and nations of origin” (Hoover, 2010, p.286). Those collaborations provide the audience quickly with all information, no matter where an event takes place. Heinrich (2012) observed these media networks and sees them as a definite result of globalization. He mentions, by referring to Volkmer (2003) that the development towards nowadays’ global media took place in two steps: “What started with new access opportunities through the invention of satellite broadcast systems (Volkmer, 2003) is now fostered further with the invention of low-cost, digital connection tools. A ‘translocal reference system’ (Volkmer, 2003, p.313) is developing, in which local or national borders of news production are replaced by global communication exchange patterns” (Heinrich 2012, p.768).

At the same time, file transfer simplifies the exchange of videos and audio data, e-mail traffic and smartphones ensure simple communication, and even live broadcasting becomes possible through modern camera technique e.g. LiveU. The work becomes technically easier, as especially for writing journalists a notebook and a table in a coffee shop can be enough to produce content. For broadcaster-journalists the situation is a bit more difficult, but still in process of development. A smartphone can in situations of sudden events be enough to create videos, record voices and make the content available to the audience within seconds. On the one hand, this development enables citizen journalism and decreases the role of professions somehow. On the other hand, it also provides opportunities for media companies, which were not able to hold an office in another country (Archetti, 2013, p.849). And while freelancers and travelling journalists rise the situation of competition, this can also lead to higher expectations towards the public service broadcasters and a high quality of their content. As they are paid by the public, citizens are part of democratic decisions about their future.

## 2.4 Different Types of Foreign Correspondents

To be able to focus on this topic in all its details and answer the previously raised question about foreign correspondences' necessity properly, my subject of researches needs to be narrowed down by definition.

The term 'foreign correspondent' is interpreted and used for different kinds of foreign journalism. Marx for example used this term in general for all journalists "who work outside the country, the state in which the information system is established" (Marx, 1982, p.211). However, this paper is focusing on one specific type. Hamilton & Jenner (2004) divided the profession 'foreign correspondent' into seven models, dependent on the journalists' place of residence and employment relationship: 1. The "traditional foreign correspondent", who works for national media companies; 2. the "parachute journalist", who is selectively sent to events like natural disasters, instead of permanently living abroad; 3. the "employed local correspondent" (also "foreign foreign correspondent"), who reports from his country for foreign media; 4. the "local foreign correspondent", who works from home and reports about local topics in a global context; 5. the "foreign local correspondent", who permanently works abroad (Al Jazeera is an example for this system); 6. the "in-house foreign correspondent", who works for an international operating company to communicate between the different locations; and 7. the "premium service foreign correspondent", who reports about a specific field from abroad. The category this paper is going to focus is the firstly defined one, the "traditional foreign correspondent" who works for national media companies (Hamilton and Jenner, 2004).

A lot of foreign journalism is situated in regions of war and conflict and covers those events which are happening outside the relative 'safety zone' of the Western world. This has in consequence an effect on the scientific studies about this field: For example, according to Hamilton & Lawrence (2010, p.631), scientific researches about foreign US-news mainly consist of attention to the reporting from war areas with US-participation. However, another huge field of foreign journalism besides conflict journalism takes place within Western countries, areas of peace and cultural similarities. So happening also within Europe where public broadcasters hold correspondence-offices even in their neighbour countries. Short geographical distances and at first sight little cultural differences question how relevant their journalistic work really is and if their work could be replaced by other channels of news gathering, like news agencies, travelling journalists, or even digital solutions. Therefore, this particular case of European transnational news coverage is to be focused by this thesis. Particular attention will be given to the German media correspondents of the broadcast

network *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (hereafter referred to as ‘ARD’) in Sweden, who are covering news and stories in Scandinavia and the Baltic States. Scandinavia is defined here as the area of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland, Faroe Islands, and Greenland. This case stands exemplary for foreign journalism despite short distances, cultural similarities and situations of peace. It can potentially stand for the traditional foreign correspondents in Europe in general, as the ARD correspondents seem to have a typical structure of organization and work. Moreover, the ARD network has a long tradition and produces amongst others the oldest television news, called *Tagesschau*, with the highest audience rating in Germany, since 1952 ([Tagesschau.de/About us](http://Tagesschau.de/About%20us)). As a main part of the work of foreign correspondents is the recovering and producing of news, the relevance of the ARD correspondents is particularly high for German television and radio.

Foreign correspondents have a long tradition in Western countries. In the early 1800s, when American print media companies started working profit-oriented and consequently aimed to catch the readers, they started hiring reporters and editors who worked from abroad (Cole and Hamilton, 2008). The roots of this field therefore lie in newspaper and magazine journalism. In the 1920s and 1930s radio broadcasters followed sending employees abroad, later also TV broadcasters (Hamilton, 2009). Today the amount of TV correspondences declines, as Hamilton states with focus on US-news (2009). This is different to what I before mentioned referring to Terzis (2014) as the case of Europe seems to be more stable: There are still many radio and TV correspondents working from foreign countries (also within Europe). As the costs and efforts for them are high due to their need of technical equipment and usually a certain amount of staff members (for camera, sound, administration), the existence of these foreign journalists is most interesting to study critically. Therefore, this paper is focusing on TV and radio correspondents.

Concluding, it can be defined that the subject of the following researches will be ‘traditional foreign correspondents’, as entitled by Hamilton & Jenner (2004), who are working for TV and radio broadcasters within Europe. A special focus lies on the German broadcast media representatives of the ARD network.

## 2.5 Theoretical Framework – Foreign Correspondents’ Culture

Many aspects discussed in the prior chapters concerning theoretical background were brought to my interviews, as the subsequent analysis is showing. However, the main focus of the

analysis is supposed to be the role and culture of foreign correspondents. Consequently, this theory formed the framework of my interviews.

As the previous parts of this thesis explained from different points of view the cultural exchange within Europe has become closer due to globalization processes. This has an influence on transnational journalistic work, but is also caused and influenced by it, as the role of correspondents, in the view of my informants, shows. Siemes (2000, pp.57f.) created a frame for the analysis of foreign correspondents when she investigated German foreign correspondents in Poland. This I am using as a theoretical framework in this thesis as it perfectly cooperates with the role of my informants as the analysis will show. Siemes' theory defines the functions a foreign correspondent should fulfil to create journalistic content which informs, entertains and educates the audience. Therefore the theory covers three dimensions: The intermediary-explanatory level, which includes the function to explain processes and phenomena of the foreign area to the audience; the diplomatic-missionary demands, which aim to influence the public opinion; and the neutral-facts-oriented level, which includes the value-neutral publication of information about the reporting area. The first level has a slightly lower relevance for correspondents' work within Europe than in transcontinental journalism, through the audiences' prior knowledge due to many similarities between the societies, cultures, and geographically little distances. In contrast, diplomatic-missionary demands play a role also within the continent. In cases of 'Brexit', the rise of right-wing policies, or the Catalanian conflict media coverage functions as a mediator between the events and the audience and is thereby in high responsibility concerning telling the truth and represent opinions. The neutral-facts-oriented level is probably that part of the journalism, which foreign correspondences mostly have to do with when they produce content for the news (instead of magazine and reportage program). Especially foreign journalists located in cities like London, Brussels, and Rome are mainly charged with the coverage of news and thereby in daily experience of the information gathering without adding a connotation.

Those three dimensions affect correspondents in Europe as well as everywhere else in the world (dependent on their journalistic ethics).

### 3. Background – The German ARD Network

'Network Journalism', a term which was established by Heinrich (2012), results of the development towards collaborating media worldwide: "It is based on the idea that we are moving away from a fairly 'closed' operational structure of journalistic production and

towards a rather open and dynamic network structure” (Heinrich, 2012). However, media networks are no modern phenomena. They have a long tradition, especially for European public broadcasters. The *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) in Great Britain (BBC.co.uk), *Sveriges Television* (SVT) in Sweden (SVT.se/Organisation) and ARD in Germany are examples of networks within one country which create content in different regions at the same time, in order to, on the one hand, publish regional content and, on the other hand, assemble everything in a national TV- or radio-program.

The German public TV and radio broadcasting network ARD was founded in 1950 as an “‘umbrella institution’ that runs a nationwide television network known as ‘the first program’ and regional networks referred to collectively as ‘the third program’” (Gunlicks, 2003, p.111). The structure of regions emerges from the federalism in Germany, which means a subdivision of the country into 16 so called ‘Bundesländer’. The federation has own parliaments, which have own laws and responsibilities. Technical issues are consequently also treated differently, television and radio have to be performed and sponsored by the regions. There are however not 16 regional broadcasters, as some regions work together in one program. So, for example, in Northern Germany, the *NorddeutscherRundfunk* (NDR) in Hamburg covers the regions Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and Schleswig-Holstein – most of the Northern regions of Germany (Gunlicks, 2003, p.111-112). The policy of the regional broadcasters is the same for all: “The networks are operated by a director and supervised by an administrative council of usually eight–ten members and by a larger board consisting of up to fifty representatives from the parties in parliament, arts and sciences, religious groups, management and labor, and social organizations“ (Gunlicks, 2003, p.112). All prime ministers of the regions decide democratically about the rate of contribution Germans have to pay for the public service broadcasting. Since 2015 this rate is 17.50 Euro per month per household. All households pay the same amount, which is then in a further step divided into the regional broadcasters in accordance with their size and financial needs (Rundfunkbeitrag.de, 2018). The broadcasting network ARD is however not the only public broadcaster in Germany: “A second network for television only is called in German ‘the second program’ (ZDF)” (Gunlicks, 2003, p.111). *ZDF* as well as *Deutsche Welle*, a public television broadcaster, and *Deutschlandradio*, a public radio broadcaster, are also financed by the public via the ‘Rundfunkbeitrag’-fee.

Today Germany faces a ‘plural system’ of broadcasting as many other countries, too. Besides the public broadcasters there are also many private ones, who were firstly established in 1984. What followed was a distribution of roles: The public broadcasters are more than

before expected to offer high-quality programming, while the private stations are expected to fulfill the entertainment factor or send specialized programming (Gunlicks, 2003, p.113). This competition situation is often to the detriment of the public service broadcasters, as the private stations attract most of the money for commercials and compete when it comes to licenses for films or sport events, what in consequence increases the costs for the program (Gunlicks, 2003, p.113).

Not many media companies work with a similar high amount of correspondents as ARD, which consists of 32 correspondence offices with 100 journalists worldwide – 44 of them report for TV, 56 for radio. This causes substantial costs of about 38 million Euros for TV correspondents and 19 million Euros for radio correspondents every year (Tagesschau.de/Korrespondenten). The correspondences are situated all over the world: 13 of them are located in Europe (for example, in Rome, London, Brussels, Geneva, Moscow, Warsaw, and Stockholm), the others can be found in Washington, Buenos Aires, Tokyo, Singapore, Johannesburg, New Delhi, Tel Aviv, and so forth (Tagesschau.de/Korrespondenten). Each foreign correspondent office is assigned to one regional broadcaster. For example, Moscow belongs to the *WDR* in Cologne, Geneva to the *SWR* in Baden-Baden, Rome to the *BR* in Munich, and Stockholm to the *NDR* in Hamburg. So the administration and responsibilities have to be carried by the ‘home-headquarter’. Nevertheless, all regional broadcasters are allowed to ask all foreign correspondences to produce for their programs. This includes 64 radio channels and a huge amount of telecasts. Additionally the correspondents can be instructed to write articles for the news websites of the broadcasters (Tagesschau.de/Korrespondenten).

Like most other public broadcasters, the ARD is – as it is paid by all German citizens – following the mission to inform, explain, educate and entertain the whole range of society. As a non-profit-company it is following the task to provide a varied, investigative and reliable programme to which everybody has free access. Therefore it is not always the demand that determines the supply like private media companies work. The educational task of the ARD sometimes also requires providing a supply that determines a demand (MDR.de).

The ARD network is an ideal case for foreign journalism research. It shows up the worldwide as well as the European news coverage through traditional correspondences. The foreign correspondents of the ARD network face, just like their colleagues, a changing media environment nowadays. In consequence, their existence is to take into consideration. Could they be replaced by other reporting-channels or how do they stand out from those?

## 4. The Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to figure out the role of foreign correspondences in Europe in the view of professional foreign journalists nowadays. In this thesis, I am focusing on the professional journalists' values, opinions and visions. Choosing from a range of methods, I found interviews and auto-ethnography to be the most suitable ones in order to focus on the culture of foreign correspondents as imagined and shaped by them. Quantitative methods, in my view, would not allow for a deep analysis of this culture as it is not the amount of facts or opinions that was in focus, but rather the personal experiences and expectations.

First of the chosen methods was semi-structured interviews. The reason is that the journalists themselves are the most experienced experts and most deeply involved in the topic so that their expertise could bring me new findings. Consequently, I requested several journalists working in different European countries for the German ARD network.

Apart from interviews I used the auto-ethnographic research method, which also includes my own view on the topic and takes into account that I work as a TV-producer for the German broadcaster ARD in its correspondence office for Scandinavia and the Baltic States in Stockholm. By this position I also get insights into the profession of foreign correspondents and the construct around the journalists in foreign countries, which I would like to include into my thesis.

Using the combination of two different research methods – interviews plus auto-ethnography – has several reasons: First, I expect the interviews to give the most possible insights into the topic and enable the most investigative findings. Combined with auto-ethnography those insights might become even more intense, as this method allows me to include my personal perspective and compare it with the expert-opinions. At the same time, it gives me the opportunity to summarize after analyzing each topic and change my point of view in accordance with the results. Moreover, the auto-ethnography method allows an analysis in the form of storytelling from the first-person viewpoint. This hopefully helps to keep a red thread and make the thesis interesting to read. At last, these methods and the way I used them are suitable for the given ten weeks of researching and writing this master thesis.

### 4.1 Qualitative Methodology

The history of qualitative research methodology goes back to the tradition of the Chicago school in the 1970/80s and the field of anthropology: scientists used the methods of ethnography and observation for the analysis of “primitive” societies as well as urban

environments. They made interviews without determined questions and observed rituals, symbols, or objects, which couldn't be mapped in a quantitative way (Ayaß and Bergmann, 2011, p.16).

The difference between quantitative and qualitative research lies in the type of data collection: countable data, like heights, weights, or income belongs to the quantitative characteristics; qualitative characteristics on the other hand totally dispense with measurements or if not so are classified and verbalized (this can also mean giving the results symbols or graphics, but no numbers) instead of counted (Bortz and Döring, 2006, p.296).

Statistical and mathematic proceeds can indeed be used for qualitative data, but have, however, a lower significance. Scientists talk about a “low level of measurement” (Ayaß and Bergmann, 2011, p.17). Therefore, it should not be the aim of a qualitative study to have countable data as an outcome and reduce it to its quantifiable characteristics. The approach should rather be the data enhancement and the discovery of a “not scientifically filtered (...) social reality” (Ayaß and Bergmann, 2011, p.17).

Concluding, it can be seen that qualitative research methods as the less countable and measureable once. This can become a disadvantage when it comes to veracity: No hard facts can proof the results of this inquiry as it is based on opinions, experiences and personal views. At the same time, the advantage of qualitative research methods is obviously that they are more flexible than most of the quantitative methods: They enable the researcher to pick out the relevant aspects and change his / her focus when necessary what is exactly what this thesis could profit from when it came to the interviews.

#### 4.2 The Ethnography and Auto-Ethnography Methods

As mentioned before, ethnography is one of the qualitative research methods. To get a better idea of how this method is used, a definition of the term ‘ethnography’ should lead the way. Hammersley & Atkinson summed up the main components:

“Ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry. Generally speaking ethnographers draw on a range of sources of data, though they may sometimes rely primarily on one” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3).

The object of inquiry is consequently not necessarily stable, but can change over the research period. Applied to this thesis paper, that can mean a change or, more explicitly, a

development of the focus. Not only the interview partners are persons of different circles and will probably give different answers in the interviews, also the questions I am asking may be others in the beginning than in the end: “Here, decisions about whom to interview, when, and where, will have to be developed over time, and the interviewing will normally take a relatively unstructured form, though more structured or strategic questioning may be used towards the end of the fieldwork” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.4).

The definition of Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) also clearly shows up that the researchers of ethnographic fieldwork become an essential part of the researches themselves. Their perspective, their experience, personal interest, and connection to the topic lead to different approaches in the fieldwork. Consequently, the results of ethnographic inquiries can differ dependent on the involved scientists or researchers.

However, this freedom of inquiry structure also has its disadvantages, as the researchers need to keep an overview of the topic. Constant critical scrutinizing might be the key to achieve a scientifically useful result in the end of the fieldwork. Otherwise one runs into danger to lose the thread.

To go one step further in this paper’s research methods, it is necessary to look into the field of auto-ethnography in particular. An overview can be achieved by a look at the precise meaning of the word: Following Ellis (2004) and Holman Jones (2005), auto-ethnography is the approach to research which is trying to explain personal experiences (*auto*) and systematically analyze (*graphy*) them to understand cultural experiences (*ethno*). Auto-ethnography treats research as a political and social act (Adams and Holman Jones, 2008).

The method of auto-ethnography is inspired by the “crisis of confidence” in the 1980s, which created new opportunities to rethink aims and characteristics of socio-scientific researches (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2010).

According to Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) auto-ethnography can be seen as a fusion of ethnography and autobiography. Researchers basically use aspects of both methods, what entails that the term “auto-ethnography” describes not only a method / process, but also a product. This might especially be applicable when it comes to socio-sciences like anthropology – researchers who observe an ethnic minority or a tribe will collect new personal experiences and stories that they write about in an autobiographic style. This requires a personal connection to the researches: “Most often, autobiographers write about “epiphanies” – remembered moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of a person's life” (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011, p.3).

However, auto-ethnography is compared with autobiography working less exclusively with the own experiences and rather combining inner and outer views on the “culture” or field of research:

“Autoethnographers must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and, in so doing, make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders. To accomplish this might require comparing and contrasting personal experience against existing research, interviewing cultural members, and/or examining relevant cultural artifacts.” (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2011, p.4)

In case of this thesis the auto-ethnographic research will run on another level: I am job-wise already part of the “society” I am researching on. My experiences I could make by this job are rather influencing me or my work on a professional level and to a lesser extent in a personal way. However, I still see the auto-ethnographic method as the most suiting one for this thesis as the inquiry of a culture (here: the foreign correspondences) as well as the practices, beliefs, and experiences of the associated people (here: the journalists working abroad) is – transmitted to my requirements – what will probably bring me to my results most effectively.

#### 4.3 Interviews as a Research Method

Interviews are in this thesis expected to become the main key to an answer of the research questions.

The approach of interviews is to make findings and receive input for the inquiry which is not written down yet, cannot be observed without asking questions, or is directly related to the responding person. Kvale (1996) sees the main task of research interviews in the understanding of the meaning of what the interviewee says. Furthermore, he figures out two levels of the interviews’ role: “A qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level” (Kvale, 1996).

Applied to my thesis the factual level has a high relevance anyways. But still, the meaning level is important, too. However, what outcome an interview brings, is different and dependent on the structure the interviewer gives as well as the interviewee engages in the conversation.

According to Kvale (1996) there are seven stages of interview investigations a researcher should consider:

1. *Thematizing*: Defining the aim the investigations and the concept of the research topic (the why and what) before starting with the interview.
2. *Designing*: Creating a design of the inquiry before the interview starts. This expects to take in account all seven steps of investigations. The envisaged results should be clear as well as the moral implications.
3. *Interviewing*: Conducting the interview with the approach of an interpersonal situation to the interviewee. The focus on the outcomes should not be lost.
4. *Transcribing*: Transcribing the material from oral speech to a written text to prepare it for analyzes and receive a better overview.
5. *Analyzing*: Determining the method of analysis. This depends on the topic of research, the purpose and the characteristic of the material. In case of my thesis this method is already figured out as described above.
6. *Verifying*: Identifying the “generalizability, reliability, and validity of the interview findings. Reliability refers to how consistent the results are, and validity means whether an interview study investigates what is intended to be investigated” (Kvale, 1996).
7. *Reporting*: Communicating (and publishing) the findings of the inquiry and provide the results to a reader.

When I conducted the interviews I followed the above listed steps to not lose the thread. As Kvale is bringing interviewing as a method into a formal structure, this might be a good compensation of the quite open method of auto-ethnography.

However, it was important for my study to keep the run of the interview open and allow myself and the respondent to push the conversation in new directions, deepen topics which were not supposed to become a particular part, or skipping other parts which seem in the moment of the interview less relevant. Moreover, the method of auto-ethnography suggests reading between the lines and finding a balance of meaning and facts.

Therefore, I have constructed interview questions for my five expected interviews, which are not supposed to remain the same during the whole process of semi-structured interviewing. All in all, the purpose of the methodology is to bring the different answers of the interviewees through analysis to a valuable common factor and thereby achieve the most interesting and investigative discovery.

I conducted the interviews for this thesis in April and May 2018. The related interview questions can be found in the appendix. The informants for my inquiry were five journalists employed by the ARD network and working as foreign correspondents in Europe. Two are

situated in Stockholm, Sweden, one in Brussels, Belgium, one in London, Great Britain, and one in Warsaw, Poland. Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes. Two of the interviews were carried out in personal meetings, the other three via telephone. As all five journalists are from Germany, the conversation language was German. I recorded all five interviews and transcribed them afterwards in German language. For the analysis of this thesis I only translated those parts into English, which were relevant for my research. I analysed all the transcribed interviews as texts, and applied thematic analysis. Several themes were extracted when analysing the interviews: “The Foreign Correspondents and their Tasks”, “Globalization in Europe and its Impact on Foreign Journalism”, “Digitalization and its Impact on Foreign Journalism”, “Reporting from German about Foreign Countries”, “The Audience of Foreign Correspondents”, and “The Future of Foreign Correspondents”.

The research questions I stated before are aiming to cover a big subject. I can obviously not generally answer them by interviews with only five informants; they however help to find answers as they all have a high expertise in the field of research.

Only ARD correspondents working in Europe were supposed to participate. My idea was to narrow my case down to only one public broadcaster from one European country in order to get the most detailed insights. At the same time this particular case could in later studies be applied on other public broadcasters and their structures and developments. In consequence, my group of informants is small, though highly experienced and having a particular expertise in this field, due to their profession.

#### 4.4 The Approach of the Analysis

It was my curiosity for the research subject that led me to the before described methods. I wanted myself to be part of the inquiries and reflect my findings. Therefore, I will start my analysis by a description of my own relation to the topic and an overview of my work in the office of the ARD correspondence in Stockholm. This is followed by an introduction of my five informants to give the reader an idea of their profession and work. In a next part I will start the analysis itself; this is divided into several subchapters as I filtered the main aspects of my interviews and contextualized them within one section. In every subchapter I try to give room for various quotations of my informants, contrast them with each other, and reflect auto-ethnographically from my own perspective. I expected the major approach of all informants to be a support of foreign correspondences in general. Therefore, I was very curious of their arguments for the existence of foreign journalism within Europe and will collect those arguments as part of my findings. The theoretical basis of my analysis will be formed by the

theories I presented in previous chapters. I will relate the opinions and arguments of my informants to those theories, with a particular focus on the theoretical framework – the three dimensions of foreign journalism by Siemes (2000) – and reflect and discuss the findings.

#### 4.5 Research Ethics – The Double Role of being Researcher and Colleague

For researchers in a field, including observations and interviews, it is often an advantage to be as close to the topic as possible. In case of inquiries regarding a professional group it is best to become an “insider” of this group of interest to receive all detailed information of relevance. To be even a member of this group can, however, also be seen sceptically. I am a member of my field of research by working together with two of my informants and being employed in the same company with the other three of them. Critical voices might question the preservation of a required professional distance between the researcher and the informants, and as a consequence a low objectivity. By using the method of auto-ethnography I pushed myself into a double role of being researcher and colleague at the same time. This can of course be viewed critically. The Swedish scientist Fredrik Stiernstedt has however been in a similar situation when researching changes and production of media at *MTG*-radio, his former employer (2013). He points out that the idea of being “insider” and “outsider” at the same time when interviewing former colleagues is, in fact, an illusion. We cannot turn off our social relations and that can in this case of researching within our social network have consequences. However, Stiernstedt did not experience this as a problem, if, as he says, the researcher reflects about his double role and finds a way to handle possible consequences (2013, p.57).

What negative aspects could entail from the double role? Stiernstedt states different risks: the loyalty and friendships between the researcher and colleagues could influence the interviews and the approach of the inquiry. Furthermore, Stiernstedt sees a risk that the informants might hide information (for instance, about colleagues or what they think about their work) which they would tell an external person. A third risk lies in finding the right relation to the informant during the interviews, according to Stiernstedt. It can become an issue to keep the position as the interviewer when having the same or even more knowledge than the interviewee (2013, p.57).

Concerning my specific case, I agree with all the risks -especially finding the right researcher-interviewee-relation with my colleagues was an issue for me too -, but also add another one: The five informants I interviewed were all in higher position within the hierarchical structure of the company; one of them was even my direct superior. This can result in the risk that the interviewees hide information which they normally discuss in

“manager-meetings”, but not with the regular staff; at least if they would not see my role as a researcher.

Despite the different risks of ending up in a double role position between colleague and researcher, I decided to use the above explained research-methods. As my informants are journalists they all know classical journalistic interview situations. Therefore, I was sure they would take this situation and my questions very seriously. Moreover, I figured out the ethical justifiability of being a member of my field of research. I am somehow, of course, biased when it comes to foreign correspondences as I work for one. However, I did not experience the globalization and digitalization developments of the last decades in the profession of a journalist myself. Therefore I am using all stories and opinions, my informants told me, for the analysis of this thesis – no matter whether they include positive or negative aspects of foreign journalism. Furthermore, I have never had direct contact to the foreign correspondence offices in London, Warsaw, and Brussels. The argumentation for or against the role of journalists in these positions were therefore very new for me and gave me insights I did not have yet. I found myself in those interviews more in an outsider- then insider-role and kept the professional distance this research deserves. I came to the conclusion that working for a foreign correspondence just gives me an advantage for my research concerning some pre-knowledge. However, I do not expect my result being distorted by my role and consequently do not have serious doubts about the ethical correctness of my inquiry.

One issue concerning the interviews was the question of anonymization. Some of the interviewees were not sure whether they were allowed or not to appear with their original names in a scientific paper, telling their opinions and job stories. Therefore, together we evaluated different opportunities, like referring to them anonymously or half-anonymously by naming only their positions without saying their names. Finally, we came to the decision to use the full names, positions, and name the place they are situated, to give the reader the most possible insights into their profession and perspective. The requirement was however, that I gave all paragraphs they are quoted in to the interviewees before publishing this thesis to receive their agreements first.

## 5. The Analysis

### 5.1 My Relation to the Research Topic

I started working for the foreign correspondence office of the broadcast network ARD in Stockholm in October 2017. Since then I am a freelancer, not permanently employed, with the

professional title “TV producer”. As I do this work simultaneously with studies, I am working half-time, but usually two days per week. My place of work is the office of the foreign correspondence in Stockholm’s district Östermalm. Besides me there are several others working in the “studio”, as we call it: The office is divided into the TV-section and the radio-section. The latter is managed by the responsible radio correspondent, who I am going to introduce in the upcoming chapter of this thesis. He is assisted by one full-time producer. The TV-section of the studio has a higher amount of employees than the one for radio. It is managed by the TV correspondent, who will also be introduced in a later part of this thesis. Additionally, there are two administrative assistants coordinating appointments, the office’s accounting, and human resource cases. One cameraman, one technician, and one cutter are full-time employed and, just like the correspondent, delegated employees from the regional broadcaster NDR in Hamburg, Germany. Most of them stay in Stockholm for a period of five years. Additionally to those eight listed staff members, there are four freelancers working as TV producers, including me.

The job as a TV producer consists, in our case, of assisting the content-production of the studio concerning the journalistic work. This includes:

1. Researches on relevant topics by reading newspaper, websites, news agency reports, interacting with personal / professional networks, and following press notifications of Scandinavian / Baltic media, politicians, ambassadors, and royal houses.
2. Providing possible topics, in the form of writing short reports, for the German editorials and programme managers which are responsible for choosing the subjects of the programme and therefore instruct us to shoot a story when it takes place within our reporting area.
3. Planning the shootings, making appointments with protagonists, preparing interview questions.
4. Organizing the journey to the shooting and coordinating the shooting on the spot, making interviews, coordinating the filming together with the cameraman.
5. Translating the interviews into German language, deciding together with the correspondent which quotes and film clips are the most relevant.

The author of all videos we create is still our correspondent, who stands for our content and is consequently mainly responsible for it. Nevertheless, the autonomy of a TV producer is relatively high due to being part of most steps of the process of creating a journalistic product. Therefore, I get a lot of insights into the organization and work of a TV correspondence in

Stockholm in particular, but also in general, as well as in the construction of the ARD network.

As a member of the staff I experience in my daily work all issues a foreign correspondent is confronted with. As a central element of those I see the task to convince programme coordinators in Germany that the topics we suggest are newsworthy. Big news happening in Scandinavia or the Baltic States would always be implemented into the programme, but those are rarely taking place here. The politics of the recent years were on a national level of relevance, but more seldom for a German audience. Even the results of national elections are only stated in German news if there is anything curious about it, or if they show significant similarities to Germany. Undisputedly relevant news topics were, for instance, terror attacks, events and decisions regarding the Nobel Prize, or the deaths of internationally famous people. Others are sometimes difficult to “sell” to the decision-makers in Germany.

Besides the news topics there are a lot of stories which find their way into magazine programmes or journals, which give each topic several minutes of room for being explained. Topics reported in such a programme are less informational than news, but covering social, political, celebrity or curious stories. Due to the lack of relevance, these stories seem to have it even harder sometimes to find the necessary interest of German editorial / programme managers.

The issue in terms of story finding and –selling is, as I observe it during my work, the relation between German and foreign interests. The correspondent and his/her colleagues work for a German audience, but cover and investigate abroad. That requires a lot of consideration: When is an event or issue in, for instance, Lithuania or Iceland relevant for Germany? And how do we convince the decision makers and the audience of the relevance when it is not obvious?

My job in the foreign correspondence office shows me also, how many other media, apart from the public TV and news broadcasters, cover topics in Scandinavia and the Baltic States. On relevant press conferences we usually meet journalists from news agencies as well as private media companies. Even private individuals become “journalists” when posting news and stories on Twitter. In case of great news events, many journalists from German media travel to the countries of our reporting area, as the short distances within Europe allow journeys in a few hours. Some others even simplify processes by buying film material from national broadcasters. So it happened, for example, when the terror attack in Stockholm took place in 2017; many German media broadcasted information and pictures they received from the Swedish public broadcaster *SVT*. In my perspective, all those people and companies and

their procedures become serious competitors for our on-spot-investigations, as the speed of reporting often counts to catch the audience. This is a big aspect I am curious about and therefore also discussing in my interviews. The upcoming chapters will show the different perspectives and opinions on the question on how globalization and a “smaller” Europe entails to a changing role of foreign correspondents. They furthermore aim to figure out how Siemes’ (2000: 57f.) three dimensions of the tasks of foreign correspondents apply on the analysed case.

## 5.2 The Foreign Correspondents and their Tasks

The informants I interviewed for this thesis are five foreign correspondents. They are all employed by the German broadcaster ARD and delegated to foreign offices to report from areas abroad. As the professional careers of these experts as well as their position today are differing, I will introduce each of them separately.

It is important to note that all interviews and the thereof resulting quotations base on the personal opinions and attitudes of the foreign correspondents and do not necessarily reflect the position of their employer ARD or related regional broadcasters NDR and WDR.

Dr. Clas Oliver Richter is TV correspondent and studio manager of the ARD office in Stockholm. Here he is responsible for reporting from eight countries: Iceland, Denmark (including Greenland), Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Richter is a qualified journalist, who has worked in different offices worldwide, for instance Tokyo, since 2002. Moreover, he was a member of a reporter group doing crisis operations. Due to these experiences, he decided to work abroad for a longer time and chose Stockholm. The reason for this choice was the good infrastructure in the form of schools and family-related factors, which was important for him, as he moved to Stockholm together with his wife and children. A second reason was the work here: “The ARD office in Stockholm is a travel-studio. I do not need to spend all my time in the office. The actuality of the topics here is low. Therefore, one can do many investigations, stories and reports from within the countries and make first-hand-experiences”. He started his position as a foreign correspondent in 2012. In summer 2018 he will move back to Germany and will hand over his job to a new starting correspondent.

As Richter was a chief editor in Hamburg before, he was used to the high responsibility and being concerned with personnel and administrative aspects in addition to the regular journalistic work. However, there he worked in a newsworthy desk; here in Stockholm he rather produces long format reports, as he finds that important: “The profile and the

requirements for the team and the correspondent are broader here”. The versatility of being foreign correspondent in Stockholm constitutes the attractiveness of his job for him.

Carsten Schmiester is the radio correspondent in the ARD office in Stockholm. He started his position in 2016 and is going to stay for five years, the usual period for ARD employees, until 2021. Schmiester looks back on a long career as a foreign correspondent, as Stockholm is his third position abroad already. In 1993 he gained his first experiences as a foreign journalist during vacation replacements in Singapore and New Delhi that are also ARD offices belonging to the regional broadcaster NDR in Hamburg. He decided that a life in those areas is not compatible with a family life, so he asked for a delegation to London, his first position as a foreign correspondent from 1999 until 2003. This time was immediately followed by five years in the ARD office in Washington. Back home in Hamburg he became a chief editor of a radio news editorial for eight years, until he moved to Stockholm for his third foreign assignment. Working as a correspondent is manually the same, no matter if one reports from a specific area in Germany or from abroad, says Schmiester: “The task is to compile those topics of the reporting area which are of national interest in Germany. That requires asking: What is relevant for the listener?”.

Hanni Hüsich is the TV correspondent and studio manager of the ARD office in London, which also belongs to the regional broadcaster NDR in Hamburg. Like her colleagues, she has a long history of journalistic experience in general, but also specifically as a foreign correspondent. During the 1990s she spent a period of four years as a correspondent in Great Britain, later she managed the ARD office in Washington. Then she came back to London in 2015. “I think I have the reputation that I like this part of the world very much. I am very interested in the Anglo-Saxon areas”. In between these stations Hüsich gained different experiences as a news editor and also as a chief editor of the department for foreign and current topics in Hamburg.

The ARD office in London covers the area Great Britain and Ireland. Content-wise the journalistic investigations often focus on politics here, as Hüsich states: „In contrast to travel studios, we are more present in the news programme; especially in the present times. We sadly show less landscapes than, for instance, the colleagues in Scandinavia, as the focus lies on the politics of our reporting area”.

Kai Küstner is the radio correspondent in the ARD office Brussels. The studio Brussels is belonging to two different regional broadcasters in Germany – the NDR in Hamburg and the

WDR (*Westdeutscher Rundfunk*) in Cologne. It is covering the region Belgium and Luxemburg, but is mainly investigating the politics of Brussels. Küstner is an employee of the NDR. He started his position in Brussels in 2013 and will move back to Germany this year. Earlier he gained experience as a foreign correspondent in New Delhi, where he worked for five years and covered the region of South Asia and investigated many different topics in India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. After working in a conflict area he made the conscious decision to apply for the position in Brussels, which has, on the one hand, some parallels with his former studio – in terms of the relation between Brussel's NATO-topics and New Delhi's Afghanistan-conflict. On the other hand, it gives him the opportunity for a very new experience: „The work here mostly consists of analysis, comments, current reporting, EU-, and NATO-decisions. To a lesser extent it includes reportages and making new countries accessible to the audience. Something very different compared with my previous job, but I liked the chance to re-orientate”.

Olaf Bock is the TV correspondent and studio manager of the ARD office in Warsaw. This studio belongs to the regional broadcaster WDR in Cologne and reports exclusively from Poland. Bock has – of all my informants – the shortest experience in his current position so far as he moved to Warsaw in September 2017. However, he worked as a foreign journalist previously, too: From 2007 until 2012 he was a TV correspondent in Moscow. Compared to then, he now has more responsibility since the function as a studio manager includes many administrative tasks additionally to the journalistic daily business. He compares the amount of issues with those in a small company. At least the responsibility for employees is a task which he gained experiences with in Cologne, when he worked as a planner for a WDR-editorial. But there is one main difference between his previous jobs in Cologne and his position as a foreign correspondent in Warsaw now: “In Cologne I was mostly working as an editor. I was responsible for the TV programme, signed off on reports or ordered material, but I did not create it on my own. I discussed the topics with my colleagues, but I was less a maker, than a manager”.

The studio Warsaw is, according to Bock, a very political working space at the moment. He however hopes for more opportunities to report about the country and the people in longer formats within the next years.

### 5.3 Globalization in Europe and its Impact on Foreign Journalism

Globalization is a worldwide phenomenon of long history, as the theoretical background presented before. It has an impact on economics, logistics, communication, and also on information systems including journalism. When starting the researches for this thesis I had the impression that Europe is a very close continent with many similarities in the everyday life of different nations. Coming from one of the most central countries in Europe, I am used to taking advantage of the open borders, the common currency and the little language barriers due to English as a common language which is taught in our similar education systems. Still, I have always been aware of my German identity and found many differences when moving to Sweden, but at the same time I grew up with a consciousness for being European. Mc Luhan's "Global Village" was consequently a suitable model for my image of Europe.

However, a model fitting to my impressions does not necessarily mean that it is also fitting to the field of foreign journalism within Europe. As before mentioned, Reese (2010, p.344) sees the field of journalism within the globalization as "a key component in these social transformations, both as cause and outcome". Therefore, I was asking my informants if they have experienced any globalization in the last years of their career. TV correspondent Clas Oliver Richter in Stockholm first does not see it as a big aspect: „I do not have the impression that Swedes become more Norwegian or Danes more German. But we benefit from globalization in the same way, as we all drink coke or eat hamburgers. That implies a common level, but does not make us feel more European". At the same time, he sees it as his task as a journalist to explain the close neighbors: "And yet, we feel close to each other within Europe. The Scandinavians look like us, drive the same cars, have the same expectations of education, but they are still, for instance, Finns. We as foreign correspondents show up the differences".

Hanni Hüsich, TV correspondent in London, speaks even less positive about the globalization in Europe, as her experiences in Great Britain draw another picture of it:

"Globalization did not pull Great Britain nearer to Europe for the reason that it is an island, which is located on the verge of the continent and not in its centre. When travelling to England, there is a passport control and the country has another currency. The distance is something I feel here just as much as twenty years ago. However, I also see a significantly more positive view on Germany compared to the times of Margaret Thatcher. Nowadays Germany enjoys a good image, especially Berlin. Due to the Brexit this development slightly declined".

The impression that globalization not automatically leads to a positive image of other nations is one that also radio correspondent Kai Küstner in Brussels shares: "I see the effect

that the huge globalized world frightens people and makes them retreat. All the populism circulating at the moment can be explained by a fear of globalization and automatization.” His statement connects to the theory of Reese which works out that “journalism contributes to this experience and thus represents a key component in these social transformations, both as cause and outcome” (2010, p.344). Populism is an important point, an outcome of the transformations.

At the same time, there are a lot of other outcomes of globalization as, for instance, global trading. According to Olaf Bock, TV correspondent in Warsaw, Germany became the most important business partner for Poland – maybe one reason why there are many similar stores:

“I believe that globalization is a central aspect which I have recognized in Moscow already. As a new arrival in a foreign country one notices that many commercial structures exist here just like in Germany. Especially the individual characteristics and features of big cities are not obvious anymore. Fashion- and supply chains are represented all over Europe and the factors of everyday life became exchangeable – that can be evaluated positively or negatively.”

Bock made this experience of globalization in Russia before, but sees it as more intense in Poland. However, there are not only similarities: “My first impression here is: There is also an own view to many aspects of life and to the cohabitation within Europe. In sum, there is, on the one hand, a close proximity concerning economical developments, on the other hand, there is a unique identity in Russia as well as in Poland”.

This opinion corresponds to the statement of Reese (2010, p.245) who determines new options for global players; at the same time he sees new chances for the existence of micro-communities and monocultures within the globalized world.

Due to the interviews I got a new perspective on the phenomenon of globalization in the field of media: I see indeed that the technology and political conditions provide a variety of opportunities for intercultural connections – what is happening on a very high level already when it comes to business and trading relations – but that does not mean that the communication in terms of media is increasing. The fact is this would require a public interest in foreign countries, maybe even a positive image of each other. This issue is going to be viewed more deeply in chapter 5.6.

#### 5.4 Digitalization and its Impact on Foreign Journalism

Facing the developments digitalization enables today, I came to the impression that this could be one strong argument for the elimination of foreign correspondences – at least from the perspective of new grown competitors. The field of media and journalism got new

opportunities, especially on the internet. As worldwide communication and information distribution became easier with every step of technical development, there raised a lot of platforms for news and documentaries, as well. Also traditional media like newspapers made use of the digitalization and started journalistic websites. Thereby they became direct competitors for broadcasting media for the first time.

I see this highly competitive market as a challenge for the foreign correspondences as a huge amount of professional and amateurish journalists from all over the world provide content that can be demanded from anywhere. That means that also the German audience does not depend on investigations of the foreign journalists of public broadcasters anymore when demanding news. Hoover (2010, p.286) underlines this, as stated before: “Media events are today largely deterritorialized; they are consumed globally or are at least accessible well outside their geographies and nations of origin”. I therefore asked in my interviews how the foreign correspondents see the competition themselves.

Carsten Schmiester, radio correspondent in Stockholm, confirmed my impression and stated: “Yes, they are competitors.” But he doubts whether current online platforms provide the journalism that informs the audience properly:

“The challenge is that the wealth of information is superficial, but still leaves the impression on the consumers that they were extensively informed. However, quantity does not lead to higher quality. Much information available on the internet are repeated and due to this intensified. This still does not bring more diversity for journalism: When you type in ‘#London’, you will still see pictures of the Big Ben, there are just even three million different images now instead of three thousand some years ago. But it is always the same building and nobody knows the house next to it, because it seems not important.”

Schmiester sees an economical reason for this: “Professional providers generate click rates, which are always received by the strongest stimulus which, in turn, can be achieved by appealing to familiar things. That is rather a negative tendency. Consequently, the internet does not lead to a wider knowledge in the society, but to a penetration of that knowledge that people already have. This makes all the more important that there are journalists who look behind the surface”.

I agree with him in so far as I think that there is always a need for investigative journalism. General information is easy to retrieve nowadays, but it still needs professionals who provide the background stories and put information into context. Also Archetti’s article (2013) mentioned the popular use of publishing on internet platforms: “The phenomenon of

citizen journalism and blogging support the idea that almost anybody with access to a computer can ‘report’ to worldwide audience”.

Schmiester makes another point here:

“This is my criticism of internet journalism: The people do not correctly learn the job anymore. Many of them work superficial, because things must go quickly and it lacks economical resources. Therefore it is important to have an institution which is able to investigate thoroughly. Many headlines turn out to be not that sexy, because the situation is just more complex. Internet is nice, but it does not replace the depth. It makes it easier to receive superficial knowledge. But if you really want the insights, you eventually have to go to the spot“.

He furthermore points out that only 16 Eurocents of the monthly broadcasting fee all Germans have to pay are allocated to the foreign radio correspondents.

Schmiester’s arguments also refer to Reese’s theory which covers journalism as a key component of globalization processes (2010, p.344). I agree to that as I see in Schmiester’s examples the role of journalism as cause and outcome of globalization (Reese, 2010, p.344): Journalism makes use of digitalization and thereby brings cultures closer together, but that again also results in new channels of journalism like social media content.

Clas Oliver Richter, TV correspondent in Stockholm, has another opinion about the competition on the internet, but agrees with the important role of professionals, too: “I do not think that internet journalists are our competitors. Our approach is a solid research instead of only a superficial impression that one has. And that is what I claim”.

Olaf Bock argues against the threat of competition that the interests of internet media are others than the one of the public broadcasters: “Most of the new media channels are in Polish. Those media which cover Poland topics in German language usually have their own focus, like culture, sports, science. They follow their own approach. I see them as a pleasant supplement, not as competitors”. However, he notes changes in the use of media since the internet provides new opportunities in countries of low press freedom – an experience he made in his positions in Russia and Poland:

“All in all, the communication channels became others. The internet plays a key role, especially in countries like Russia, to a lesser extent in Poland, where the formation of opinion in the public media is not very pronounced. I concretely experienced that in Moscow: Many opinion leaders of the opposition spread their information on the internet and not via government related channels. That is an important aspect when it comes to information retrieval. There are websites or formats of radio and TV broadcasters where other people get a chance to speak than those in the governmental related programmes.”

Bock gives a concrete example: “In Poland it came to a change of policy concerning the public media content after the last elections. The director and more than 100 journalists were removed. Those who watch *Telewizja Polonia* (TVP) get the very governmental related information. Oppositions speak on private broadcasters or on the internet. That became more important during the last years”.

With this point Bock reinforces the statement of Cole and Hamilton (2008): “newsgathering abroad appears to be moving toward a system of multiple models co-existing and collectively providing information”.

The experiences of Bock gave me new insights into the role of online journalism: It should not only be seen as a competitor, but also as a supplement of media which is able to assume a responsibility for spreading a high variety of opinions and information. This is a task the public broadcasters can – in these cases – not fulfil. Consequently, it is, in my point of view, a valuable parallel information system. This reflects Siemes (2000, pp.57) model about the role of foreign journalism as this names the diplomatic-missionary demands as its second dimension. The public broadcasters in Russia are, according to Bock, influencing the public in a certain way, while the oppositions spread their missions on other channels on the internet. The foreign journalism has in this case the role of an observant who monitors all channels, selects relevant information and translates those to the – in this case – German audience. On the value-neutral level, according to Siemes (2000), the neutral information might be the same on all channels and can thereby be easily transmit to the German audience. However, to satisfy the intermediary-explanatory level it needs deeper insights and investigations, which can afterwards also influence the diplomatic-missionary demand of the broadcasting.

### 5.5 Reporting from Germany about Foreign Countries

As one consequence of globalization and digitalization, there grew several worldwide or transnational networks of reporters and media companies. Many European public broadcasters provide their content for each other in the EBU, as mentioned before. Today the programme about foreign issues could, in my perspective, be filled by the purchase of video material. This combined with an explaining over-voice in German language could give all the relevant information. However, I also find it still important that German journalists produce own content, make interviews and go to the spots of events to get detailed impressions and investigate and clearly identify the truth.

I was consequently very interested in receiving more arguments for or against on-site journalism and asked my informants, if reporting about foreign countries would be possible from Germany by the use of collaborations and news agencies.

Carsten Schmiester sees foreign journalism as the only solid option for reporting from abroad:

„You can only understand a country when you live in it, for instance, when you sign up for your personal number in the Swedish Skatteverket, when dealing with a landlord, when going to a doctor in England, when experiencing and also ‘suffering’ another system. You read so many things about the coldness of Swedes, but only here you can experience it. This is something you cannot ‘google’. Life in the reporting area is important to explain the nation and understand the culture. We as foreign correspondents want to provide deep insights into the countries. We want to explain incomprehensible decisions to our audience”.

Schmiester furthermore finds metaphors for explaining the compelling necessity of his position: “You can only know if a bed is comfortable after you slept in it. That is just the same here. We need to be on the spot, especially for the unpleasant experiences that you would not have as a guest. When you sleep in a hotel, you do not get familiar with the city”.

Clas Oliver Richter agrees with the fact of self-experience. He finds it important to be as close to the events as possible:

„In the beginning of all reports stands our everyday life experience. How do media explain things here? How are topics evaluated? How do people understand them and how are they contextualized in terms of history and sociology? Therefore it is important to live in the country. We, for instance, always wonder about American correspondents situated in London who are reporting about all of Europe. But they actually cannot experience in London how Italians tick. And when they report about ‚Hygge‘, this is probably more difficult for them than for someone who is travelling to Copenhagen regularly.”

Hanni Hüsck reports from Great Britain, a country with many facets: „Our reporting area is a very split country. As a journalist it is important to know all parts of it – the Scots, the Welshman, the Irish and Northern Irish. That is something I can only recognize if I systematically and regularly explore all areas.”

The working situation in Brussels leads to once again other experiences of the foreign correspondent. Kai Küstner evaluates his presence by the need of networks:

„Despite the digital age many things depend on personal contacts. I need people who know me, who trust me and who know how I handle information. I only get information about a Ministerial Council behind closed doors when I am on the spot to ask people in the hallways for brief

explanations about the discussions in there. That is the same with exclusive information which – if I get it – is helpful for my own image as a journalist as well as the image of ARD.”

I am wondering if the necessity of the presence is obvious for the audience and also the decision makers and ask him for the awareness of this function. He answers that he sees a difference the correspondents’ positions:

“It might be more obvious for reporting areas like Bhutan or Afghanistan that it needs journalists on the spot to prevent being exposed to war propaganda only (in case of Afghanistan). But even in the EU or in Berlin it is just equally important to receive relevant information through personal contacts. Moreover, it was important to have a foreign correspondent situated in Brussels when the terror attacks in Belgium happened”.

In my work I experience a high interest in all subjects of our reporting area of all staff members. By living in this area and working here for some years there are many personal and professional contacts growing which are useful for a wide overview and detailed investigations. Olaf Bock shares the impression that reporting on the spot brings deeper information:

„If we would only repeat the news agency journalism that would lead to a lack for the audience: The immediacy of personal experiences which shows up the characteristics of a country. Local media would not even recognize many of those special things. The approach to send journalists abroad for five years is that they always arrive in this new reporting area with a fresh and keen view on it and in interest for the stories beyond the actuality horizon. If we would only report from Germany about foreign countries this would get lost. Then we would probably reduce the reporting to only the news what would make it difficult to receive a certain classification – for the audience and for the journalists”.

The correspondence office covering all of Scandinavia and the Baltic States is located in Stockholm. It seemed to me that it would not make a difference if journalists travel from Germany to a sudden event in, for instance, Norway or from Stockholm. Clas Oliver Richter, however, makes a point:

„We have a logistical advantage here, for instance, at the time in Utoya. We have been travelled there before the attack and therefore knew where exactly it is, how it normally looks, and what the situation is. The knowledge about the situation and the people is most important. We were able to understand why the police failed there: They have no ammunition in their guns. Foreign correspondents can explain those questions, because they know the police in Norway and the people there.”

Carsten Schmiester argues: “Of course I do not know the other Scandinavian and Baltic countries well, but Sweden is the dominating country here, due to its size. So we can at least determine differences from a Swedish perspective”.

Richter gives an example of an event which particularly required the presence of a foreign correspondent:

“I believe it is important to report as an eyewitness as often as possible when we want to present something to the audience. Therefore we must be on the spot. We made this experience one year ago, when the terror attack took place in Stockholm. We were the only German camera team, were very fast and could report precisely what happened and how the atmosphere developed. We could report about the arrest of the terrorist, because we had sources that we were able to rate as credible”.

I was not yet working in Stockholm during the terror attack, but heard about the relevance of the journalists’ presence from many other colleagues, as well.

Bock did not experience anything similar in Poland, but he also sees an importance of living on the spot as most subjects in Poland cannot be illustrated by news agencies:

“Here we have a country which is at the moment politically split into the group of people, who feel strongly associated with Europe, and those, who rely on their national values. This causes different understandings of the country’s issues. At this point we as German journalists, who are guests in this country and report about it, have the opportunity and also the duty to show this ambivalence to the German audience. And that cannot be provided by a news agency which summarizes political facts within 20 lines”.

Hüsch gives a very different example from London, which concretely shows the need of her and her colleagues’ positions:

„We are one of a few media here who foresaw the Brexit. We had the chance to immediately travel through the country, talk to many people in London and just be in contact – a permanent, sustainable contact. That is something you cannot get by two or three journeys to Great Britain. It is something that needs to be sensed. I take it for essential that we provide our established, extended and constantly questioned knowledge about the region on our own channels.”

In the theory Heinrich (2012, p.768) mentions, by referring to Volkmer (2003) that the development towards nowadays’ global media took place in two steps: “What started with new access opportunities through the invention of satellite broadcast systems (Volkmer, 2003) is now fostered further with the invention of low-cost, digital connection tools. A ‘translocal reference system’ (Volkmer, 2003, p.313) is developing, in which local or national borders of news production are replaced by global communication exchange patterns”. However, these

reflections do not take in account the gaps that are caused by reporting on the basis of external material. Hüsich names those: „You could always edit a little Tagesschau (*explanatory note: German main news programme*) in Hamburg, there is always some material available. I can purchase everything, but the fact if someone knows a lot about an area or not makes a difference in the reports. I do not have my knowledge from news agencies only, but it is collected from all our experiences we gained in all over the country”.

Schmiester makes another point. The exchange of video and audio material makes workflows easier nowadays, but many interviews, conducted by foreign broadcasters, do not give us the requested information:

“My questions in case of an event are different than the one from SVT who ask from a Swedish perspective. They would not understand our questions as they do not know our country. We all ask on the basis of our background, our culture, and try to link events with our world. The question is then what this means for us and what we can learn out of that – positively as well as negatively”.

Furthermore, Küstner sees a risk in the unselected use of the available material. It needs a classification before pieces of it are used for the German news. Therefore, a qualified journalist on the spot is unavoidable:

“Reporting about the EU is only possible in Brussels. I believe it is an illusion to think that information is reliable just because it is available online. Every commission, every parliament, every parliamentary group wants to give the stories an individual spin. After every EU resolution you can find someone in Brussels who is full of praise for the decision and there is also someone who takes this for the end of the accident. As a journalist I see it as my duty to find something between those poles that provides the audience with reliable information”.

The argumentations of my informants gave me many more impressions of what it means to create accurate TV and radio content when reporting about foreign countries. Of course, there is some material provided by news agencies or other broadcasters which can be useful for reports on German TV. But it should rather be a supplement than the basis of the programme as I see it as a convincing point that the selection and classification of material still needs a journalist who is familiar with the issues of the country of interest.

#### 5.6 The Audience of Foreign Correspondents

As the German public pays for the broadcasting network ARD it seems mandatory to me that the programme is oriented towards the audience and its expectations and interests. In my impression there is a demand of foreign news and reportages. Following the before mentioned

theory of Siemes (2000) journalists need to provide information to the audience, explain those, and slightly direct opinions. Therefore, I was curious about the impact of the public opinion to the work of the foreign correspondents. I consequently asked my informants what public expectations they are facing.

Carsten Schmiester has a precise idea of what is expected from him:

“Primarily the expectation of me as a foreign correspondent is that I reflect what the audience thinks and feels about a particular topic. For instance, England is cool, a little crazy, and the people drink tea all day long; the Scandinavians wear floral wreaths in their blond hair while it is always midsummer. It is exciting to try to cautiously add the reality to those stereotypes and look, together with the listeners: How much of these clichés is true? Yes, Great Britain is cool and Scandinavia can be beautiful, but this is just one part of the truth. The good thing is that there is a certain basic openness to these countries. The audience is interested in stories about them. The same applies to Iceland – Germans are incredibly fascinated of that country and everybody immediately listens to me when I talk about it”.

But not always are the images of countries positive. Schmiester sees an enormous difference between the reporting areas here:

„That was different during my time in America. It was the time of the Bush government and I was often correcting the negative image that Germans had. So I showed: That is just one half of the country. As a foreign correspondent you often function as a corrective. At the same time, you also need to watch out to not affront the people. If I would tell all the Sweden fans that Sweden is horrible, they would turn off the radio. Therefore I say: It can be amazing, but one should better not become sick and not live in Rieky (explanatory note: district of Stockholm), because also those sides exist. But the openness and interest is very high. That does not apply to every reporting area“.

Clas Oliver Richter is also aware of who he is reporting for: “The reference level should always be the interest of a German audience. Is it important to describe where the particular suburb of Stockholm is and how I get there? Or do I better use the broadcasting time to explain what happens there? The first is important for a local newspaper in Stockholm, but a German viewer does not care about these facts. Therefore, it is our task to select“.

Knowing the expectations of the audience does not automatically mean following them. The foreign correspondents of the ARD are not the decision makers in terms of programme. Hanni Hüscher explains:

“That is channelled by the editorials and programme managers in Germany who know even better about the current topics of the Germans. But I still try to envision who is our audience. 10 million

people watch the Tagesschau every day. That includes the whole range of society. I give my best to reach as many people as possible with our stories. At least concerning the use of language I am very aware of this and try to use it inclusively, not exclusively”.

Germany plays an important role in many international politics. It also is located very centrally in Europe and shares nine borders with neighbour countries. In my point of view this leads to a higher interest of foreign countries. Schmiester agrees: “Due to the geopolitical position, many Germans are aware of the importance of foreign countries. I experienced the other extreme in America, where foreign reporting remains low and mainly focuses on catastrophes. The Brits are if ever interested in the Commonwealth, but enjoy living on their island”.

Kai Küstner answers this question from his perspective of reporting from Brussels: “I think that every country has its specific topics of interest. For Germans this of course is the German political position and the role of the government within the EU”.

Schmiester adds the point of neighborhood: „For most interested people it is obvious that our relation to foreign countries is of importance. Therefore Germans are, for instance, interested in Poland, because that country is relevant for the reason of our shared boarder”.

Besides the question of interest I also asked myself if it is necessary to be a German journalist to report for a German audience. Of course, the language plays a major role as someone who does not speak German could not do this job. But except from this point I tried to figure out arguments for or against the importance of a shared nationality. Olaf Bock explains the role of a cultural background when it comes to journalistic investigations:

“It would be possible that foreign journalists edit topics for the German audience. However, it is questionable if these people have the same cultural background. Someone, who was socialized in Putin’s Russia, would perhaps not ask the same questions that are obvious for us as Germans. Especially in Russia there are so many things that differ very much from Germany, what would, however, not be recognized by the Russians, because they take those things for granted. We recognize these things. This threshold makes it interesting for me to trigger those ‘aha’- and ‘oho’-moments of the audience”.

Hanni Hüscher focuses the knowledge of the German audience, as well and gives an example from the studio London:

“We make a lot of comparisons. Therefore, we need to know what is currently discussed in Germany. The requirement for ‘selling’ a report to the programme managers is that we know how the German colleagues tick, what the audience is interested in, and what topics we can link to. That is, of course, also a question of language. We work together with Brits, what is very

important for us to sharpen our view on the British society; however, it sometimes is an issue for them to evaluate what is relevant for Germans, because Brits and Germans are ticking differently”.

Küstner, whose focus in his daily work is the EU politics, agrees with his colleagues:

„Could a Brit or French do my job here? I think that the topics, which relate to Germany, are treated by us in a special way. For example, there are many Turks living in Germany; that is why Germans are much more interested in the expansion of the EU, than any other nation. It is the same with the road toll on cars (PKW-Maut), which only affects us. Which Greek journalist would report about it? Also the reactors in Belgium are not interesting for the Greeks, but in contrast highly relevant for Germans living in Aachen (*explanation note: German city right beside the Belgian boarder*)”.

These opinions and experiences of the foreign correspondents reflect the three dimension model of Siemes (2000, pp.57): The nationality of the journalists plays an important role when it comes to the intermediary-explanatory level which includes the function to explain processes and phenomena of the foreign area to the audience; and also the neutral-facts-oriented level, the value-neutral publication of information about the reporting area, is dependent on a selection of the right information for the associated audience. I agree with my informants and am glad about their examples as they clarify the importance of foreign correspondents even more.

Furthermore, Hanni Hüsich tells about the channels for feedback and critique of the audience: “We get feedback by media researches. Moreover, there are very quick reactions via Twitter and other social media channels. That is an opportunity for contact with the audience which we did not have in earlier times”. Not in every case feedback supports the improvement, but Hüsich experiences a lot of helpful exchange with viewers:

“People who give constructive and positive feedback, who criticise or praise things – this is a good exchange which I appreciate. The people also pay for us and we should not forget that we are still service providers. We do not stand above anyone. In this world it is a good approach to see beyond the end of your nose, to see what we have in common and what differs. That makes our work so important. And I appreciate to exchange views about that. I only do not like to be offended“.

Due to the interviews with my informants I came to the impression that the expectations of the audience do play a role for the foreign correspondents when it comes to the selection of topics, the way of explanation, and the use of language. I also see very good arguments for the reporting of Germans for a German audience, although I consider it as possible that also a

foreign journalist could, with some learning and experience, get a feeling for German issues and interests. However, the – in my point of view – most important aspect is that foreign correspondents inform the public about relevant topics on the neutral-facts-oriented level, according to Siemes (2000), but also give insights to the people, culture and nature, of their reporting area. As especially Hüscher and Bock stated before, a high amount of reports is related to politics and they would appreciate creating more content about the curiosities and characteristics of the nations. Also Küstner focuses most on politics in Brussels. I conclude from this that the role of foreign correspondents is on one level dependent on actuality, as actual topics have the highest relevance, but also on the decision makers and programme managers in the broadcasting headquarter. This does not always leave room for the own creativity.

### 5.7 The Future of Foreign Correspondents within Europe

Foreign correspondents within Europe are, in my perspective, playing an important role for explaining the nearby nations and cultures, show unexpected differences and refute clichés. As globalization and digitalization is still an ongoing process, the connection between countries will probably increase in future. To include citizens in those processes and inform about political decisions as well as explain the neighbour countries it is important to provide a platform for information. Public broadcasters are institutions which already have this mission and who could further on fulfil this function in future. Therefore it is necessary to report from foreign countries – what could be undertaken by foreign correspondents, just like now. To figure out the chances of foreign correspondences in the future and research their options I asked my informants for their opinions from a professional perspective.

Kai Küstner sees an increasing importance of foreign correspondences due to globalization and is dissatisfied with the approach of many media houses:

“I think that foreign correspondents will become even more important in future. It’s an illusion to think that truthful information is omnipresent. The more pieces of information are haunting the world, the more important we become. Someone is needed who filters, translates, bundles, and explains to the people in a way that they understand and at the same time can form an opinion.”

Küstner’s arguments match with the theory of Siemes (2000) as the explanation level plays an important role in his understanding of his journalistic function. He further states:

“We live in a phase in which many media houses shut down their foreign postings. The ARD does not do that so far, what is absolutely right. In a globalizing world we need to know why things happen in Syria, North Korea or Japan. Thus, we need people who can explain that to us. It is a

paradox that foreign correspondents are reduced. I think that in times when false information are being spread, the role of those who are on the spot and know better about things becomes more and more important. Only an experienced journalist is able to classify, analyze and comment issues in a way that is a benefit for the audience”.

While Küstner considers positively that the ARD is not reducing the amount of foreign correspondents, Clas Oliver Richter claims for even more journalists in foreign countries:

“If we do it cleverly, we will start establishing more foreign correspondence offices tomorrow, because the reference size is growing. In the past my reference size was my hometown. Today it is in fact the planet. Therefore, we would actually have to open a correspondence office in New Zealand, although that is far away. But many people are interested in that country and would like to travel there. So we need to report from there. Why do we not have a studio in Copenhagen although the Danes rank as the happiest nation in the world? We should find the reasons for that. It is important to think outside of the box.

Richter compares the horizon we have today with the one of older generations: “That was different in the past – my parents studied in the 1950s and did not want to travel abroad. That was simply unknowingness, because it was a time before online media. I found it sad, because the reference size, in which we move, is in fact the whole world. That is the situation since the invention of airplanes”. Richter’s statement underlines the function of foreign correspondents according to Siemes (2000, pp.57): The neutral-facts-oriented level plays a role to spread knowledge about foreign cultures in a society. Moreover, the intermediary-explanatory level can help to get even better insights into other nations and take the ‘fear of the stranger’.

This relates to Olaf Bock’s observation of movements back to smaller reference sizes:

“My concern is that the European countries, including Germany, start to only look on their national worries and needs and ignoring the view beyond the borders. The question is in how far foreign journalism is perceived. At the moment I experience a tendency towards nationalist movements what is unfortunately associated with a decreasing will to follow up with different cultures. True to the motto: We have our own worries at home”.

In my perspective this developments are closely related to the function of journalism. As Siemes (2000) mentions the role of journalists to direct opinions I find it important to take countermeasures. However, Bock sees a strong connection between supply and demand:

“My concern is that foreign journalism decreases due to such societal movements which lead to a focus on the regional, accessible topics which are also important. This could entail a lower cultural comparison with important European neighbors. And this, in return, could lead, according to my impression, to a more limited range of the forming of an opinion by the example of foreign

countries. I fear that foreign journalism could generally decline in favor of the worries that are existing back home what I find is a pity. Considering the financing of the public broadcasting system, I believe that the pressure to economize will not stop when it comes to the foreign correspondences. That could, for instance, mean a merging of reporting areas; I do not find that desirable”.

However, Bock does not expect a complete end of the era of foreign journalism:

“I do not fear foreign journalism generally to stop, but I do worry that the intensified view on national topics will increase what could lead to a higher regionalization in media. This might on the other hand decrease the focus on international issues. But if our media stops connecting with other cultures and being interested in other people the view is narrowing down over the years. People do not need things that they do not know. It is my impression that seeing how it works somewhere else can mean an expansion of awareness for many”.

Hanni Hüscher agrees with her colleagues as she finds it essential to let professionals put the high amount of information, also caused by digitalization, in order:

“Foreign correspondences are increasingly important due to the richness of information that is spread over the world via social media. This includes many untruths, as well. Therefore, it is important that people from different countries bring clarity in these things by their knowledge, their researches and opportunities. As a result, they ensure that the countries in the world do not move even further apart from each other due to the consciously or unconsciously spread flood of disinformation. In future we will consequently not become less important, but rather more important than ever for providing information, contributing entertainment, and in a manner participating the adjustment of the society’s compass. All in all, in the whole discussion about the need of foreign correspondences I make my cross and say: Yes, now more than ever!”

Besides that, Hüscher is aware of ‘fake news’ and faces the responsibility of public broadcasters to stand against those, what I find a very strong point as well: “I see how much disinformation goes round; we are trying every day to set clean news and understandable backgrounds against this. How else should people be able to form their opinion? Sometimes we succeed well, sometimes less well, but this is the plan with which we start into every single day”.

The voices I heard in my interviews could be evaluated as biased, as all of five foreign correspondents naturally defend their own profession and role. Nevertheless, I consider these perspectives important to get the mission these journalists have. In my opinion, the approach of the foreign correspondents and their team has a particular relevance for understanding the need of their current and future existence.

## 6. Concluding Discussion

Europe is growing together – this is a result of the ongoing globalization. Therefore, this thesis made it its task to figure out the current and future role of foreign correspondents working within the continent by investigating the view of professional foreign journalists. The researches focused on the case of the foreign correspondents of the German ARD network. The method of auto-ethnography gave me the opportunity to include my own perspective as a staff member of the ARD office in Stockholm to my analysis and reflect my further findings. As a second method I conducted interviews with five foreign journalists of the ARD, working in Stockholm, London, Brussels, and Warsaw. Within these interviews I received many insights into the work, the responsibilities, and the mission of foreign correspondents. The interrelation of my two research methods consequently turned out to giving me the best options for developing my knowledge and permanently reflecting about my findings.

The theoretical background included a lot of different theories, opinions and facts about how foreign journalism in Europe works, what the broadcasting network is, and how things are connected within the EU. The globalization is the main focus of the researches as this is an ongoing process which changes established structures from time to time. Therefore, a closer look at its current developments shows arguments for and – to a lesser extent – against public broadcasters' foreign correspondence offices in Europe.

Globalization and digitalization are the main theoretical concepts and perspectives in this thesis as EBU and other similar networks can be understood as a sort of compromise between continuances of old structures and a change towards new digital options. They are apparently one part of the future of global (or transcontinental) journalism. However, it does not generally replace the traditional foreign correspondents, who present the present basis of foreign reporting and probably the future as well. Behind the EBU alliance there still stands the journalist of a public service broadcaster. The whole system is still financed by the citizens of all participating countries. Hamilton & Lawrence (2010) have, in my view, a good approach when they refer to Linowitz, a US-American businessman and lawyer: “Linowitz had a point. We should expect journalists to tell us what we need to know about the world as well as our hometown” (Hamilton and Lawrence, 2010, p.630). In other words: The demand determines the supply. That means that as long as there is an audience, which is asking for foreign news on TV and radio and trusts into public service media, there will be a content provided.

In the beginning of this thesis I raised five research questions which my analysis should bring answers to. They all found responses in my interviews with the five foreign correspondents as the previous chapters show.

The topic of globalization met with differing opinions within the group of journalists. Some of them experience closer getting cultures within Europe, a perspective I shared before my inquiry. However, the point of view of Hanni Hüscher, reporting from London, and the one of Olaf Bock in Warsaw are other: Hüscher experiences Great Britain as a separated island which is not moving closer to the rest of the continent. Bock sees at the same time one part of the Polish society which is resisting a ‘common’ Europe. Nevertheless, all five journalists see it as their task to inform the German public about similarities as well as differences, clear up and explain situations in other cultures and politics, as these countries are de facto nearby and therefore of importance for Germany – in terms of travelling, economics, foreign affairs, defence, refugee policy, or even neighbourhoods along the borders.

The digitalization plays a central role when it comes to globalization as new communication channels; online media is seen as a concurrence for the public broadcasters – at least by some of my informants. Carsten Schmiester describes the issues that digitalization brought to the media: The quantity of information increases, but this does not lead to a higher variety and thereby not to more quality. He and his colleagues agree about their essential duty to select and contextualize topics and explain them to the audience. In the system of different online information channels they see a lack of the necessary professional skills to fulfil this role.

One of the things I was uncertain about was the question: Why is it necessary to live in the reporting areas instead of covering the foreign topics from Germany? The reaction of my informants regarding this question was uniform and came with absolute certainty. All agreed that a profound reporting is only possible if a professional journalist investigates on the spot. Richter argues that personal experience is the basis of every reporting; Kai Küstner describes his role as a translator of facts and refers to his network which is necessary to get relevant information; Hüscher gives the example of the Brexit which was only explainable to the audience as she and her team knew the different parts of the split country due to many travels.

All reflections about the role of foreign correspondents do primarily aim the satisfaction of the audience. Therefore, it was of importance to me to discuss the mission of the journalists and ask them for their awareness of viewer or listener. They all seem to be very conscious about their function as a service provider; especially Hüscher who also talked about the channels for feedback and her inclusive use of language. All five feel very responsible for the

education and information of the TV and radio consumer. They furthermore find it important to report as a German journalist to the German audience to select the most relevant topics and explain them adapted to the interests, knowledge and cultural background of Germans.

For a comprehensive consideration of the role and culture of foreign correspondents within Europe I tried to figure out possible future development of the profession. The statements of my informants were again very clear: They all see a necessity to increase the amount of foreign correspondent offices in future, or at least keeping the existing ones stable. Küstner is sceptically facing other media houses shutting down their foreign journalism and Richter suggests founding new offices all around the globe as he sees an increasing interest in far-off countries. Bock refers to the demand of the audience as well, but sees a serious threat in the nationalistic movements which could, according to him, lead to a stronger focus and interest on regional topics.

The theoretical framework of the analysis of this thesis was formed by the three dimensions of foreign journalism by Siemes (2000, pp.57). The theory was created on the basis of researches on German correspondents working in Poland. Although, it can be related to all foreign journalists, it is particularly suiting to research cases within Europe. It figured out to be very applicable to the role of the questioned foreign correspondents. The first dimension, the intermediary-explanatory level, plays an important role when it comes to conflicts, discussion, specific political decisions or societal topics in other countries as all nations differ in those issues. Therefore, journalists classify relevant stories and explain them to the audience. I evaluate this level very differently than in the beginning of this thesis, where I stated that this function plays a smaller role in the reporting within Europe. The interviews and their analysis showed me however that a cultural, political and societal difference exists – also within Europeans who tick differently as arising from the journalists' exact observations. The diplomatic-missionary level refers very much to the experiences of Küstner whose work includes much selection of topics and contradictory statements to investigate the most reliable points for the audience. The neutral-facts-oriented level by Siemes (2000) is a function most journalists have to fulfill; and also the foreign correspondents take it as their duty to cover the most relevant information and channel them, value-neutrally, to the audience. Especially in reporting areas with a high amount of political topics, like in this case London, Brussels and Warsaw, this task is unavoidable for foreign journalism.

## 6.1 Future Research

As this thesis is focusing the public broadcasters in particular, there are also very specific outcomes resulting from the researches. The before described educational task of public broadcasters entails the specific role of the ARD to provide supply without necessary having a preceding demand. The mission of the public network is to provide all relevant information and make it accessible for the whole range of society. I would probably have received other arguments, ideas and experiences if I have asked foreign print journalists, freelancers or those who are employed by private media houses. Those studies would have not allowed me to use the auto-ethnography research method and it might have been more difficult to find appropriate interviewees. Nevertheless, I see those approaches as possible concepts for further researches like a dissertation. Also another perspective on the topic like, for instance, the point of view of the audience, could carry the current researches forward.

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## 8. Appendix

### Interviews with Foreign Correspondents– The Questions:

1. May I use your name in my paper / is it ok that I record this interview?
2. Since when are you working as a correspondent and how long will you stay abroad?
3. What were the main steps of your former career?
4. What are your tasks as a foreign correspondent?  
Which area are you reporting from?
5. How far does your current job differ from an equivalent one in a German editorial?
6. What makes Europe interesting for a journalist?
7. Did you recognize globalization during your career (especially in Europe)?  
Which changes did that make?
8. Digitalization led to easier / better / more transportable technique...  
→ Does that make your job easier (by f. ex. more simple file transfers)?  
→ Did new fields of journalism (bloggers, networks) become concurrence for you?
9. Europe is small, distances are short, the borders are open – couldn't you do your job in Germany and travel when necessary?
10. Videos and audio material is available online – couldn't you just buy this from Germany and merge it together? (f.ex. by cooperation with other public broadcasters or news agencies)
11. Why does the German audience expect a German journalist to investigate and present reports from foreign countries?
12. Is an interest in other countries actually necessary? What makes it important?
13. What do you think/know do Germans expect from a foreign correspondent?
14. Can you tell about one case when it was specifically necessary for you to be situated in the foreign country?

15. Many people think about war journalism when it comes to foreign correspondents. Is it a disadvantage for you to report from a peaceful country?

16. What future do you expect for foreign journalism in general / in Europe?