

Running Head: MEDIA AND FOREIGN POLICY

Media and Foreign Policy: Comparative Study of Journalists' Perceptions of
Press-Government Relations during the Six-Party Talks

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Abstract

This study examines journalists' role conceptions in their coverage of diplomatic issues, based on a survey of South Korean, U.S., and European journalists who covered the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program. The author found differences between South Korean, U.S., and European journalists in their perceptions of journalists' role in the multilateral nuclear talks. Compared with U.S. and European journalists, South Korean journalists believed more strongly that journalists are participants in the negotiation process and that news sources have significant influence on their judgments of the newsworthiness of issues related to the talks. This comparative study offers important implications for the press-government relationships in foreign affairs issues.

Keywords: *journalists; foreign policy; North Korea; six-party talks; media sociology*

A Comparative Study of Journalists' Perceptions of
Press-Government Relations during the Six-Party Talks

The role of the media in foreign affairs and international issues has garnered growing attention from scholars, as it has been assumed that the end of the Cold War and advances in communication technologies have increased the ability of the media to influence the foreign policy process (Gilboa 2006). While scholars have presented different opinions and findings regarding the media's roles in shaping foreign policy decision-making (Gilboa 2006; Gowing 1994; Livingston 1997; Robinson 2002; Strobel 1997), it is generally acknowledged that news media coverage can sometimes influence foreign policy processes (Entman 2004; Gilboa 2002, 2006; Sparre 2001). That is particularly the case when countries use the media for communication with parties with whom they don't have effective or viable dialogue channels (Burns 1996; Gilboa 2002, 2006; Sparre 2001). Despite significant attempts to explain whether and how the media can influence foreign policy (e.g., Bennett 1990; Entman 2004; Gilboa 2002, 2006; Livingston 1997; Mermin 1999; Robinson 2002), demonstrating the media's involvement in complex foreign policy processes remains a major challenge.

One of the most important topics to examine in this area of research is how journalists view their roles in foreign policy, as studies have shown that journalists' subjective beliefs influence their news decisions (Donsbach 2004; Donsbach and Patterson 2004; Patterson and

Donsbach 1996; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Starck and Soloski 1977). However, not enough empirical research has dealt with a specific topic of journalists' perceptions of their own role in foreign policy (Bell 1997; Cohen 1963, Fahmy and Johnson 2005; Hess 1996, 2005). This study attempts to fill part of that gap by investigating how diplomatic correspondents of a number of different countries perceive their roles in foreign policy.

The event this study focuses on is the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions, a negotiation process that began in 2003 and has continued, unfinished, through early 2009. Involving the United States, the two Koreas, China, Japan, and Russia, the talks serve as an important opportunity to explore the press-government relationship. The six-party talks feature some elements of media diplomacy (Gilboa 2000, 2006; Sparre 2001; Van Dinh 1987), as the participating governments have often used the media to convey their positions to their counterparts or to influence the atmosphere of the negotiations.¹ In addition, the six-party nuclear talks are instances of *closed-door diplomacy*, which poses a great challenge to reporters because governments release only technical aspects of the negotiation process to the media and excludes the more substantive aspects (Gilboa 2000:282). While journalists have very limited access to the event, they are under tremendous pressure from their editors and the public to offer information about it (Donsbach 2004; Gilboa 2000). In this sense, the six-party nuclear talks can

¹ Sanger, David. 2003. "North Korea Says It May Test an A-bomb." *The New York Times*, 29 August.

be regarded as a culmination of the ways in which government and media influence each other with regards to foreign affairs issues.

This study focuses on journalists' role conceptions in examining press-government relationships during the six-party talks. As previous studies have suggested, journalists' perspectives of their roles can influence the way they cover certain issues (Donsbach 2004; Donsbach and Patterson 2004; Patterson and Donsbach 1996; Fahmy and Johnson 2005; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Soloski 1997; Starck and Soloski 1977). Based on a survey of journalists who covered the six-party talks, this study examines whether journalists perceive their roles in foreign policy to be primarily neutral messenger or active participant roles. This study also investigates how journalists from different countries differ in their perceptions of the media's role in the six-party talks. Also examined are factors influencing journalists' perspectives on the media's roles during the six-party talks. This study concludes by assessing the implications of the findings in regard to journalistic performance and academic research.

Theory

Influences on journalists' performance

What influences a journalist's coverage of news events? This has been one of the most popular questions in journalism research, given the impact of journalists' coverage of certain

issues on audiences' perceptions of those issues (McCombs 2004; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Wanta, Golan, and Lee 2004). Accordingly, scholars have presented diverse approaches to answering it and have identified factors at different levels that influence journalists' news decisions (Donsbach 2004; Fahmy and Johnson 2005; Kepplinger, Brosius, and Staab 1991; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Starck and Soloski 1997). According to Donsbach (2004), there are four main areas that need to be analyzed: news factors, institutional objectives, the manipulative power of news sources, and the subjective beliefs of journalists. News factors refer to professional assessments of the newsworthiness of events. Institutional objectives are expectations or pressures journalists face as a result of their employment status. The manipulative power of news sources concerns the influence of news sources, such as public relations people, on journalists' news decisions. The area of subjective beliefs of journalists covers how their prior knowledge of or attitude towards a news event, as well as their ideological stances, affect their coverage of the event.

Of these various factors, the influence of individual journalists' subjective beliefs on news decisions has generated important arguments among professional journalists and journalism scholars (Donsbach 2004; Fahmy and Johnson 2005; Shoemaker and Reese 1996). Empirical evidence has shown that the characteristics of individual journalists affect their coverage of certain issues. Individual-level factors that have been analyzed in this area of

research include personality, values, religion, experience, attitudes, and role conceptions (Bissell 2000; Fahmy and Johnson 2005; Kepplinger, Brosius, and Staab 1991; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Starck and Soloski 1997). For example, Bissell found in her study of photographic decision making at a newspaper that photographic gatekeepers' decisions were influenced by their political preferences, perceptions of audience expectations and personal opinion about explicitness (2000:90). Fahmy and Johnson's (2005) survey of 159 embedded journalists covering the Iraq war found that the journalists believed individual-level factors such as individual values and professional norms influenced their reporting of the war. In addition, Chang and Lee (1992) showed that individual differences and organizational constraints affect newspaper editors' foreign news selection. Based on a nationwide survey of news editors, Chang and Lee found that the political ideology and professional experience of the editors were significant factors in their selection of international news.

Journalists' Role Conception

Some studies focused on journalists' role conceptions as a potential factor influencing their journalistic performance. Weaver and Wilhoit identified three journalistic role conceptions: interpretive function, dissemination function, and adversary function (1986:137-140). According to Weaver and Wilhoit, the interpretive function refers to investigating government claims,

analyzing complicated issues, and discussing public policies in a timely manner. The dissemination function is that of providing information quickly to the public, while trying not to report unverified facts. The adversary function refers to being critical of government officials and businesses.

Donsbach and Patterson's (2004) study provides a useful framework for examining this area by specifying two dimensions of journalists' role conceptions: passive-active and neutral-advocate. The passive-active dimension is based on the journalist's "autonomy as a political actor" (Donsbach and Patterson 2004:265). Passive journalists will act as "the instrument[s] of actors outside the news system," such as government officials, by taking their cues from outside actors (Donsbach and Patterson 2004:265). In comparison, active journalists are those who actively interpret and investigate news events. The neutral-advocate dimension is based on the journalist's "positioning as a political actor" (Donsbach and Patterson 2004:265). While the neutral journalist does not take sides in partisan or policy disputes, the advocate journalist does so in a "consistent, substantial, and aggressive way" (Donsbach and Patterson 2004:265). These two dimensions were a basis for Donsbach and Patterson's (2004) analysis of role conceptions held by journalists in five Western countries.

While Donsbach and Patterson (2004) saw the activeness and neutrality of journalists as two distinct dimensions, Cohen (1963) suggested correlations between the two aspects.

According to Cohen (1963), journalists who regard themselves as neutral messengers of information are more likely to become an “instrument of government,” as they tend to faithfully transmit what government officials say (1963:20). Therefore, Cohen indicates that journalists focusing on their neutral role will tend to remain passive in their coverage of news events while mainly relying on news sources. In comparison, Cohen believes (1963) that journalists who have the notion of being active participants are more likely to influence foreign policy by aggressively questioning government officials.

Some empirical studies found that journalists’ role conception of these sorts can influence their performance. For example, Starck and Soloski (1977) found that journalism students’ attitudes toward the functional role of the media affected the type and content of the stories they produced. Starck and Soloski (1977) said students who regarded themselves as midway between the extreme neutral and the extreme participant role produced the most objective stories.

Journalists and International Negotiations

As this study analyzes how journalists from different countries see their roles in foreign policy and what factors influence their perspectives, it is important to examine international changes in recent years that might have affected how these journalists do their jobs. The two

most important changes that are regarded as having increased the media's ability to influence foreign policy are the end of the Cold War and advances in communication technology (Gilboa 2006). In the post-Cold War era, nations lack a manifest basis for laying out their foreign policy. In addition, the revolution in communication and information technologies has enabled global and live broadcasting 24 hours a day (Gilboa 2006).

Against this backdrop, some scholars suggest that the dynamics between governments and the media have changed in the post-Cold War era (Entman 2004). For example, Entman (2004) proposed the cascading activation model, arguing that hegemony and indexing models fall short of explaining the media-government relationship in the 21st century. Hegemony and indexing approaches suggest that the media generally mirror or index the dialogue of elites, and thus lack independent and critical coverage of foreign policy issues (Bennett 1990; Entman 2004; Mermin 1999). In comparison, the cascading activation model emphasizes the increased independent influence of the media on foreign policy issues (Entman 2004). According to Entman, the White House no longer holds a hegemony in controlling foreign policy discourse, and the media have enhanced their power to challenge the White House's framing of foreign affairs issues.

Some scholars have developed specific typologies to examine policy-media effects under this new environment (Livingston 1997; Gilboa 2002, 2006). Livingston's (1997)

approach sees the media as an “accelerant” to policy decision-making, an “impediment” to the achievement of desired policy goals, or “agenda setting agency.” First, the media can accelerate policy decision-making by pushing officials for instantaneous responses to meet their news cycles. Second, the media can impede the pursuit of desired policy goals when their emotional coverage of international conflicts influences public opinion and when they expose sensitive security operations. Lastly, the media can influence a government’s foreign policy agenda. Examining the relations of media effects and eight types of military interventions, Livingston concluded that “different policies with different types and levels of media scrutiny produced different results” (1997:15). Other scholars also agree that the influence of the media is conditional (Gilboa 2002, 2006).

One of the areas in which the media are most likely to influence foreign policy is international negotiations, especially when there is no direct channel of communication between the parties involved (Gilboa 2002, 2006; Jonsson 1996). Officials use the media to send signals and messages when they are not sure how their counterparts might respond to their proposals (Gilboa 2006). Gilboa called this “media diplomacy,” referring to the use of mass media to advance negotiations (2000, 2006). Nicholas Burns (1996), former U.S. State Department spokesperson, backed this claim when he acknowledged, “We use the briefings to send messages to foreign governments about our foreign policy. For example, I sometimes read carefully

calibrated statements to communicate with the governments with which we have no diplomatic relations: Iraq, Iran, Libya and North Korea (12-13).” The six-party dialogue on North Korea’s nuclear ambitions is a recent example of media diplomacy (Gilboa 2000, 2006; Sparre 2001; Van Dinh 1987). The participating governments have often used the media to indicate their positions and intentions to the other parties and even to fly a “trial balloon.”² Did the journalists who covered the six-party talks realize how the media could be used by governments to increase their bargaining power? This study will show how journalists think about this idea, as well as how they perceive the concepts behind the other research questions stated above.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

As previous studies suggested (Cohen 1963; Donsbach and Patterson 2004; Starck and Soloski 1977), the journalist’s role conception is an important factor influencing journalistic practice. This study examines how journalists from South Korean, U.S., and European media organizations who covered the six-party talks perceive their journalistic role in these international negotiations and how the particular factors discussed above influence their role conceptions. Based on this, the following research questions were posed.

RQ1: How do journalists representing South Korean, U.S., and European news

² An interview on 7 January 2008 with a South Korean official who participated in the six-party talks.

organizations perceive their role in the six-party talks?

RQ2: What characteristics of these journalists predict perceptions of their role in the six-party talks?

Based on my professional experience as a working journalist covering the six-party talks as well as previous research on media sociology (Shoemaker and Reese 1996), it is assumed that social milieu of the journalist can influence perceptions of the international event and approach to the coverage of it. In particular, the region in which the journalist's news organization is based may play a greater role in media coverage of the six-party talks because governments provide deeper background briefings to journalists from their own region. Therefore, this study posits the following hypotheses.

H1: Journalists from South Korean, U.S., and European news organizations differ in their perceptions of journalists' role in the six-party talks.

H2: Journalists from South Korean, U.S., and European news organizations are differ in their perceptions of the factors that influence their news judgments of issues related to the six-party talks.

Method

For this study, I surveyed a sample of journalists from South Korean, U.S., and

European news organizations who covered at least one round of the six-party talks. Of the six countries involved in the negotiations, only South Korean and U.S. journalists were included because those two countries are more deeply engaged in the talks with North Korea than the other countries. Europe is included because the countries that comprise it are *not* party to the talks and in this regard provides contrast with South Korea and the U.S.

A list of 152 South Korean journalists and 73 U.S. journalists was compiled by searching South Korean and U.S. news reports on the six-party talks between August 2003 and March 2007. E-mail addresses for the journalists were obtained from the web sites of their media organizations or from the public relations departments of news outlets. European journalists were contacted through the Foreign Correspondents Club of China (FCCC), which forwarded my recruitment e-mail to its 129 members. As shown in Appendix 1, a majority of these journalists are from the United Kingdom (27.9%), Germany (12.4%), Spain (11.6%), and France (10.9%).

As the target journalists were working in different countries—mostly in China, the United States, South Korea, Japan, and Russia—I used an online survey to reach them (Schonlau, 2002). Before inviting journalists to participate in the survey, I conducted interviews with seven South Korean and U.S. journalists to discuss their perspectives on journalists' role in the six-party talks and other related issues. The interviews, along with a literature review and content analysis of news reports on the six-party talks, served as a basis for the survey

questionnaire. The journalists who participated in the interviews were not invited to take part in the final survey. I created the survey questionnaire through a professional online survey web site and sent personalized e-mails to all of the target journalists, directing them to the web-based questionnaire.

The main dependent variable for this study was the journalists' role conceptions in regard to the six-party talks. To measure journalists' perceptions of professional roles in the six-party talks, participants were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale how much they agree with each of three separate statements. The three statements were: (1) journalists are vulnerable to government manipulation; (2) journalists are neutral messengers of information; and (3) journalists become active participants in the process of diplomatic negotiations. In this study, the neutral messenger item connotes the idea of the neutral journalist (Donsbach and Patterson 2004) and the dissemination function of journalists (Weaver and Wilhoit 1986). The active participant item is related to the active journalist notion (Donsbach 2004) and the idea of the interpretive and adversary function of journalists (Weaver and Wilhoit 1986). These items were chosen after interviews with the seven South Korean and U.S. journalists who covered the six-party talks but were not part of the final survey.

In addition, this study examined what factors affect journalists' perceptions of the newsworthiness of issues related to the six-party talks. For this part of the study, respondents

were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert-type scale how influential five factors were in their perceptions of the newsworthiness of an event. The five factors were: news sources, their editors, other journalists, other media of their own country, and the media of other countries.

The independent variables for this study were the nationalities of the journalists, their professional experience, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the six-party talks in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. Their professional experience was measured by whether or not they were diplomatic correspondents and by how many rounds of the six-party talks they had covered. They were also asked to provide other demographic information, including gender, the type of their news organization, and their political orientation on North Korea issues.

Results

A total of 109 journalists responded to the survey, but only 90 responses were used for the final analysis because the questionnaires of the others were incomplete. The 90 journalists included 45 South Korean journalists, 24 U.S. journalists, and 21 European journalists.

Nationalities of the European journalists who participated in the survey are shown in Appendix 2. The response rate was 29.6 percent for the South Korean journalists, 32.8 percent for the U.S. journalists, and 16.3% percent for the European journalists. The response rate for European

journalists may result from the recruitment email being sent collectively through the journalists' association in China. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the participants. In terms of their experience in covering the six-party talks, more than 65 percent of them said they had reported on three or more rounds of the six-party talks. Also, about 40 percent of them regarded themselves as diplomatic correspondents. In regard to their area of work in journalism, 55.6 percent work for newspapers, 18.9 percent for television, 17.8 percent for wire service, and 4.4 percent for radio. When asked about their political orientation relative to North Korea, 45.5 percent of the participants said they were liberal on North Korean issues, 42.2 percent said they were neutral on North Korean issues, and 12.2 percent said they were conservative.

[Table 1 about here]

First of all, this study examined how South Korean, U.S., and European journalists perceive their role in the six-party talks (Figure 1). As noted above, the journalists were asked to rate their agreement with three statements: (1) journalists are vulnerable to government manipulation, (2) journalists are neutral messengers of information, and (3) journalists become active participants in the process of the diplomatic negotiations. Of the three statements presented, respondents agreed most on journalists' vulnerability to government manipulation ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.01$), followed by journalists' being neutral messengers of information ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.07$), and journalists' becoming active participants in the diplomatic process ($M = 3.13$,

$SD = 1.21$).

Next, this study examined whether or not there were any significant differences between the journalists of the three countries in their perceptions of the media's role in foreign policy (H1). This issue was analyzed by a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). As shown in Table 2, the three groups were significantly different only in regard to journalists' becoming part of the negotiation process ($F(2, 87) = 34.80, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .44$), not for vulnerability to government manipulation or journalists' being neutral messengers. Specifically, the South Korean group showed a significant difference when compared with each of the U.S. and European groups, but no such difference was found between U.S. and European journalists. South Korean journalists believed that journalists become participants in the process of the diplomatic negotiations ($M = 3.93, SD = .62$) to a greater extent than U.S. journalists ($M = 2.42, SD = 1.18$) and European journalists ($M = 2.24, SD = 1.09$). Non-parametric tests showed similar results.³ The three groups were statistically significantly different only regarding journalists' becoming part of the negotiation process ($\chi^2(1, df=2) = 42.94, p < .001$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is partially supported.

[Figure 1 and Table 2 about here]

³ Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted. There was no statistically significant difference between the three groups in regard to journalists' being neutral messenger ($\chi^2(1, df=2) = 3.26, p = .20$) and journalists' being vulnerable to manipulation ($\chi^2(1, df=2) = .39, p = .82$).

The next issue for analysis concerns what factors influence journalists' perceptions of the media's role in the six-party talks. This was examined by regression analysis, with the dependent variable being the respondent's perception of journalists as being (i) part of the negotiation process, (ii) vulnerable to government manipulation, and (iii) neutral messenger. The independent variables included the journalist's nationality, the number of rounds of the six-party talks the journalist covered, whether the journalist was diplomatic correspondent or not, and how effective the journalist believed the six-party talks to be. As shown in Table 3, when it comes to perceptions of journalists being part of the negotiation process, journalists' nationality was the most important predictor ($\beta = .72, p < .001$), and the other significant factor was journalists' perceptions of how effective the six-party talks are proving to be in resolving the nuclear issue ($\beta = .18, p < .05$). That is, the more effective journalists believe the six-party dialogue to be, the more likely they are to think that journalists become part of the negotiation process.

Respondents' professional experience, measured by whether or not they consider themselves to be diplomatic correspondents and by how many rounds of the six-party talks they have covered, was not a significant predictor of their perceptions of journalists' roles as in the six-party talks.

In regard to perceptions of journalists being vulnerable to government manipulation, none of the independent variables was significant. Variables that predicted the respondent's perceptions of journalists' being neutral messenger were the journalist's nationality ($\beta = .26, p < .05$) and the

number of the six-party talks the journalist covered ($\beta = .23, p < .05$).

[Table 3 about here]

Finally, this study analyzed what influences journalists' perceptions of the newsworthiness of issues related to the six-party talks (H2). As shown in Table 4, the journalists said they are the most influenced by their news sources ($M = 3.99, SD = .87$), followed by the media of other countries ($M = 3.30, SD = .89$), their editors ($M = 3.21, SD = 1.08$), the media of their own country ($M = 3.14, SD = 1.08$), and other journalists ($M = 2.62, SD = .87$). An ANOVA test showed there were statistically significant differences between the three groups in their perceptions of the influence of news sources on their judgments of the newsworthiness of issues related to the six-party talks ($F(2, 87) = 10.96, p < .001, partial \eta^2 = .20$). According to Bonferroni's post hoc test, the mean comparisons of the South Korean group with each of the U.S. and European groups were statistically significant, but the difference was not significant between U.S. and European journalists. South Korean journalists ($M = 4.36, SD = .61$) believed that news sources influence their perceptions of the newsworthiness of events to a greater extent than U.S. journalists ($M = 3.46, SD = 1.06$) and European journalists ($M = 3.81, SD = .75$). Non-parametric tests showed similar results.⁴ The three groups were statistically significantly

⁴ Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted. There was no statistically significant difference between the three groups in regard to the influence on their news judgment of media of other countries ($\chi^2(1, df=2) = 1.51, p = .93$), other journalists ($\chi^2(1, df=2) = .80, p = .67$), and editors ($\chi^2(1, df=2) = .21, p = .90$).

different in regard to the influence of news sources on their judgment of newsworthiness ($\chi^2(1, df=2) = 16.50, p < .001$). In addition, the three groups were different in their assessing of the influence of media of their own country on their news judgment about issues related to six-party talks ($\chi^2(1, df=2) = 8.09, p < .05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

[Table 4 about here]

Conclusion

This study investigated how journalists covering foreign affairs defined their professional roles in relation to policy decision-making. Examining this issue is important because previous studies have shown that journalists' perceptions of their roles can influence the ways they do their job (Donsbach 2004; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Soloski 1997; Starck and Soloski 1977). More importantly, media reports of foreign affairs and international issues can significantly influence audiences' perceptions of those issues because audiences rely heavily on mass media for information about such matters due to lack of their personal access (Brewer 2006; Elasmr 2007; Wanta, Golan and Lee 2004).

The survey of journalists who covered the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions shows the respondents most strongly agreeing that journalists are vulnerable to government manipulation in their coverage of the nuclear talks. They said the main reason for

this is their limited access to relevant information. Therefore, journalists acknowledge they may end up mirroring or indexing the discourse of government officials (Bennett 1990; Mermin 1999), especially in situations like the six-party talks to which their access is extremely limited. In addition, journalists more strongly agreed with the idea that journalists are neutral messengers of information than that they become active participants in the negotiation process. This seems to reflect journalists' norm of objectivity (Mindich 1998; Reese 1997; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Shoemaker and Vos in press; Zelizer 2004).

It is also important to note that the findings of this study indicate that the journalists of different countries have different notions about being a neutral messenger of information and/or an active participant during the six-party talks. In this study, being an active participant was a reflection of journalists being able to influence the negotiation processes. While the U.S. journalists believed the two functions were almost opposite, the South Korean journalists believed that the two could go hand-in-hand. What can explain this finding? This study shows that journalists' professional experience and their perceptions of the effectiveness of the six-party talks had no significant, or only minimal, influence on how journalists perceive their roles. Instead, the nationality of the journalists was the major predictor of how they see their roles in foreign policy. Therefore, it can be argued that the differences may be accounted for by the different stakes the countries have in the six-party talks as well as by different professional

orientations in the different countries. It is likely that South Korean journalists, who live in a country bordering North Korea, may believe the North Korean nuclear issue is an urgent matter that needs to be resolved to bring peace to the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, they may hope for a more active role on the part of the media to influence the talks. Moreover, South Korean journalists think they can do so while remaining neutral messengers of information. In comparison, when the U.S. journalists think of being neutral messengers and active participants (Cohen, 1963), they seem to regard the question more as representing the neutral-advocate dimension suggested by Donsbach and Patterson (2004). The neutral journalist does not take sides in policy disputes, whereas the advocate journalist does so consistently (Donsbach and Patterson 2004). For the U.S. journalists, attempting to influence the talks would be beyond their journalistic role and would prevent them from remaining neutral on the issues of concern.

While previous research on Western journalists has indicated that journalists who perceive their roles to be those of active participants in foreign policy processes are more likely to play a watchdog role (Cohen 1963; Weaver and Willhoit 1986), the findings of this study suggest this may not be so for South Korean journalists. South Korean journalists, who most strongly believed that journalists become active participants in the negotiation process, were the most heavily affected by news sources in their news decisions. The South Korean journalists said news sources, in this case government officials for the most part, have an important influence on

their perceptions of the newsworthiness of issues related to the six-party talks, to a greater extent than the Western journalists. This may indicate that the degree of cooperation between the government and the press relative to the six-party talks is greater in the case of South Korea than the United States and Europe. Therefore, South Korean journalists are not necessarily more independent from or critical of their own government's policies on the six-party talks than their U.S. and European counterparts.

In sum, this study showed that journalists' nationality was the major factor influencing how journalists of different countries regard their role in foreign policy. Compared with U.S. and European journalists, South Korean journalists more strongly believed that journalists can and do become active participants in the six-party talks. The three groups of journalists also differed in their perspectives on the influence of news sources in their coverage of the six-party talks. These findings have important implications because previous studies have shown that journalists' role conceptions and their perspectives on the issues they cover can influence how they report on issues (Donsbach 2004; Donsbach and Patterson 2004; Fahmy and Johnson 2005; Patterson and Donsbach 1996; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Soloski 1997). In particular, the comparative approach of this study contributes to advancing research in this area (Donsbach and Patterson 2004). The findings presented here help explain how journalists of different countries cover crucial international negotiations. Future research should examine journalists covering different

international negotiations to develop more general.

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Appendix 1

Nationalities of European journalists contacted for the survey

| <i>Nationality</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| U.K. | 36 | 27.9 |
| Germany | 16 | 12.4 |
| Spain | 15 | 11.6 |
| France | 14 | 10.9 |
| Denmark | 9 | 7.0 |
| Italy | 8 | 6.2 |
| Sweden | 6 | 4.7 |
| Netherland | 4 | 3.1 |
| Ireland | 3 | 2.3 |
| Norway | 3 | 2.3 |
| Switzerland | 3 | 2.3 |
| Other | 12 | 9.3 |
| Total | 129 | 100 |

Appendix 2

Nationalities of European journalists participated in the survey

| <i>Nationality</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| U.K. | 4 | 19.0 |
| France | 3 | 14.3 |
| Germany | 2 | 9.5 |
| Italy | 2 | 9.5 |
| Denmark | 1 | 4.8 |
| Finland | 1 | 4.8 |
| Ireland | 1 | 4.8 |
| Netherland | 1 | 4.8 |
| Portugal | 1 | 4.8 |
| Spain | 1 | 4.8 |
| No response | 4 | 19.0 |
| Total | 21 | 100 |

Table 1

Characteristics of journalists who participated in the survey

| Variable | Values | S. Korea (N= 45) | U.S. (N= 24) | European (N= 21) | Total (N= 90) |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Number of talks journalist covered | One or two | 42.2% | 33.4% | 19.0% | 34.5% |
| | Three or four | 42.2 | 20.8 | 38.1 | 35.6 |
| | Five or six | 6.6 | 29.1 | 23.8 | 16.7 |
| | Seven or eight | 8.9 | 16.6 | 19.0 | 13.4 |
| | Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Political orientation of journalists | Very conservative | 0% | 4.2% | 0% | 1.1% |
| | Somewhat conservative | 13.3 | 16.7 | 0 | 11.1 |
| | Neutral | 31.1 | 54.2 | 52.4 | 42.2 |
| | Somewhat liberal | 51.1 | 25.0 | 42.9 | 42.2 |
| | Very liberal | 4.4 | 0 | 4.8 | 3.3 |
| | Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Area of work | Newspaper | 57.8% | 54.2% | 52.4% | 55.6% |
| | Television | 20.0 | 12.5 | 23.8 | 18.9 |
| | Wire service | 17.8 | 20.8 | 14.3 | 17.8 |
| | Radio | 8.3 | 0 | 9.5 | 4.4 |
| | Magazine | 0 | 4.2 | 0 | 1.1 |
| | Online | 4.4 | 0 | 0 | 2.2 |
| | Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 2

ANOVA results for journalists' perceptions of journalists' role in the six-party talks

| Variable | South Korea <i>N</i> =45 | | U.S. <i>N</i> =24 | | Europe <i>N</i> =21 | | Total <i>N</i> =90 | | <i>Levene's</i> <i>test sig.</i> | <i>F</i> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Participants in negotiations | 3.93 ^a | (.62) | 2.42 ^b | (1.18) | 2.24 ^b | (1.09) | 3.13 | (1.21) | .02* | 34.80*** |
| Vulnerable to manipulation | 3.60 | (.94) | 3.46 | (1.06) | 3.62 | (1.12) | 3.57 | (1.01) | .66 | .19 |
| Neutral messenger | 3.52 | (1.06) | 3.58 | (.97) | 3.10 | (1.18) | 3.44 | (1.07) | .56 | .49 |

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Entries are mean values with standard deviations in parentheses.

^a and ^b indicate statistically significant mean differences by Bonferroni's post hoc test.

Table 3

Regression analysis of predictors of perceptions of journalists' role in the six-party talks

| Dependent variable | <i>Participants in negotiations</i> | | | <i>Vulnerable to manipulation</i> | | | <i>Neutral messenger</i> | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Independent variables | β | R^2 | <i>Adjusted</i> R^2 | β | R^2 | <i>Adjusted</i> R^2 | β | R^2 | <i>Adjusted</i> R^2 |
| Diplomatic correspondent | -.06 | | | -.10 | | | .13 | | |
| Number of talks covered | .04 | | | -.09 | | | .23* | | |
| Perceptions of effectiveness of the talks | .18* | | | -.02 | | | -.10 | | |
| Nationality (U.S.) | .09 | | | -.06 | | | .20 | | |
| Nationality (S. Korea) | .72*** | .51 | .48 | .01 | .02 | .00 | .26* | .12 | .07 |

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$, $N = 90$.

Table 4

ANOVA results for journalists' perceptions of influential forces on their perceived newsworthiness of issues related to the six-party talks

| Variable | South Korea <i>N</i> =45 | | U.S. <i>N</i> =24 | | Europe <i>N</i> =21 | | Total <i>N</i> =90 | | <i>Levene'</i> <i>test sig.</i> | <i>F</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|----------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|------------------------------------|----------|
| News sources | 4.36 ^a | (.61) | 3.46 ^b | (1.06) | 3.81 ^b | (.75) | 3.99 | (.87) | .02* | 10.96*** |
| Editors | 3.18 | (.81) | 3.33 | (1.31) | 3.14 | (1.32) | 3.21 | (1.08) | .003** | .22 |
| Media (same country) | 2.96 | (.88) | 3.67 | (1.05) | 2.95 | (1.32) | 3.14 | (1.08) | .20 | 4.12 |
| Media (other countries) | 3.38 | (.83) | 3.25 | (.99) | 3.19 | (.93) | 3.30 | (.89) | .43 | .36 |
| Other journalists | 2.71 | (.79) | 2.48 | (.98) | 2.62 | (.92) | 2.62 | (.87) | .31 | .66 |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Entries are mean values with standard deviations in parentheses.

^a and ^b indicate statistically significant mean differences by Bonferroni's post hoc test.

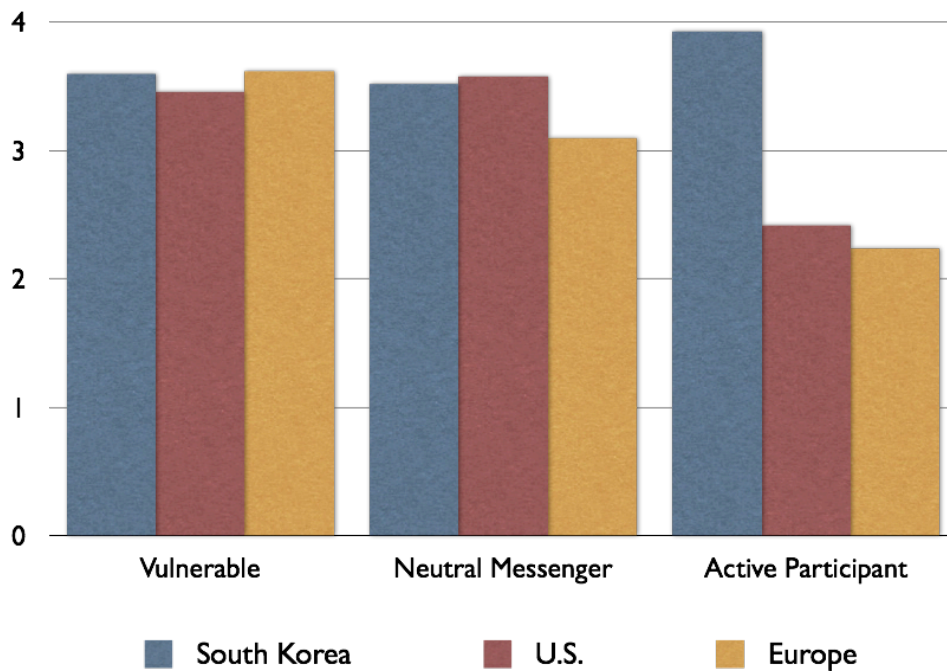


Figure 1. Journalists' perceptions of journalists' role in the six party talks.

Note. Question: Here are some statements about journalists' role in the six-party talks. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with these statements, with a scale from one to five where one means strongly disagree and five means strongly agree. The three statements: (1) journalists are vulnerable to government manipulation; (2) journalists are neutral messengers of information; and (3) journalists become active participants in the process of the diplomatic negotiations.