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# Fashion reporting in cross-national perspective 1955-2005

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## Abstract

This article aims to portray long-term developments and cross-national differences in the editorial prominence, artistic focus, and international orientation of the coverage given to designer fashion by a central, intermediary agency within national, cultural fields: the journalism of art and culture in what are called quality or elite newspapers. Based on content analysis, the article explores how the volume and content of fashion coverage in these papers has evolved since 1955 and how this accords with their arts and culture coverage in general. Theoretically, the research draws on the sociological literature on processes and structures of cultural classification and cultural globalization and on communication research into the production of news. The research covers three countries – France, Germany, and the Netherlands – and four reference years: 1955, 1975, 1995 and 2005. Fashion has often been included among the cultural forms that have gained in artistic legitimacy in the late twentieth century, but the present analysis indicates that the ‘aesthetic mobility’ of fashion in elite newspapers has been modest compared to that of other cultural forms. Journalistic attention to fashion is found to vary considerably among countries and across time, in accordance with the size, institutional development, and international position of the designer fashion sector in each country and the globalization of the designer fashion industry. The longstanding (inter)national importance of the French high fashion world is clearly reflected in the relatively high amount of coverage given to (French) designer fashion in the French press. Until the 1990s, French newspapers primarily reported on French based fashion designers and events, but afterwards their fashion coverage became far more international in focus, in line with the decreased dominance of Paris fashion and the rise of other fashion centers. Compared to their French counterparts, Dutch and German papers appeared less inclined to incorporate fashion in their arts and culture reporting, although in recent years they expanded their fashion coverage, parallel to the expansion of the designer fashion sector in their respective countries.

## 1. Introduction

Journalistic attention to arts and culture is a fertile ground for the comparative study of the making and diffusion of cultural classifications. Arts journalists and reviewers channel and shape the ways in which cultural products are perceived by cultural consumers as well as other agents involved in the production and dissemination of cultural goods. Through their selective and evaluative activities they confirm, modify or reject the ways in which cultural producers position their products on the market and they do so publicly. Newspaper coverage of arts and culture, therefore, provides a rich and accessible source of data and ‘an unobtrusive measure

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of taste' (Peterson, 2005, p. 272) which is a useful alternative to survey methods and interviews in longitudinal and cross-national comparative research.

The present study aims to portray long-term developments and cross-national differences in the coverage given to designer fashion by a central, intermediary agency within national, cultural fields: the journalism of art and culture in what are called quality or elite newspapers. Using content analysis, the study examines how the volume and content of such papers' fashion coverage has evolved since 1955 and how this accords with their arts and culture coverage in general. Theoretically, the research draws on the sociological literature on processes and structures of cultural classification (e.g., Bourdieu, 1983, 1993; DiMaggio, 1987, 1992; Van Rees and Dorleijn 2001; Dorleijn and Van Rees 2006) and cultural globalization (e.g., Crane, 2002; Thussu, 2000; Heilbron, 1995) and on communication research into the production of news (e.g., Gans, 1979; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). The research covers three countries – France, Germany, and the Netherlands – and four reference years: 1955, 1975, 1995 and 2005.

The following section briefly reviews the theoretical insights and assumptions that served as guidelines for the research. Section 3 explains the research methodology and Section 4 presents the results.

## **2. Changes and cross-national differences in journalistic attention to fashion**

Experts in the field of fashion and media claim that, in the late twentieth century, fashion has become one of the cultural forms – like film, photography, jazz and pop music - that have gained substantially in editorial prominence in the serious press. McRobbie (1998, p. 54), in her study on the British fashion world, notes that fashion journalism has expanded greatly since the 1980s, not only into television and across the numerous new magazine publications that were launched, but also commanding more space on the daily newspapers. In *The Fashion Handbook*, recently published by Routledge, fashion journalist Brenda Polan (2006, p. 154) asserts that:

Fashion gets more coverage in the media than any comparable area of human interest or endeavor. It may not fill more column inches than news, scandal, politics or show business, but it exceeds space devoted to many worthier topics like art, education, architecture, theatre, literature, the environment or technology.

According to Church Gibson (2006, p. 21), in the same volume, newspapers give fashion stories a far higher profile than they did two decades ago:

Nowadays, a particularly innovative or eye-catching catwalk show will invariably make the front page of even the most serious broadsheet - a glimpse of breast, nipple or upper thigh is no longer necessary to make the front page - while takeover bids within the industry, designer sackings or other developments are usually reported in detail.

These British reports concerning the increased prominence of fashion in U.K. newspapers contrast sharply with those of Dutch fashion experts who lament the lack of attention to fashion in the leading Dutch newspapers (Van den Berg, 2003). The magnitude of the apparent gap between the British and Dutch situation is hard

to determine, as the above observations are not based on systematic comparative analysis. Nevertheless, from a theoretical view point, the attention to fashion is likely to be higher in British newspapers than in Dutch ones.

### *2.1. Artistic recognition and editorial prominence*

Case studies on processes of cultural valorization in different fields, periods and countries have highlighted the role of several key factors in explaining changes or variations in the extent to which a cultural product is publicly recognized as artistic or culturally valuable (Baumann, 2001). A first determinant is the shape of the 'opportunity space' (DiMaggio, 1992), which is defined by the existence of competitors or substitutes and the availability of sponsors who can advance a cultural product's prestige. The advent of a popular substitute or competitor – such as television in the case of film (Bauman, 2001) - can act as a foil against which a cultural product's artistic status is increased. The diversification of fashion styles, and, particularly, the rise of industrial fashion (Crane, 2000), may have provided the foil against which designer fashion could gain in cultural legitimacy in the late twentieth century. Furthermore, evidence from the U.K. suggests that, since the mid-1990s, fashion has benefited from the increasing recognition of popular culture as a serious subject for debate outside the art world, as well as the art school sector's growing awareness of the necessity to connect with the changing world of commercial culture, for which fashion seemed a suitable envoy (McRobbie, 1998).

A second key factor is the institutionalization of resources and practices of production and consumption by actors in a particular cultural field (Becker, 1982; Bourdieu, 1993; DiMaggio, 1992). In the case of fashion, such institutionalization has first and foremost taken place in France (Crane, 2000; Jackson, 2006), but it has also occurred elsewhere, principally in Italy (White, 2000), the U.S. and the U.K. (McRobbie, 1998).

Germany and the Netherlands, unlike France, Italy the U.S or the U.K, do not count as major fashion countries.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, in the past two decades, the designer fashion sector has experienced a significant growth in both countries, while its institutional infrastructure has expanded greatly and its international significance has increased. This holds first and foremost for Germany, which has become a leading exporter in the luxury segment of the fashion market. In 2005, major German designer fashion companies such as Hugo Boss (total sales of € 1.3 billion),<sup>2</sup> Escada (€ 649 million), Jill Sander (€ 114 million in 2004) and Rena Lange collected 70 to 75% of their annual turnover outside of Germany, while Strenesse (€ 81 mln in

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<sup>1</sup> According to the U.K. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI, 1998), in 1996, the U.S. designer fashion industry was the largest in the world. The U.S. had gross sales of approximately £5.2 billion (\$8.1 billion). Next in line came Italy (£1.5 billion / \$2.3 billion), France (£900 million / \$1.4 billion) and the U.K. (£600 million / \$934 million). Unfortunately, comparable cross-national data for previous or later years appear not to be available. Other data sources do not distinguish between designer fashion and other clothing, or only present single country data.

<sup>2</sup> Hugo Boss (founded in 1923) was known for its high quality products, but was not regarded as a luxury brand until the 1980s. With selective sponsoring in the 1980s and 1990s, the company has succeeded in elevating its brands positioning (Orlovic, 2002).

2004) had a fifty-fifty split between national and international sales.<sup>3</sup> In addition to Düsseldorf, which hosts the worlds' biggest fashion trade fair (Collections Premiers Düsseldorf, CPD), Berlin has been able to establish itself as one of the designer fashion capitals of the world in recent years (cf. Jones and Mair, 2003), presently hosting the Berlin Fashion Week and the 'Bread and Butter' fashion trade show.

Compared to Germany, the Netherlands is relatively invisible on the international (designer) fashion scene. Mexx (founded in 1986) was the only fashion company of Dutch origin on the *TW Rangliste* (2004) of major European fashion companies, occupying the fourteenth place with an annual turnover of € 780 million.<sup>4</sup> However, since the 1990s, the number of Dutch brands marketed internationally by designers has risen steadily (Van Slobbe/SO, Gsus, The People of the Labyrinths, Spijkers & Spijkers). At the same time, Viktor and Rolf have managed to establish themselves among the leading Paris designers (Roso, 2004; Teunissen, 2006).<sup>5</sup> On native soil, the institutional infrastructure for the education, production, and presentation of fashion design has expanded rapidly in recent years (Teunissen, 2006; Van den Berg, 2006).<sup>6</sup> The figures of Statistics Netherlands (CBS) show fashion design to be one of the fastest growing occupational fields in the Netherlands (Roso, 2005.) In the first quarter of 2006, the Netherlands counted over 500 registered fashion design companies, 12% of which focused on high fashion (Wenting, 2006).<sup>7</sup>

Baumann (2001), among others, has provided empirical evidence for the role of a third key factor in the artistic valorization of cultural forms, *i.e.* the grounding of artistic and/or cultural worth in a legitimating ideology. In spite of the enormous growth of fashion journalism since the 1980s, journalists working for the many new magazine publications did not manage to develop the kind of intellectualizing, critical discourse which has been used by their counterparts in the specialized film and music press to elevate the artistic status of those genres. The 1990s saw fashion move into new venues such as fine-art or specialized fashion museums and galleries. Academic research, first and foremost in the U.K and the U.S. and to a lesser extent

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<sup>3</sup> Sources: TW Rangliste 2004 and <http://www.young-germany.de/germanfashion.98.html>, consulted on September 9, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> In 2001, Mexx became part of the American clothing giant Liz Claiborne.

<sup>5</sup> Both in the 1980s and 1990s, groups of Dutch designers manifested themselves internationally, following the example of the Antwerp Six. For most of these designers international success did not last, but the mid-1990s group (Le Cri Néerlandais) did give rise to the success of Viktor and Rolf (Teunissen, 2006, pp. 10-15).

<sup>6</sup> While the Netherlands already counted a number of higher vocational institutes for fashion design, and the Dutch government had been offering grants to talented fashion designers since the 1980s, from the late 1990s onward, the support structures for Dutch fashion multiplied. In 1998, the Fashion Institute Arnhem was founded, offering the first post graduate fashion design course in the Netherlands; in 2001, the Dutch Fashion Foundation saw the light, fulfilling a network and platform function for Dutch fashion designers; in 2002, the Premsela Dutch Design Foundation (funded by the Dutch Ministry of Culture and the Amsterdam City Council) started its activities aimed at the promotion of the international, social an economic development of the Dutch design sector; in 2004 and 2005 respectively, the Amsterdam Fashion Week (AIFW) and the Arnhem Fashion Biennale were launched; in 2005, three major fashion exhibitions were organized by Dutch museums.

<sup>7</sup> To give some measure of comparison: The U.K. designer fashion sector, in 1996, contained about 280 enterprises, which is about 5 to 6 times as much as the number of Dutch companies focusing on high fashion (DTI, 1998).

in France and Australia (Anderson, 2000), paid growing attention to fashion. However, this expanding body of scholarship concerned fashion history, the social and cultural dimensions of fashion, or the business of fashion, rather than fashion aesthetics (McRobbie, 2000). The international academic journal *Fashion Theory* (founded in 1997) does contain instances of the application of a typical high art framework to fashion, while French critics in *Le Monde* also sometimes apply such consecrating discourse to fashion (Rocamora, 2002). On the other hand, concomitantly with the growing recognition of popular culture, British newspaper critics in the *Guardian* tend to celebrate fashion as popular culture rather than high art (Rocamora 2001).

In other words, a legitimating ideology of fashion as art seems to be less developed and certainly less widespread (McRobbie, 2000; Polan, 2006; Van den Berg, 2003) than a high art approach to film (Baumann, 2001; Allan and Lincoln, 2004; Hicks and Petrova, 2006).

Besides the absence of a common, elaborated aesthetic framework on which newspaper journalists and critics can draw for reviewing fashion, other factors may have hampered the artistic recognition of fashion and its advancement to a higher status in newspapers' hierarchy of arts and culture, in particular the highly commercialized nature of the designer fashion world and the publicity machinery surrounding it (cf. Bourdieu, 1983). On the other hand, the strong growth and the commercial successes of the designer fashion industry since the early 1990s (Orlovic 2002; Jackson & Haid, 2006) are likely to have bolstered public recognition of luxury fashion as a serious business instead of a fancy playground for frivolous females.

In view of the above, and taking the degree of journalistic attention as indicative of the artistic or cultural value placed on fashion (Janssen, 1999; Verboord, Janssen and Van Rees, 2006), several assumptions can be made regarding the amount of newspapers' attention to fashion in the countries and reference years included in his study.

AI-a: Throughout the period being studied, newspapers' coverage of fashion was highest in the country with the largest and institutionally most strongly developed designer fashion sector. French newspapers rank first, followed by German and Dutch papers.

AI-b: Newspapers' coverage of fashion increased in all three countries studied here, along with the growth and institutional expansion of each country's fashion design sector.

AI-c: French newspapers were the first to expand their fashion reporting, whereas German and Dutch papers increased their coverage at a later stage.

AI-d: In spite of the increased editorial prominence given to fashion, fashion has not progressed to a higher status in newspapers' hierarchy of arts forms.

## 2.2. International orientation

The second set of assumptions to be explored in this study concerns the degree and direction of international orientation of fashion reporting in each country.

Cultural exchange between countries and regions is not a new phenomenon to be sure, but the volume, tempo, and extent of international exchanges have increased enormously since the Second World War (Appadurai, 1996; Crane, 2002; Held et al, 1999). Cultural products gained a much larger reach, through which – in De Swaan's (1995) terms – a 'cultural world-system' came into being. This system contains many different forms of both high and popular culture, including fashion in all its manifestations, ranging from luxury designer fashion to industrial fashion and street styles (Crane, 2000, p.166). In the late twentieth century, fashion producers came to operate in an increasingly global market, which radically altered the rules of the game for fashion designers and companies, as well as the number of players and the position of various countries on the international fashion stage (Crane, 1997 and 2000; Djelic and Ainamo, 1999; Jackson and Haid, 2006; Orlovic, 2002).

All-a: Along with the growth of international, cultural exchange in general, and the globalization of fashion in particular, newspapers in all three countries began to devote a larger portion of their fashion reporting to foreign actors, products and events during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

However, available research shows the degree of internationalization to vary strongly from place to place and for each cultural form. Some expressions of culture lend themselves better than others to international dissemination (Gerhards and Rössel, 2000; Moretti, 2001), while regions and countries differ markedly among themselves in their receptiveness to certain categories of foreign cultural products.<sup>8</sup> Heilbron (1995) connects this greater or lesser international orientation of countries to their size and the centrality of their cultural production. For a variety of reasons, larger countries tend to maintain less transnational, cultural relations than small countries (p. 177), while small countries like the Netherlands rely more extensively on international exchange and are the most internationally oriented.<sup>9</sup>

Size alone is not the last word on a country's place in the cultural world-system or the international marketplace for a particular cultural genre.<sup>10</sup> Another factor is the extent to which a country's cultural production or its production in a particular cultural field functions as an example for producers or public in other countries (Heilbron, 1995). When this happens often and for long periods of time, a country comes to occupy a more central position and tends to be less oriented to foreign products and producers.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For example, small countries tend to be more strongly internationally oriented than large countries, but this is much more pronounced for certain cultural forms than for others. For instance, in comparison with Dutch film, Dutch pop music has a relatively large market share in the Netherlands, but Dutch literature or fine art, in turn, does much better than pop music on native soil.

<sup>9</sup> Also in the area of clothing (of which designer fashion is obviously a limited part), the Netherlands has a negative trade balance. In 2003, the import of clothing amounted to € 6 billion, while the export amounted to € 3.7 billion (Roso, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Australia, Mexico and Japan, for instance, do not occupy central positions in the cultural world-system either; they are also net importers of culture.

<sup>11</sup> A good illustration of this is the share of book translations in the national book production of a variety of countries (Heilbron, 1999). In countries where English is spoken, translations are the fewest by far, while

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All-b: The share of foreign articles in newspapers' fashion coverage varies per country in accordance with the size and centrality of its fashion production. In 1955/1975, French newspapers were (far) less internationally oriented in their fashion reporting than Dutch and German newspapers.

The late twentieth century witnessed the collapse of the previously highly centralized, French-ruled system for the production and diffusion of fashion styles. Audiences became increasingly fragmented, international cultural exchanges expanded and fashion styles diversified, boosting the numbers and visibility of designers in other countries. As a result, Paris fashion came to occupy a less predominant position in the international market place, while other fashion centers – in particular, Milan, New York, London and Tokyo, but also a number of smaller fashion worlds in Europe, Asia and South America<sup>12</sup> - gained in importance (Crane, 2000; Djelic and Ainamo, 1999; Orlovic, 2002). This also holds for Germany and the Netherlands (see above). In both countries, fashion design activity increased considerably, designer fashion became more established as a field of cultural production, and both German and Dutch designers and companies became more visible on the international fashion scene.

All-b (continued): In 1995/2005, French newspapers were still less internationally oriented in their fashion coverage than their Dutch and French counterparts, but the difference was less pronounced, in line with the above changes in the international and domestic prominence of each country's designer fashion sector.

Research shows not only the degree but also the character of international orientation to be highly variable. The make-up and direction of international orientation – in terms of the range of countries and centers targeted – are not identical for different cultural genres or countries, and they vary over time.<sup>13</sup>

All-c: In 1955/1975, French fashion received far more attention than any other country in the coverage given to foreign fashion by Dutch and German newspapers.

All-d In 1995/2005, journalistic attention to foreign fashion in each country's newspapers was more diverse, covering a wider range of countries and regions, while (in the

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most appear in the smaller, and more peripheral, language areas of the Western world; the source language of these translations is English, confirming the central position of the Anglo-Saxon countries.

<sup>12</sup> Such as Amsterdam, Antwerp, Barcelona, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Dubai, Düsseldorf, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Moscow, Mumbai, Singapore, Sao Paolo. See, for example, the popular anthology *Fashion Now 2* (Jones, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> When the Paris of the 1950s was still viewed as *the* centre of contemporary, fine art, the Netherlands and other European countries primarily purchased French art in addition to the indigenous product. In the 1960s and 70s, interest became much more focused on American art (Quemin, 2001). That remained the case later, but concurrently more attention began to be paid to art from Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe. Later still, European museums began to follow what was happening in French and American museums by starting to take an interest in African and Latin-American art (Bevens, 1995).

Dutch and German papers) French fashion occupied a less prominent position than before.

Finally, both in the literature about news production (e.g. Clausen, 2004; Kalantzi, 2003; Wilke, 1998) and in studies of cultural globalization (Biltreyst, 1995; Moretti 2001; Straubhaar, 1991; Yair and Maman, 1996), regional proximity and cultural and language kinship appear as important criteria for selection.

All-e: In addition to what takes place in the international fashion centers, newspapers in all three countries pay a relatively large amount of attention to domestic producers or events, and to producers and events in neighboring countries and/or countries which are close in terms of culture or language. For instance, Dutch and French newspapers pay attention to Belgian fashion.

### 3. Method and data

In order to examine the long-term developments and cross-national differences in journalistic attention to fashion, a quantitative content analysis was performed for four reference years: 1955, 1975, 1995 and 2005 (cf. Neuendorf, 2002). This analysis dealt with the coverage given to fashion in Dutch, French, and German newspapers, and was part of a comprehensive content analysis of the arts and culture journalism in these papers (cf. Janssen, 2002). The data set allows for a comparison of relevant features of fashion coverage with those of other forms of culture. Because only a limited number of newspapers per country could be included in this larger content analysis, a careful choice had to be made.

#### *Choice of newspapers*

Newspapers targeting the governing, intellectual, and cultural elite seemed the obvious choice for examining the classification of cultural products, as they determine to a considerable degree whether and how all sorts of subjects are discussed within the media and the wider community and they fulfill a key role in processes of cultural valorization. Secondly, as the research is in part aimed at tracing diachronic and synchronic variations in journalistic attention to foreign and domestic arts and culture, the focus was on daily newspapers with a national or supra-regional distribution. A third selection criterion was that the chosen newspapers had appeared during the entire research period. To further restrict the choice of appropriate newspapers, for each country, two newspapers were selected having on average the largest paid circulation in the research period. Table 1 gives an overview of the selected newspapers.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The data for these six, elite-oriented European newspapers are currently being supplemented with data for U.S. newspapers (the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*) and with data for one popular newspaper from each country (*De Telegraaf*, *Le Parisien*, *Bild*, and *USA Today*). Restricting the total number of newspapers to three per country was decided upon for mainly pragmatic reasons. More specifically, given the longitudinal comparative design of the study, each selected newspaper title involved sampling a large number of editions to guarantee reliable analyses of the theoretically important variables.



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Table 1.  
Selected newspapers per country and their circulation in 1955 and 1995\*

	Founding year	1955	1995
<i>Le Monde</i>	1944	166,000**	379,089
<i>Le Figaro</i>	1854	384,000**	391,533
<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>	1949	145,475	391,220
<i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i>	1945	188,081	396,746
<i>N.R.C. / NRC Handelsblad</i> ***	1844	109,471	267,000
<i>Volkskrant</i>	1919	149,501	359,000

\*Sources: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*: FAZ Media Service; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: IVW-Circulation Figures *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (1e kwartaal); *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*: Charon (1996); Murschetz (1997, pp. 71-114); *NRC Handelsblad* and *Volkskrant*: Van Vree (1996); Huysmans et al. (2004, p. 41)

\*\*circulation in 1960

\*\*\*The *NRC Handelsblad* is the result of a merger of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant* (N.R.C.) and the *Algemeen Handelsblad* in 1970. For the period prior to that, the *N.R.C.* was coded.

### *Sampling procedure*

The nature and extent of cultural information provided in the newspaper differs not only per weekday, but is also subject to seasonal influences. Coverage of certain forms of art and culture is generally more concentrated in and around the weekends and, moreover, is less extensive in the summer months than in the cultural, high season. In order to generalize on the total coverage of arts and culture in each reference year, the sample must thus contain proportional numbers of editions per weekday and per season. Therefore the method of the constructed week was used per quarter of the year: for each day of the week a random edition from each quarter was selected, resulting in four constructed weeks or 24 editions per reference year per newspaper title.<sup>15</sup> The sample for the content analysis of fashion reporting thus contained 576 editions in total: 24 editions per reference year for each of the six newspapers.

### *Types of articles*

The data collection included all types of articles on fashion with at least 10 lines, such as reviews, background articles, news bulletins, interviews and columns. Pieces about the fashion world/fashion business were included. Data collection was not restricted to arts and culture sections or lifestyle supplements: the whole newspaper was screened for articles on fashion.

In carrying out the analysis, fashion was defined rather narrowly as high fashion or designer fashion, including both couture and ready-to-wear (*prêt à porter*)

<sup>15</sup> Sampling efficiency studies have shown that, as a rule, two constructed weeks provide a reliable image of the size and composition of newspaper coverage during a whole year (Riffe, 1994). This research analyzed four constructed weeks. This had the advantage that the entire sample contained a larger number of articles, boosting the total reliability and the level of detail that could be subjected to reliable analyses.

by luxury designers. Pieces concentrating on lifestyle aspects, e.g. articles on what is hot or not in consumer fashion or articles on street styles and subcultures were not taken into account, except when they were linked to more reflective discussion about trends in fashion design.

The larger analysis of the arts and culture coverage in these newspapers also included the above mentioned types of contributions and followed the same procedure. It covered nine main categories of cultural artifacts: Fiction books, Classical music, Popular music, Film, Theater, Visual arts, Dance, Television fiction, and Applied arts (including Designer fashion), which were itemized in various subcategories.

### *Variables*

A large number of variables were registered for each separate item discussed. Thus, in the case of articles that contained more than one item (e.g. an article reviewing the spring collections by two different designers), a separate registration form was filled out for each separate item. A short explanation of the principal variables used in the context of this article follows:

- *Year, newspaper and country* in which the item appeared.
- *Size of item*. For each item, the size was determined in cm<sup>2</sup> by measuring the height and width and multiplying them.
- *Name and type of section* in which the item appeared.
- *Heading and type of page* on which the item appeared.
- *Type of item*: Was the item the *only* item discussed in an article or was it part of an article containing more than one item?
- *Perspective of item*. Was the item focused on *artistic* matters - i.e. artistic content, style(s), themes, predecessors, developments, etc. - or *external/contextual* aspects such as organizational issues, policy, business, or human interest?
- *Name and type of principal actor/actors* in article: In many cases the principal actors were fashion designers; but they could also be the (CEO's of) fashion companies, experts (e.g. fashion critics or curators), etc.
- *Country & place of origin* of the *principal actor(s)*. Birth country & city of the principal actor(s).
- *Country & city of location* of the *principal actors(s)*. Country & city in which the principal actor(s) has/have their professional base.
- *Country & place of action*. Country and place where action or event takes place.

### *Measurements*

Different measurements may be employed to chart developments in the *amount of newspaper coverage*, which was taken as an indication of the (artistic and/or cultural) status of fashion. The main measurements used in this paper were the total number of fashion items and the percentage of arts and culture items devoted to fashion, *i.e.* the share of fashion items within the total amount of arts and culture items in the newspaper sample. In addition, the size (in cm<sup>2</sup>) of the total

fashion information supply in each newspaper was calculated,<sup>16</sup> as well as fashion's share within the total editorial space (in cm<sup>2</sup>) for arts and culture.

The extent to which fashion coverage focused on *fashion as art*, was assessed by looking at the proportion of so-called 'artistic oriented' items in the coverage given to fashion, *i.e.* items that focused on artistic content, style, themes, influences, developments, and the like, as opposed to items addressing other 'external', contextual aspects, such as organizational issues, policy changes, business developments and human interest. In addition, the type of sections and page headings under which fashion coverage appeared in the newspapers was taken into account, *i.e.* the proportion of items classified into specialized arts and culture sections versus the proportion included in other newspaper categories.

The primary measure of the *international focus* of fashion coverage used in this paper was the share of 'international' or 'foreign' items within the total supply of fashion items.<sup>17</sup> All items were classified as either a 'foreign' or a 'domestic' *actor*-item based on the country of location of the principal actor(s) reviewed, *i.e.* the countries in which the main actor(s) had their professional base at the time of publication. In addition, items were classified as either a 'foreign' or a 'domestic' *event*-item according to the country of action, *i.e.* the country in which the main news event or action occurred.

Using the data on the country location of the principal actor(s), the *direction and composition of the international orientation* was specified by looking at (i) the specific countries covered in the international fashion reports and (ii) the diversity of countries covered in fashion reporting. Coverage of foreign events or actors may be limited mainly to a few highly specific countries, *e.g.* to countries with a central position in the international fashion system or it may involve a more general coverage including a wider range of countries, which provides us with another indicator for the international orientation of newspapers. The latter sort of international orientation may be regarded as more truly international than the former.

#### 4. Results

The content analysis of the newspaper sample yielded a total of 10,881 items on arts and culture. About 13% of these were part of an article containing more than one item, while 87 % were so-called 'only item' articles. The number of fashion items amounted to 265, accounting for approximately 2.5% of all arts and culture items. The fairly small number of fashion items, of course, had consequences for the level of detail at which reliable analyses could be made and, generally, does not allow for drawing strong conclusions from the data. However, the sample is large enough to explore the plausibility of the assumptions outlined before.

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<sup>16</sup> In other words, the total size of all individual newspaper items on fashion.

<sup>17</sup> Gerhards and Rössel (2000) used similar measures in their study of the cultural internationalization of (West-) Germany.

4.1. Amount of fashion coverage

Figure 1 shows, for each country, how the amount of fashion coverage developed between 1955 and 2005. The columns in Figure 1 give the number of fashion items per country per year, whereas the lines indicate the amount of space (in cm<sup>2</sup>) devoted to fashion.

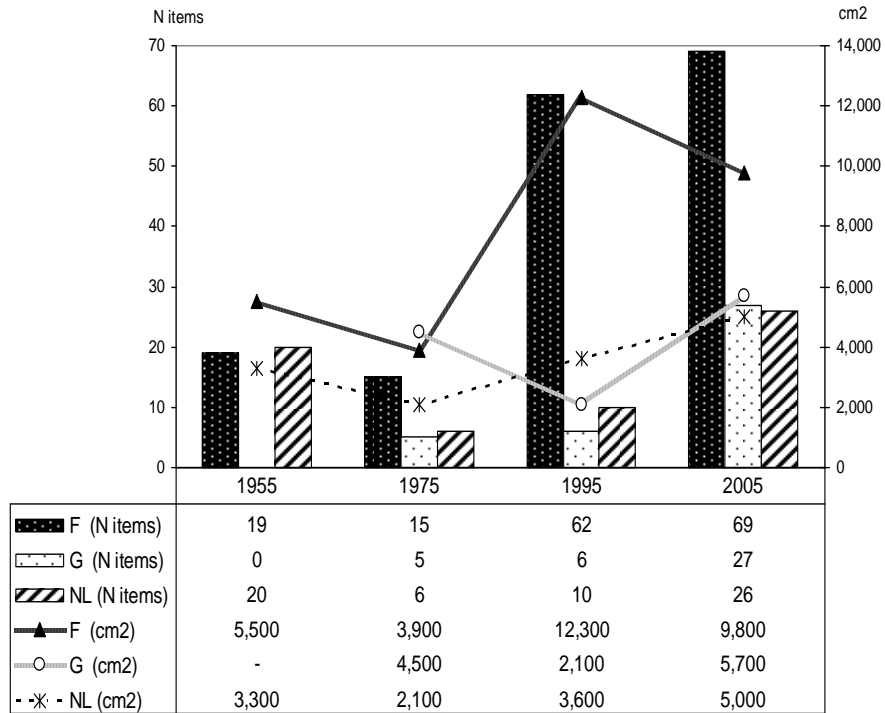


Figure 1. Amount of coverage given to fashion: number of items and amount of space (in cm<sup>2</sup>), 1955-2005. *Note:* For each fashion item, the size was determined in square centimeters (cm<sup>2</sup>) by measuring the height and width and multiplying them; subsequently the total amount of space (cm<sup>2</sup>) occupied by fashion items in the newspaper sample was calculated. Figure 1 shows the total number of items (N items) and the total number of cm<sup>2</sup> devoted to fashion in the sample editions of the French (F), German (G) and Dutch (NL) newspapers. For example, the French newspapers, in 2005, devoted 9800 cm<sup>2</sup> of their space to fashion coverage. The data are based on 4 constructed weeks per year, i.e. 24 editions per year for each newspaper (cf. section 3)

The amount of fashion coverage was hypothesized to be highest in France, being the country with the strongest and institutionally most developed designer fashion sector (**AI-a**). In most years, this appears to be the case, both in terms of the number of fashion items and the amount of space devoted to fashion. As was expected, newspaper attention to fashion went up in all three countries (**AI-b**). The French newspapers were the first to expand their fashion coverage, while the Dutch and German newspapers strongly increased their fashion coverage after 1995 (**AI-c**).

### Fashion Reporting in Cross-National Perspective

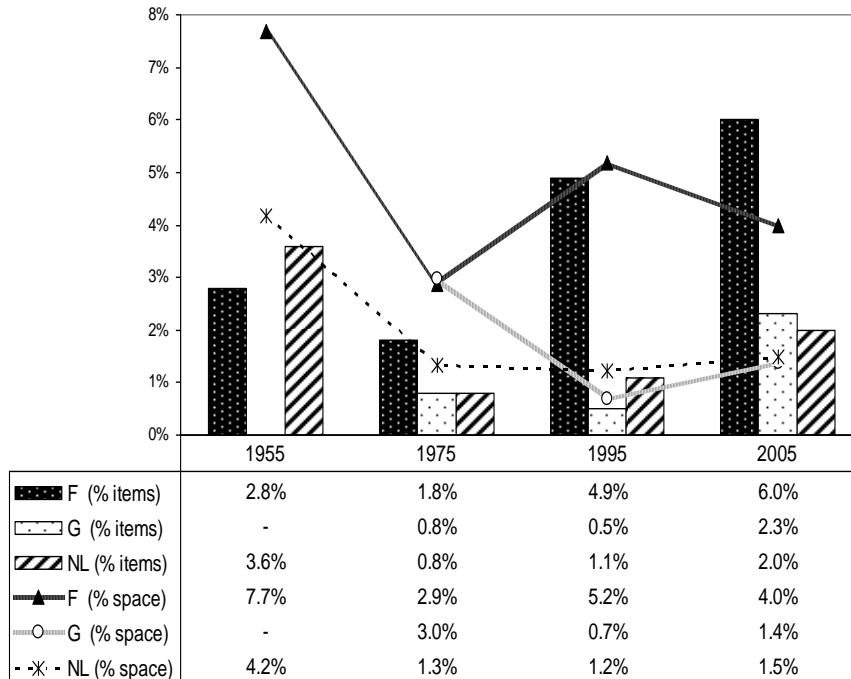


Figure 2. Share of fashion within total arts and culture coverage: percentage of all items devoted to arts and culture and percentage of total space (cm<sup>2</sup>) devoted to arts and culture, 1955-2005.

Figure 2 shows the *relative* amount of coverage given to fashion per year per country. The columns show the percentage of arts and culture items devoted to fashion, while the lines present the share of fashion within the total space devoted to arts and culture.

The information in Figure 2 leads to conclusions that are quite similar to those drawn from Figure 1. In most years, the share of fashion, according to both measures, is much higher in the French newspapers than in the Dutch and German papers. The unexpected decline of fashion's share in the French papers of 1975 calls for further investigation, as does the surprisingly high share of fashion in the Dutch newspapers of 1955 and the subsequent drop of Dutch fashion coverage in 1975.

Looking at the percentage of newspaper items devoted to fashion, again we find an increase in the coverage given to fashion - first in the French newspapers, and more recently, also in the Dutch and German papers. In 2005, fashion still occupied a fairly marginal position in the Dutch and German papers, but its share was two to four times larger than in 1995. In the French newspapers, the share of fashion rose by more than 100% between 1955 and 2005.

The data discussed so far, all suggest that fashion has indeed gained in editorial prominence and thus acquired a higher status in all three countries of the study.

### Fashion Reporting in Cross-National Perspective

However, considering the proportion of space devoted to fashion, Figure 2 shows a decline instead of an increase for the French papers. Apparently, the increase in the amount of space the French papers devoted to fashion (cf. Figure 1) did not keep pace with the growth of their total editorial space for arts and culture.

#### 4.2. Focus of fashion coverage: artistic or contextual?

A higher degree of editorial prominence does not necessarily point to a higher *artistic* status, but could be merely indicative of the increased social, economic or cultural value placed on fashion. To assess the extent to which the increased coverage given to fashion focused on fashion as art, for 2005, the share of so-called 'artistic oriented' items was taken into account, *i.e.* items that focused on artistic content, style, themes, influences, developments, and the like, as opposed to items addressing other 'external', contextual aspects, such as organizational issues, policy changes, business developments and human interest.

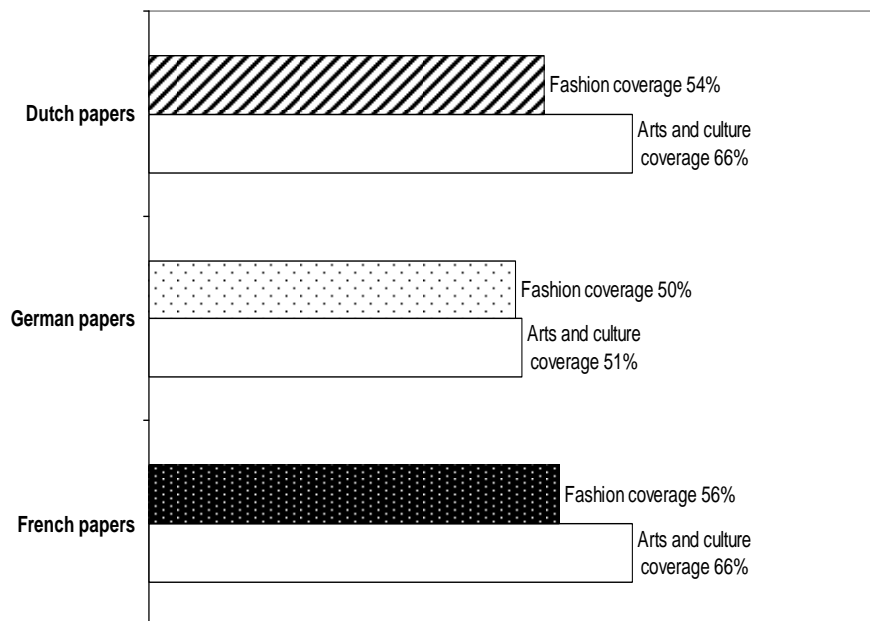


Figure 3. Percentage of artistic-oriented items in fashion coverage and in arts and culture coverage in general, 2005. *Note:* Artistic-oriented items were defined as items that focus on artistic content, style(s), themes, predecessors, influences, developments, and the like, as opposed to items addressing external, contextual aspects, such as organizational issues, policy changes, business developments and human interest.

### Fashion Reporting in Cross-National Perspective

Figure 3 shows, for each country in 2005, the percentage of fashion items which focused on artistic aspects, as well as the share of artistic-oriented items within the total supply of arts and culture items.

Both in the French and the Dutch newspapers, fashion coverage was less focused on artistic matters than arts and culture coverage in general. In the German papers, the degree of artistic orientation of fashion coverage was more or less comparable to that of the overall coverage given to arts and culture. On the whole, the German newspapers appear less concerned with artistic aspects in their arts and culture coverage than their French and Dutch counterparts.

Table 2.  
Classification of arts and culture items and fashion items according to type of newspaper section or page heading

Type of Section/ page heading	French papers		German papers		Dutch papers	
	% Arts & Culture	% Fashion	% Arts & Culture	% Fashion	% Arts & Culture	% Fashion
Arts/Culture	55.5	1.5	75.6	3.7	53.5	11.5
Books/Literature	13.8	-	-	-	8.7	-
Film*	2.4	-	-	-	2.9	-
Music*	-	-	-	-	2.1	-
Style/Life Style	7.1	82.6	2.5	3.7	17.7	30.7
Calendar info/ RTVguide	8.6	1.4	3.0	-	4.8	-
Business	2.4	14.5	3.3	25.9	1.6	11.5
Other sections/pages**	10.0	-	15.6	66.6	8.7	46.2

*Note:* The table shows the percentage of arts and culture items and the percentage of fashion items per type of section/page heading.

\*The categories 'Film' and 'Music' only include articles that appeared on a so-called 'Film' or 'Music' page which was not part of a special arts and culture section.

\*\*This category contains all articles that appeared on pages designated for other subjects than arts, culture, lifestyle, media and entertainment and that were not part of a newspaper's business pages.

Besides the degree of artistic focus of newspapers' fashion reporting, the way in which they classified their fashion coverage was taken into account. Table 2 shows, for both fashion coverage and arts and culture coverage in general, the type of section or page heading under which items appeared in the 2005 newspaper editions. The figures in the Table give the percentage of fashion items and the percentage of arts and culture items per type of section or page heading.

In each country's newspapers, the majority of arts and culture coverage was published in separate arts & culture sections or pages, but these section and pages rarely included fashion stories. The majority of the French newspapers' fashion was assigned to special 'style' sections and pages, while a substantial portion appeared on their business pages. About one third of the Dutch fashion stories were presented on separate (life) style pages. However, in the Dutch and the German newspapers, fashion coverage mostly (Dutch papers) or almost entirely (German papers)

### Fashion Reporting in Cross-National Perspective

appeared on sections and pages designated for other subjects than arts, culture, lifestyle, or media, such as these papers' business sections.

#### 4.3. Internationalization of fashion coverage

##### *Degree of international orientation*

The primary indicator used to assess the international focus of the newspapers' fashion coverage in the different years and countries was the percentage of items devoted to actors professionally based in other countries within the newspapers' total fashion coverage. The columns in Figure 4 show the share of such 'foreign actor' items for each country in 1955, 1975, 1995 and 2005.

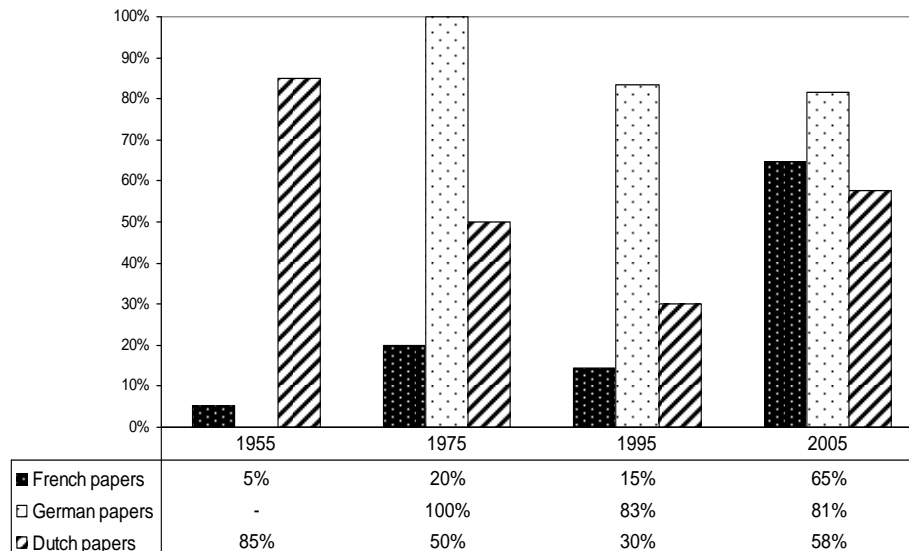


Figure 4. Percentage of items devoted to actors located in other countries, 1955-2005. *Note:* Actors located in other countries were defined as actors who had their professional base outside the home country of the newspaper.

During the period 1955 to 2005, elite newspapers in all three countries were expected **(All-a)** to devote an increasing portion of their fashion reporting to foreign actors, in line with the general growth of international cultural traffic and the globalization of (designer) fashion in particular. This only proves to be the case for the French papers, where the share of foreign actor items multiplied: from 5% in 1955 to 64% in 2005. By contrast, both the Dutch and German newspapers, at different points in time, increased their coverage of domestic fashion. The Dutch papers paid considerably more attention to domestic fashion in 2005 than in 1955,



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when the vast majority (85%) of their fashion articles featured foreign actors. In 1955, the German newspapers carried no articles on fashion whatsoever, while the few articles they published in 1975 all dealt with foreign actors. In 1995 and 2005, the share of foreign actor items decreased as domestic fashion actors gained a foothold in the German papers.

The growth of the share of domestic fashion in Dutch and German newspapers - like the overall increase in those papers' fashion reporting - is probably connected with the expansion, institutionalization and increased international visibility of the designer fashion sector in both countries since the 1990s. It also confirms the alleged importance of proximity as a selection criterion for newspapers **(AII-e)**. Notwithstanding this greater attention to domestic fashion in the Dutch and German papers, in 2005, the (large) majority of fashion items still featured foreign actors.

As far as differences between countries are concerned, the results are more or less what was expected **(AII-b)**: Up to 1995, the share of foreign actors was much higher in German and Dutch fashion reporting than in French fashion coverage, but in the last decade this difference became less pronounced. More surprisingly, by 2005, the French papers even devoted more attention to foreign actors than the Dutch ones, although the difference was modest.

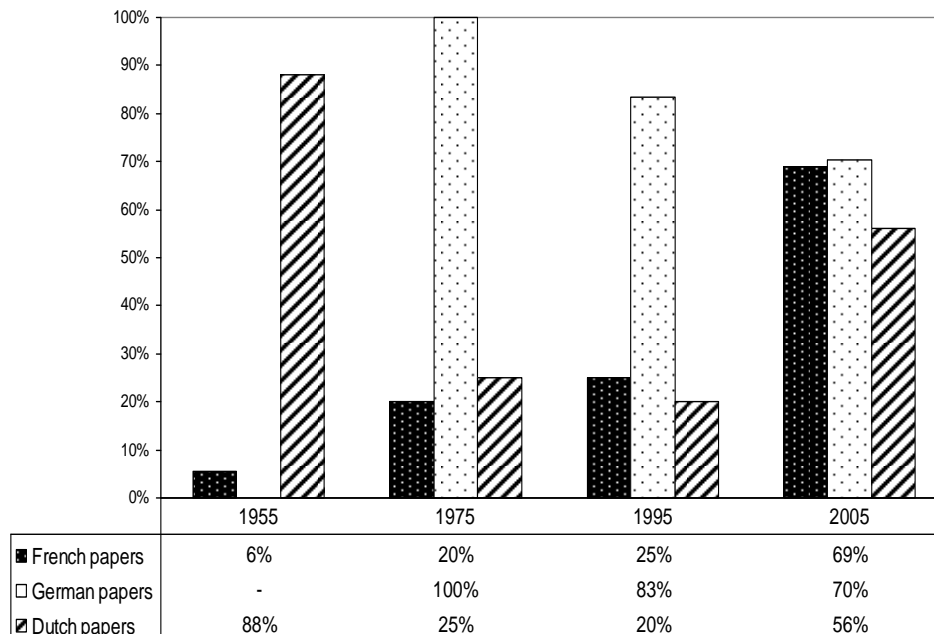


Figure 5. Percentage of items devoted to actors originating in other countries, 1955-2005. Note: Actors originating in other countries were defined as actors born in a country other than the home country of the newspaper.

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In addition to the country in which the principal actors had their professional base, their country of *origin* (birth country) was recorded. Figure 5 shows the proportion of fashion items devoted to actors originating in other countries.

The overall picture that emerges from Figure 5 is quite similar to that in Figure 4, but for 1995 and 2005, subtle differences exist. On the one hand, Figure 5 yields higher proportions of foreign actor-items for the French papers, while, on the other, it shows lower proportions of foreign-actor items for both the German and the Dutch papers. The first difference probably reflects the growing number of foreign designers who, in the late twentieth century (temporarily or permanently) came to work in France and who as such were more likely to attract attention in French newspapers than other non-French designers based outside France (**cf. AII-e**). The second finding is probably related to the increasing numbers of Dutch and German designers who left their own countries to work in other countries, but who as internationally successful fellow countrymen were still likely (or even more likely) to receive newspaper coverage in their country of origin (**cf. AII-e**).

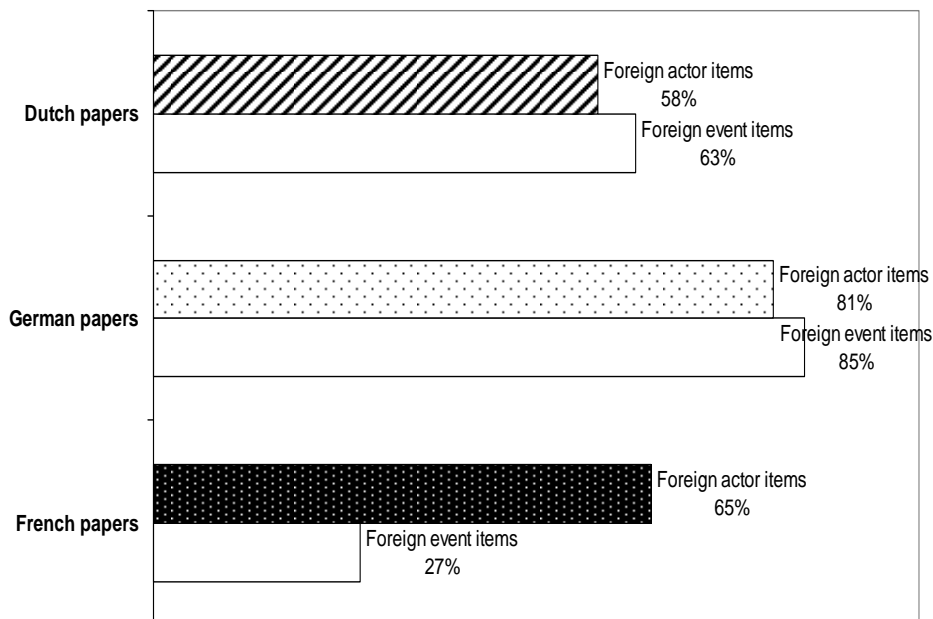


Figure 6. Percentage of items devoted to foreign actors and percentage of items devoted to foreign events in 2005 *Note:* Foreign actors were defined as actors who were professionally based in another country; foreign events were defined as events which took place in another country than the home country of the newspaper.

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*Direction and composition of international orientation*

The international orientation of fashion reporting can be further qualified by considering the specific countries covered in the international fashion reports and by looking at the range of countries covered. Table 3 gives an overview of both the countries of location and the countries of origin of the foreign actors discussed in the newspaper sample.

Table 3.  
Representation of countries in the coverage given to fashion actors, 1955-2005

1955	CL	CO	1975	CL	CO	1995	CL	CO	2005	CL	CO
	%	%		%	%		%	%		%	%
<i>Home country</i>	54	52	<i>Home country</i>	63	63	<i>Home Country</i>	77	71	<i>Home country</i>	34	34
<i>Foreign countries</i>			<i>Foreign countries</i>			<i>Foreign countries</i>			<i>Foreign countries</i>		
France	34	35	France	17	17	Italy	10	15	Italy	23	21
Italy	<3	<3	Italy	8	8	France	5	4	U.K.	11	8
U.K.	<3	<3	Japan	<1	<1	U.K.	<2	5	France	10	8
Switzerland	<3	<3	Yugoslavia	<1	<1	Belgium	<2	<2	Belgium	5	7
U.S.	<3	<3	U.S.	<1	-	U.S.	<2	0	Spain	2	<2
Spain	-	<3	Spain	-	<1	Denmark	<2	0	U.S.	2	3
						Hongkong	<2	0	Japan	2	3
						Various countries	<2	<2	Spain	2	<2
						Spain	-	3	Switzerland	<2	3
									Netherlands	<2	<2
									Various countries	<2	<2
									Germany	<1	5
									Sweden	<1	<1
									Brazil	<1	<1
									South Korea	<1	<1
									Singapore	<1	1
									Africa	-	<2
									Cyprus	-	<2
									Australia	-	<1
									Canada	-	<1

Note: Columns marked CL (Country Location) give the percentage of items devoted to countries where main actors were professionally based. Columns marked CO (Country of Origin) give the percentage of items devoted to countries where main actors were born. 'Various countries' refers to items reviewing several actors from various countries around the world, in which no 'main' actor could be identified.

The percentages for 'Home country' refer to the portion of fashion coverage given to *domestic* actors in the entire newspaper sample, which, for each reference year, includes the French actors discussed in French papers, the German actors reviewed in the German papers and the Dutch actors covered in the Dutch papers. The percentages for 'Foreign countries' refer to the share of actors from other countries in the newspapers' fashion coverage. For example, in 1955, less than 3% of all fashion actors reviewed in the sample papers had their professional base (column CL) or were born (column CO) in Italy, whereas, in 2005, the share of

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Italian-based and Italian-born actors amounted to 23 and 21%, respectively. The ranking positions of individual countries in each reference year are based on the coverage they received in newspapers from all three countries, except, of course, for the ranking positions of France, Germany and the Netherlands, which only reflect their share in newspapers from the other two countries.<sup>18</sup>

First, Table 3 shows a marked increase in the international and global diversity of fashion reporting, in line with hypothesis **All-d**. In 2005, the range of countries covered in the newspapers' fashion reports had widened significantly compared to previous reference years, including a growing number of both western and non-western countries. On a somewhat larger scale, this also supports the hypothesis regarding the internationalization of fashion reporting (**All-a**); not only has it become more international in focus, it also has become more global.

As was expected (**All-c**), in 1955 and 1975, the majority of foreign actors discussed in the Dutch and German papers were born in and professionally located in France. In 1955, French actors still were the only ones receiving a substantial

Table 4.  
Top 6 of countries in the coverage given to fashion actors, 2005

	A. Country of actor's location	B. Actor's country of origin
<b>Dutch newspapers</b>	1. <i>Netherlands</i> 2. France 3. U.K. 4. Italy 5. Belgium 6. U.S.	1. <i>Netherlands</i> 2. U.K. 3. Italy 4. France 5. Germany 6. Belgium
<b>French newspapers</b>	1. <i>France</i> 2. Italy 3. U.K. 4. Germany 5. Belgium 6. Spain/Japan	1. <i>France</i> 2. Italy 3. Belgium 4. U.K. 5. Germany 6. Japan
<b>German newspapers</b>	1. Italy 2. France 3. <i>Germany</i> 4. U.K. 5. U.S. 6. Netherlands/Switzerland Spain/Japan	1. <i>Germany</i> 2. Italy 3. France 4. U.K. 5. Switzerland 6. U.S.

*Note:* Colum A gives the top 6 of countries of location of fashion actors (i.e. the countries where these actors were professionally based). Column B gives the top 6 of countries of origin (birth countries) of fashion actors. Domestic actors (Dutch actors in the case of the Dutch papers, French actors in the case of the French papers, and German actors in the case of the German papers) are shown in italics.

<sup>18</sup> i.e. the share of French actors in the Dutch and German papers, the share of German actors in the Dutch and French papers, and Dutch actors' share in the French and German papers.

amount of coverage abroad, but in 1975, actors born and located in Italy gained a stronger foothold in the papers' fashion coverage. In 1995 and 2005, the rank order of the main actors in foreign fashion reporting had changed. Italian actors came first, their part in foreign fashion reporting being twice that of French actors. In 2005, U.K. actors also came to the fore, attracting a similar amount of coverage as French actors. It should be kept in mind that the ranking positions of Italian and U.K. actors are based on the coverage they received in newspapers from all three countries, while the ranking of French actors only reflects their share in the Dutch and German newspapers.

Table 4 qualifies France's position relative to other countries in Dutch and German papers. It presents the top 6 countries of location and the top 6 countries of origin in the coverage given to fashion actors in each country's newspapers in 2005. Domestic actors are also included and are shown in italics. Table 4 adds to the information in Table 3 concerning which countries belong to the 'winners' and the 'losers' in the fashion system of the late twentieth century: Belgium (neighboring country of France and the Netherlands, **cf. AII-E**), Japan, and especially, the U.K. and Italy seem to have gained considerably in prominence. France has lost its predominant position. Although it still belonged to the leading countries in the 2005 editions of the German and Dutch papers, it had to share the spotlight with Italy and the U.K. (**AII-d**). Surprisingly, the United States, which in almost every other cultural field experienced the biggest increase in newspaper coverage abroad (cf. Janssen, Kuipers and Verboord, 2006), did not witness a similar growth in the fashion reporting of the very same foreign newspapers. This suggests that the U.S. fulfills a far less central role on the international fashion scene than it does in other fields.

Finally, Table 4 confirms the lasting importance of proximity in news selection. Although, on the whole, domestic actors have lost ground to foreign actors, in each country's newspapers, native-born actors still received more attention than actors from any other single country.

#### *Fashion coverage versus arts and culture coverage in general*

Figure 7 compares the internationalization of the newspapers' fashion coverage to that of their arts and culture coverage in general. The columns in Figure 7 show the proportion of foreign actor items in the newspapers' fashion coverage. The lines present the share of foreign actor items within the total supply of arts and culture items. The figure shows, for each country, a gradual increase in the proportion of items devoted to foreign arts actors, culminating in an equal (F) or majority (G, NL) share of foreign actors items in newspapers' arts and cultural coverage in 2005.

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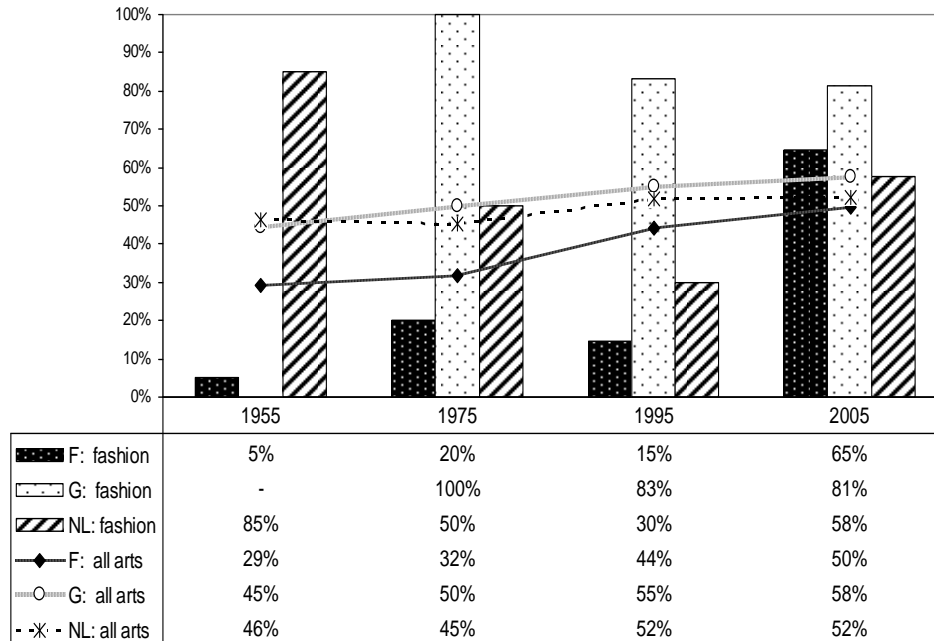


Figure 7. Percentage of foreign actor items in fashion coverage and total arts and culture coverage, 1955-2005 Note: 'Foreign actors' refers to actors who were professionally based in a country other than the home country of the newspaper.

Compared to the general level of internationalization of arts and culture coverage, in 2005, fashion reporting was clearly more international in focus in each of the three countries included in the study. In the German and Dutch newspapers, fashion reporting was more internationally oriented throughout the period being studied, except for the Dutch fashion coverage in 1995, which strongly focused on local actors. The fashion coverage of the French newspapers did not keep pace with the general level of internationalization of arts and culture coverage and remained highly concentrated on French actors until the 1990s. However, after 1995, the share of foreign actor items rose strongly, from 15% (cf. Fig. 4) to 65%, fifteen percent points above the share of foreign actors in the coverage given to arts and culture in general.

Table 5 gives, for 2005, the top 3 of cultural forms according to the proportion of newspaper items devoted to foreign actors. Compared to the coverage given to other categories of cultural products, both in the French and the German newspapers, fashion coverage was the most international in focus, followed by film and popular music coverage. In the Dutch newspapers, fashion occupied a third place, after film and popular music.

Table 5.  
Top-3 of cultural forms according to the percentage of newspaper items devoted to foreign actors in 2005

Dutch newspapers	%	French newspapers	%	German newspapers	%
Film	70	Fashion	65	Fashion	81
Popular Music	64	Film	58	Popular music	75
Fashion	58	Popular Music	53	Film	71

*Note:* 'Foreign actors' refers to actors who were professionally based in a country other than the home country of the newspaper.

The comparatively high level of internationalization of the newspapers' fashion coverage in 2005 can be viewed as a result of the highly global nature of the fashion industry. Although the international dissemination of luxury fashion is by no means a new phenomenon, the designer fashion business has become increasingly globalized since the 1990s. The products of fashion designers are distributed and sold all over the globe, to domestic consumers in the Western world, the Middle East, and Asia, as well as to tourists buying in European and American markets.

## Conclusion

In this paper, content analysis was used to explore two sets of theoretical assumptions concerning the development of the coverage given to fashion in opinion-leading newspapers in France, Germany, and the Netherlands between 1955 and 2005.

The first four assumptions (AI-a through AI-d) concerned the development of the amount of fashion coverage in each country, which was taken as indicative of the artistic and/or cultural value placed on fashion. As was expected, throughout the period being studied, newspaper coverage was highest in France, being the country with the largest and institutionally most strongly developed designer fashion sector. The data also support the assumptions about the timing of the growth of newspaper coverage of fashion. Fashion coverage increased in all three countries parallel to the growth and the institutional expansion of each country's fashion sector. The French newspapers were the first to increase their fashion reporting, whereas the Dutch and German newspapers did so much later, between 1995 and 2005.

Some findings were not anticipated. Although Germany, during the period being studied, had a larger fashion sector than the Netherlands, the German sample papers carried more or less the same amount of fashion coverage as the Dutch papers, while they also started their fashion reporting at a later stage. The Dutch papers, in turn, paid an unexpectedly large amount of attention to fashion in 1955. These findings suggest that, besides the above structural factors, other cultural factors are at stake. In the case of the German papers, attitudes toward women could have played a role: a very masculine oriented press in Germany may have considered fashion as irrelevant until recent years, when designer fashion became

big business. Dutch papers' high degree of fashion coverage in 1955 is probably associated with the relatively strong orientation toward French high culture and French media on the part of Dutch higher status groups and the Dutch press at the time (cf. Grijpma, 1999). In the reference year 1975, both French and Dutch journalistic attention to designer fashion was low, which may be connected to the socio-political climate of the 1970s in both countries: a more egalitarian, 'critical' oriented press may have dismissed high fashion as elitist and/or trivial.

Fashion has often been included among those cultural forms that have gained in artistic legitimacy in the late twentieth century. In this paper, the 'aesthetic mobility' (Peterson, 2005) of fashion was expected to be modest compared to that of other cultural forms, in view of the relatively weak grounding of fashion's artistic worth in a legitimating ideology and the highly commercialized nature of the designer fashion world which is at odds with the ideology of 'pure', 'disinterested' art (AI-d). Taking into account various indicators of artistic recognition, fashion seems not to have progressed to a much higher status in the newspapers hierarchy of art forms, unlike for example, pop music (cf. Janssen, 1999; Janssen and Verboord, 2006).

Although in 2005, fashion received a larger portion of Dutch and German newspapers' art and culture coverage, it still occupied a fairly marginal position. Only the French newspapers paid relatively much attention to fashion, reflecting the longstanding international importance of the French high fashion world. Nevertheless, their coverage of fashion was far less extensive than their coverage of other cultural fields in which France counts as a major international player (Janssen and Verboord, 2006). Also in terms of the degree of artistic focus of fashion coverage and newspapers' classification of fashion items, newspapers in all three countries appeared to treat fashion far less often as art than they did other cultural products.

The second set of assumptions (AII-a through AII-e) explored in this paper concerned the internationalization of fashion reporting between 1955 and 2005. In view of the strongly increased international cultural traffic and the globalization of the designer fashion industry in particular, newspapers' fashion reporting in all three countries was expected to have become more international in focus. On the other hand, the degree and rate of internationalization were assumed to vary across countries and across time according to the size and centrality of each country's fashion production (AII-b).

In terms of the amount of coverage given to foreign actors, the internationalization of fashion reporting appeared to be less straightforward than expected (AII-a). Only the French newspapers showed a clear, linear growth in the proportion of coverage given to foreign actors. However, in terms of international diversity, the past two decades witnessed a marked internationalization, resulting in much wider range of western and non-western countries receiving coverage in newspapers' fashion reporting (AII-d).

The findings for France corroborate the alleged relationship between *centrality* and international orientation in the cultural field (AII-b). French newspapers' fashion reporting lost its strong national orientation. Instead it became increasingly focused on foreign actors, along with the lessened dominance of French designer fashion



(AII-c) and the rise of other fashion centers on the international fashion scene (AII-d).

Contrary to the French newspapers, Dutch and German newspapers appeared to have increased their attention to domestic fashion actors since the 1990s, concomitantly with the institutional expansion of the designer fashion sector in their respective countries. Although this finding runs counter to the first internationalization-hypothesis (AII-a), it seems to confirm the role of the *size* of a country's production (AII-b) as a determinant of the level of international focus in a particular cultural field.

Finally, the results of the analysis presented here, confirm the enduring role of *proximity* in news selection (AII-e), even for a highly globalized field such as fashion. Although, in 2005, the majority of fashion items in Dutch, German and French newspapers featured actors originating in other countries, in each case, compatriots still received more attention than actors from any other individual country.

### Acknowledgments

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