

Art journalism and cultural change: The coverage of the arts in Dutch newspapers 1965-1990

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Abstract

Cultural goods and activities are classified with respect to one another. Even though systems of cultural classification present themselves as natural and enduring, they are products of human action, continually subject to selection and change. An important role in the making and mediation of cultural classifications is played by agents and institutions whose job it is to make (quality) assessments with respect to the supply of cultural artifacts. The present study considered the coverage of artistic products and practices by art newsmakers in the daily press. The first aim was to identify the changes that occurred between 1965-1990 regarding the amount of space given by Dutch daily newspapers to art and to specific art forms. To gain a differentiated view, both popular and elite papers were taken into account. The second objective was to determine how forces extrinsic to the newspaper organization have affected the provision of information on the arts.

The analysis shows that there were major changes in newspaper coverage of the arts in this period, resulting in a new hierarchy of art forms in terms of the proportion of space they received. The art forms that benefited most from this reshuffle are pop music (both in popular and elite papers), literature and film (in elite papers), and cabaret, musicals, and shows (in popular papers). The big 'losers' in both categories of papers are theatre, classical music, and applied art, while visual art more or less consolidated its position. Dance received considerably more attention, but could not escape its low-ranking position in the papers' hierarchy. These changes appear to be closely related to changes in the audience for the arts, developments in the arts supply, and pressures from advertisers and competitors.

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1. Introduction

Cultural goods and activities are classified with respect to one another. Even though systems of cultural classification present themselves as natural and enduring, they are products of human action, continually subject to selection and change. At a given point in time, certain categories of cultural goods tend to be regarded as highly legitimate. They are assigned a place in the curricula of educational institutions, they become the subject of a nation's cultural policy, and they receive extensive coverage in the cultural sections of newspapers and opinion weeklies. Other categories that are situated lower down in the hierarchy of cultural goods do not (yet) enjoy these forms of recognition. They may drop or gradually rise on the cultural ladder. Since the 1960s, there appears to have been a rise of this kind for film and pop music. An important role in this process of cultural classification is played by agents and institutions whose job it is to make (quality) assessments with respect to the arts supply (see, among others, Bourdieu, 1980; Van Rees, 1983).

The present study considered the coverage of artistic products and practices by art newsmakers in the daily press. Their involvement with the arts may be studied at different levels. The first level examines newspapers' treatment of art in general, for example, the space assigned to the arts as compared to other subjects. The second level deals with differences in the attention paid to various art forms or genres by comparing, e.g., the coverage of classical music and pop music. The third level studies the coverage received by artifacts belonging to a particular artistic field or sub-field, for instance, variations in critical attention for newly released movies. At each level, the mediation of cultural classifications is involved. At the first level, the status of the arts in relation to other (cultural) domains is at issue; at the second, the hierarchical relations *between* art forms or genres come into play, whereas at level three, the ranking of works and producers *within* a specific artistic domain is the focus. The (relative) amount of newspaper space for information on art, particular art forms, or specific works and producers is indicative of their cultural status at a given point in time. Other indicators are the number of newspaper employees specialized in the arts or a specific artistic domain, the location of art news items in the paper, and - outside of newspapers - the level of government support, the amount of attention received from cultural scholars, the availability of specialized magazines, inclusion in educational curricula, etc.

Most research on newspaper coverage of the arts, including some of my own studies (Janssen, 1994, 1997, 1998), has focused on the third level of analysis. The present study, however, focused on the other two levels. The first aim was to identify the changes that occurred between 1965-1990 regarding the amount of space given by Dutch daily newspapers to art and to specific art forms. To gain a differentiated view, both popular and elite papers were taken into account. The second objective was to determine how forces extrinsic to the newspaper organization have affected these papers' coverage of the arts.

2. Influences on newspaper coverage of the arts

There is little empirical evidence on newspaper coverage of the arts and the forces which affect the amount and type of content produced. However, a large body of empirical research into newspapers and other media organizations has shed light on the nature and functioning of such organizations. Drawing on this research (cf. Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996 [1991]), five major categories of influences on media content can be distinguished:

1. ideological and other macro-system-level factors;
2. influences from outside of media organizations;
3. organizational goals, structures, policies;
4. media routines;
5. media workers' socialization and attitudes.

These influences can be ranked hierarchically from the ideological and other macro-system-level factors to the more micro characteristics of individual media workers. Each level has its own range of influence but is subjected to and has limits set by each 'higher-order' level. Thus, the role conceptions of journalists can be explained by their socialization to the routines of the workplace. These routines exist in order to meet organizational standards and goals. The source of such standards and goals is pressures from advertisers and audiences, sources, the market economy, and so on. These external factors relate to the media in the way they do because of ideological and cultural imperatives on the role the mass media should play in society (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996 [1991]). In reality, the higher-order level does not necessarily have primacy in terms of strength and direction. It seems more appropriate to regard the relations between media workers and their environment as, in principle, interactive and negotiable. The media organization operates within and maintains its own boundaries (however permeable) and has some degree of autonomy and freedom of choice.

Much research has been 'media-centric' rather than 'society-centric' (McQuail, 1994: 186ff.). The research agenda shows a gradual development, starting with rather individualistic attention being given to the social characteristics and personal attitudes of journalists and other mass communicators as the major influence on content. The main step forward was to appreciate the extent to which institutional and organizational requirements take precedence over the personal characteristics of media workers. The 1970s witnessed a flood of research into 'news-making', stimulated by evidence of patterning and selective attention in news content and by debates over news objectivity and the nature of 'news values'. This research on organizational structures and routines has helped to explain why media content does not simply mirror social reality. The largely consistent findings showed the news product to be, in one sense or another, an artificial and very predictable symbolic construction of reality.¹

¹ This applies not only to what is presented as 'news', but also to other cultural products. Since the 1970s, numerous research studies in the so-called 'production of culture' perspective have shown how the social arrangements at the basis of making expressive-symbol elements of culture (novels, paintings, scientific research reports, religious celebrations, legal judgments, etc.) affect the nature and content of the elements produced (Peterson, 1994).

The media-centric approach, however, may lead to an overestimation of the significance of organizational influences on content. From a society-centric point of view, much of what media organizations do is determined by external social forces, including the requirements of media audiences. Of course, the more direct influences on content from both art newsmakers² and organizational aspects (categories 3-5) are highly relevant, but any account of art journalism's performance needs to take account of the wider field of forces in which newspapers and art newsmakers operate. The influence of ideological and other macro-system factors (category 1) can never be established unless we know how newspaper organizations work.

This study explored how factors extrinsic to the newspaper organization (category 2) affect newspapers' coverage of the arts. Newspapers and their employees operate under pressure from various external 'power roles', including clients (such as advertisers), competitors (other media in the main), authorities (especially legal and political), experts, other institutions, and the audience (Gerbner, 1969). Fig. 1 presents the newspaper organization, and the art newsmakers within it, as making decisions at the centre of a field of different constraints, demands or attempted uses of power and influence (adapted from McQuail, 1994: 191, Fig. 7.2).



Fig. 1. The newspaper organization and the art newsmaker in a field of forces.

²The term 'art newsmaker' refers to all those people within the newspaper organization whose decisions affect the amount or type of content provided on the arts such as editors of cultural sections, art reviewers and journalists, chief editors, and newspaper managers.

The following sections consider how the amount of space given in Dutch newspapers to art and to particular art forms is affected by various factors in Fig. 1. Content analysis was used as the basic procedure to examine the amount of space given to art and to specific art forms between 1965 and 1990 in a sample of newspapers. Sections 3 and 4 present the design and the results of this analysis. Section 5 explores how developments in the papers coverage of art relate to changes in the audience for the arts, the interests and demands of various audience groups, developments in the arts supply, and pressures from advertisers and competitors.

3. Data

3.1. Newspaper sample

The sample for the content analysis included 576 issues of four Dutch daily newspapers with a nationwide circulation. The issues appeared in 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, and 1990. For each year, the analysis involved twenty-four daily issues of each newspaper: six consecutive issues from one week in early April and eighteen consecutive issues from the first three weeks of November.

The four sample papers are the major Dutch national daily newspapers in the period under review. While in the 1970s newspaper circulation-to-household ratios began to fall, they all increased their share in total daily circulation during the 1970s and 1980s (Knulst, 1989: 42-49; Van Vree, 1996: 129). In 1990, they accounted for 39% of the aggregate circulation of daily newspapers in the Netherlands (*Gids voor de informatiesector*, 1995/1996: 194).³

Two of the sample papers (*De Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad*) used to be designated as 'popular' papers; the other two (*NRC Handelsblad* and *De Volkskrant*) as 'elite' or 'quality' papers. In 1990, *De Telegraaf* had a circulation of 705,000, followed by the *Algemeen Dagblad* with a circulation of 417,600. *De Volkskrant* and the *NRC Handelsblad* had a circulation of 334,600 and 234,800, respectively (*Gids voor de Informatiesector*, 1995/1996: 194).

3.2. Definition of art (forms)

'Art' and 'non-art' or 'high' and 'popular' art are not fixed entities but classifications which are continually subject to change. By implication, a broad definition of art was used. Nine main categories of art were distinguished, each including various (sub)disciplines and genres:

- *literature*, including all fictional genres such as poetry, literary novels, thrillers, and detective novels;

³ In 1990, the Netherlands had 7 daily newspapers with a nationwide circulation and about 50 local daily newspapers (Herpers et al., 1993: 150). The total circulation of these newspapers was 4.58 million (*Gids voor de informatiesector*, 1995/1996: 194).

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- *classical/music*, including symphonic music, chamber music, opera, and serious academic contemporary music;
- *popular music*, including pop and rock music, jazz, country music, and folk music;
- *visual art*, including both contemporary and older art, poster art, and photography;
- *film*, including both art and classic films and films 'for entertainment';
- *theatre*, including serious drama, experimental theatre, melodrama, and light comedies;
- *cabaret, musical* and *show*;
- *dance*, including ballet, modern dance, and folk or ethnic dance;
- *applied art*, including architecture, fashion, and design.

3.3. *Data collection*

The data collection involved all newspaper articles with information about artistic content: reviews, background or feature articles on specific artists, styles or movements, and interviews with writers, film producers, art dealers, etc. Disregarded were articles on art policy, financial-economic news about arts organizations and cultural industries, short announcements of cultural events and products in which no attention was given to artistic content, and pieces less than 1.5 column-inches in length.

The inventory of the newspaper sample yielded 3,702 contributions on art. The majority (80%) dealt with only one item (a novel, film, exhibition, etc.) at the time, while 20% (mainly reviews) contained information about several items. For each contribution (or item), data collection involved more than thirty variables. Here, only the variables relevant to this paper are presented:

- name and type of newspaper (popular vs. elite paper) in which the contribution appeared;
- year of publication;
- amount of space (in newspaper pages) occupied by the contribution, and - if a contribution contained information on several products or events - the amount of space devoted to each separate item. The size of each contribution was measured in square centimetres (including headlines and illustrations) and divided by the size of the pages (also in square centimetres) in the newspaper issue;
- art form (see the above categories) and sub-discipline or genre involved;
- total number of editorial pages in each newspaper issue.

4. Results

4.1. *Coverage received by art in general*

Table 1 gives a survey of the coverage given to the arts in the four newspapers between 1965 and 1990. In absolute terms, the table shows a strong growth in the

papers' attention to the arts. The number of contributions on art increased by 60%: from 507 in 1965 to 825 in 1990. The amount of editorial space given to art rose by more than 100%: from 92 pages in 1965 to 207 in 1990. The papers started to extend their coverage of the arts around the mid-1970s. Between 1975 and 1980, both the number of contributions and the number of art pages increased substantially. Through the 1980s, attention continued to grow.

Table 1
Coverage of the arts in the newspaper sample

	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
Number of contributions on art	507	496	517	639	718	825
Number of cultural items reviewed	545	594	566	735	834	944
Amount of editorial space for art (in newspaper pages)	92	90	103	129	163	207
Percentage of total editorial space given to art	11%	8%	9%	9%	11%	11%

Starting in the 1970s, most Dutch newspapers increased their editorial space to keep pace with the growing number of advertising pages and/or to bring in more and new kinds of readers and advertising.⁴ Editorial content also became more diverse. In addition to their main news sections, many newspapers introduced new special interest sections covering a broad range of topics. Besides physically separate sections dealing with art, entertainment, and recently published books, they started running regular (weekly) features on subjects such as leisure and travel, science and education, home furnishing and decoration, fashion, and health. In many cases, these new sections 'package' utilitarian information of the kind formerly regarded as the province of specialized magazines. Their emergence is part of a wider process of editorial experimentation and innovation stimulated by new production technology (more flexible formatting, more use of colour). In at least several successful cases, these sections have brought in enough new advertising to make possible an increase of the total number of pages of editorial matter. But the main effect has been to change the overall balance of news and features in the papers involved.⁵

Our data indicate that the arts benefited from the increase in the number of editorial pages in Dutch newspapers during the 1970s and 1980s. However, they had to share the (extra) available space with a growing number of other (cultural) areas on which newspapers started to carry special sections and features. Hence, in relative

⁴ An advertising executive might say that the papers that showed the largest gains in advertising had the largest increase in editorial pages and in circulation. Editors might prefer to express the relationship this way: Papers with the largest increase in news pages showed the largest gains in readership and in circulation.

⁵ Between 1965 and 1990, the aggregate number of editorial pages in the four sample papers increased by 132%, whereas the number of advertising pages went up by 65%. *De Telegraaf* and *De Volkskrant* realized the biggest growth in both editorial and advertising pages, but the other two papers carried more editorial and advertising pages to begin with. The overall ratio of editorial matter to advertising in the four newspapers changed from 45:55 in 1965 to 53:47 in 1990.

terms, one can hardly speak of increased attention for the arts. The last row of Table 1 shows the relative amount of space given to the arts between 1965 and 1990. Throughout this period, information about art accounted for 8% to 11% of the total editorial content.⁶ In the 1970s, the increase in the amount of space devoted to art did not keep pace with the growth of the total editorial space, and the share held by art news decreased accordingly. In the course of the 1980s, it again reached the initial level of 11%.

4.2. Coverage of specific artforms

In 1990, the aggregate number of art pages in the four papers was twice as high as in 1975. But how did their coverage of specific art forms develop? Table 2 gives the number and percentage of editorial pages devoted to each art form.

Table 2
Number and percentage of editorial pages by art form

	1965		1970		1975		1980		1985		1990	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Literature	20	22	13	15	22	22	29	23	40	25	56	28
Classical music	15	16	16	19	11	11	13	10	20	13	21	10
Visual art	14	15	14	17	14	14	15	12	18	12	30	15
Theatre	12	14	8	10	14	14	9	8	14	9	14	7
Film	11	12	15	17	15	15	20	16	20	13	26	13
Applied art	11	12	3	3	7	8	7	6	10	6	13	6
Pop music	6	6	11	12	10	11	20	16	23	14	23	11
Cabaret, musical and show	2	2	5	6	3	3	6	5	7	4	10	5
Dance	1	1	1	1	2	2	5	4	5	3	8	4

A comparison of the space devoted to the nine art forms in 1965 and 1990 shows considerable changes in their respective positions within the newspapers' hierarchy of art forms.

The papers' attention to *theatre* did not keep pace with their attention to the arts in general. The total number of art pages rose by more than 100%, while those on theatre increased by no more than 17%. Hence, by 1990, theatre's share had been

⁶ Bogart (1981: 158) provides figures on the position of 'Cultural events and reviews' and 'Entertainers, Hollywood' in American daily newspapers in 1971 and 1977. In 1971, these two categories accounted for 3.5% of all newspaper items in a one-week sample of 14 morning and evening newspapers ('Cultural events and reviews' accounted for 2.6% and 'Entertainers, Hollywood' for 0.9%). In 1977 (here a two-week sample was used) 3.4% of all newspapers items dealt with 'Cultural events and reviews' (2.4%) or 'Entertainers, Hollywood' (1%). Although Bogart's analysis refers to the percentage of items and not to the amount of space given to cultural events and reviews, the two measures are generally strongly related. We may thus infer that in the period under review, Dutch daily newspapers assigned more space to information on (both popular and high) art than American ones.

reduced to 7%, half the percentage of 1965. The proportion of pages devoted to *classical music* also went down, from 16% in 1965 to 10% in 1990.

Contrasting with this decline in attention to theatre and classical music is the explosive growth of the coverage received by *pop music*. By 1990, the editorial space given to this discipline had increased fourfold of that in 1965 and pop music's share of the papers' art pages had almost doubled, from 6% in 1965 to 11% in 1990.

Literature also enjoyed a strong increase in attention. The number of pages almost tripled between 1965 and 1990 and the top-ranking position of literature in the papers' hierarchy became even more pronounced. In 1965, 22% of the art pages dealt with literature; by 1990, this percentage had risen to 28%.

In addition, the space devoted to *cabaret, musical, show, and dance* shows a clear growth. In 1990, both categories still occupied a marginal position, but the proportion of space devoted to each was considerably larger than in 1965.

The position of *visual art* and *film* hardly changed between 1965 and 1990. Both art forms received considerably more attention, but their share of the papers' art pages remained more or less the same. The increase in visual art pages occurred mainly in the second half of the 1980s, while the number of film pages grew more steadily in the period under review. The papers' attention to *applied art* shows a rather erratic development. All in all, the proportion of space given to this category declined.

4.3. Coverage of the arts in popular and elite papers

The analysis was aimed at examining how the coverage of the arts and specific art forms developed in popular and elite papers. In view of their (partly) distinct readerships, these papers were expected to differ in the amount of space they devoted to the arts and to specific art forms. A relatively large proportion of the readers of popular papers belong to the lower-status groups and have a relatively low level of education. It is generally assumed that they are less interested in art, especially in products and activities which belong to the domain of high culture. This belief is substantiated by the abundance of research which shows that participation rates in the arts are lower for individuals who have lower incomes, lower occupational status, and lower educational attainment. These findings appear to hold across all art forms. Equally general is the finding that educational attainment, which is also an important determinant of the other two factors, is the most powerful determinant of arts participation. The 'elite' papers owe their name to their nation-wide distribution among highly educated and high status professional groups of subscribers, i.e. those groups that show the highest involvement with art. Moreover, there is mounting evidence that the well-educated and those with high occupational prestige not only participate more in high arts consumption than do others, but they also tend to be more active in other cultural areas. As older cohorts are replaced by younger ones, the high-status groups can be increasingly characterized as 'omnivores' who engage in and like more of the full gamut of cultural activities rather than orienting themselves exclusively to high-brow culture (Schulze, 1997 [1992]; Peterson, 1997).

Table 3
Number of art pages by newspaper

	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990
<i>Elite papers</i>						
NRC Handelsblad	33	33	45	40	59	77
De Volkskrant	16	16	24	37	41	51
<i>Popular papers</i>						
De Telegraaf	20	22	19	24	31	39
Algemeen Dagblad	23	18	16	28	31	40

Table 3 shows that the attention given to the arts by each of the newspapers increased considerably after 1965. The elite papers began to carry more art pages in the first half of the 1970s, whereas the popular papers increased their coverage of the arts somewhere between 1975 and 1980. The amount of editorial space given to art in *De Telegraaf* and the *Algemeen Dagblad* rose by 95% and 74%, respectively (compared to 1965). However, as expected, the increase is by far the largest in the elite papers. The number of art pages in *De Volkskrant* more than tripled, while those in the *NRC Handelsblad* increased by 133%. In 1990, art news took up 15% of the editorial space in the latter paper. In the other papers, this percentage amounted to 9%.

Table 4
Hierarchy of art forms in popular and elite papers in 1990 (and 1965)

Elite papers				Popular papers			
Rank	Art form	% of pages		Rank	Art form	% of pages	
1	(1) Literature	38.0	(28.8)	1	(7) Pop music	17.4	(7.1)
2	(3) Visual art	16.2	(17.0)	2	(1) Film	15.5	(18.4)
3	(6) Film	11.0	(6.9)	3	(6) Visual art	13.9	(12.4)
4	(2) Classica! music	8.5	(17.8)	4	(4) Classica! music	13.4	(13.9)
5	(7) Pop music	7.4	(5.8)	5	(3) Literature	11.7	(14.5)
6	(4) Theatre	6.6	(10.6)	6	(2) Theatre	8.9	(17.2)
7	(5) Applied art	5.7	(10.5)	7	(8) Cabaret, musical and show	8.4	(3.4)
8	(8) Dance	4.1	(1.3)	8	(5) Applied art	6.8	(12.9)
9	(8) Cabaret, musical and show	2.4	(1.3)	9	(9) Dance	4.1	(0.2)

Table 4 gives the rankings of art forms in popular and elite papers in 1990 and 1965, showing that the attention given to specific art forms developed quite differently. Their 1990 hierarchies of art forms diverge strongly.

In the elite papers, *film* and *literature* turn out to be the big winners. Film strongly improved its position, moving from a sixth to a third place in the elite papers' hierarchy. Information about literature occupies almost 40% of their art pages, against some 30% in 1965. The composition of this information changed remarkably. In 1965, about 25% of the editorial space for literature was devoted to poetry. By 1990, information on narrative prose (mainly literary novels) covered about 95% of the literary pages, while

poetry's share had been reduced to less than 5%. Furthermore, the elite papers considerably extended their coverage of (translated) foreign literature. In the course of the 1990s, they also increased their coverage of non-literary fiction, thriller novels in particular. In 1990, however, information on literary prose still claimed the lion's share of their literary pages.

In the popular papers, on the other hand, literature was outstripped by other art forms and only took a modest fifth place. Literary prose was also the dominant sub-category in these papers, but the proportion of space given to non-literary fiction was considerably larger than in elite papers (cf. Janssen, 1997: 289-290). Film more or less maintained its prominent place but lost its top-ranking position to *pop music*. The latter proved to be the major winner in the popular papers. The proportion of space given to pop music more than doubled compared to 1965, which gave this field the lead. Pop music's position in the elite papers also improved, but here the improvement was less spectacular. More sensational in this category of papers was the drop in attention to *classical music*: the proportion of space devoted to this discipline declined to 8.5%, less than half the percentage for 1965. In the popular papers, on the other hand, the position of classical music hardly changed.

Applied art and *theatre* were surpassed by other art forms in both categories of newspapers, but the decline in popular papers' attention to theatre appears to be much bigger. Theatre lost its second place in the popular papers' hierarchy and ended up in a sixth position, only just ahead of *cabaret*, *musical* and *show*. The latter category became far more prominent in popular papers than it was in 1965, accounting for more than 8% of the total space devoted to art, while elite papers' attention to such performances remained very low.

When it comes to *visual art*, the difference between elite and popular papers decreased: in the latter papers, visual art outstripped a number of other art forms and has gained a higher-ranking position comparable to its place in elite papers. Elite and popular papers also made similar choices with respect to pop music and film. Both categories increased the amount of space for pop music and film. However, popular papers were far more radical in this respect by devoting about one third of their art pages to these two disciplines, whereas this percentage amounts to less than 20% in elite papers. In addition, elite papers clearly gave priority to the coverage of film.

5. Discussion

5.1. *Driving forces behind the increase in newspapers coverage of the arts*

Drawing on Fig. 1 and the flood of research into the cultural participation of the Dutch,⁷ a number of factors can be identified which lie at the root of newspapers increased attention to the arts.

⁷ Much of this research was conducted by the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP). In the past decade, this institute published a number of comprehensive, long-term studies into the cultural behaviour of the Dutch population, among others, Knulst (1989, 1995); Van Beek and Knulst, 1991), and Knulst and Kraaykamp (1996).

5.1.1. Increase in the number of people interested in the arts

In the Netherlands, as in other Western societies, the material and social circumstances for arts consumption and other forms of entertainment generally became more favourable between 1955 and 1990 (Knulst, 1989: 264):

- Most important is that each successive generation enjoyed more education than its predecessors. Between 1970 and 1990, the proportion of thirty-year-old people who had finished a form of higher secondary or higher education grew from 40% to 70%. By 1990, 20% of the thirty-year-olds had a college or academic degree (Knulst, 1989: 49). Because of extended education, the cultural competence of the general public increased and the group of people interested in the arts thus grew.
- The total number of free hours per week rose by more than 30% (1989: 261) and employees had more than twice as much to spend per leisure hour in real terms (Knulst, 1996: 52).
- Government support aimed at increasing participation in the arts grew strongly, which means that, financially speaking, many artistic events and products became more accessible to more people.
- The rise of a permissive morality and the removal of traditional religious and socio-political barriers implied that moral and ideological restrictions on people's involvement with art and entertainment diminished. In the period studied, a considerable number of Dutch people left the church and most people no longer accepted religion or ideology as a guideline for their behaviour in the field of art and entertainment (Knulst, 1989: 75ff.).

The combination of these factors led to a marked increase in the number of people interested in a wide spectrum of art forms. Numerous participation studies have established that the unprecedented expansion of higher education was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in high arts consumption; they invariably reveal sizable groups of people who report enjoying or consuming no cultural goods or activities outside of television. Nevertheless, compared with pre-war generations and even the 1950s, the group of people who are able and willing to participate in a broad range of artistic activities and to inform themselves about the supply of cultural products and events has grown.

5.1.2. Competitors and advertisers

The position of newspapers compared to other news and information media is a second major factor in their increased coverage of the arts and other specialized subjects (Schneider and Hemels, 1979). In the post-war period, the disappearance of the so-called family weeklies paved the way for a greater amount of newspaper coverage of many subjects other than news, which can be summarized under the heading 'entertainment'. In the same period, the rise of the opinion weeklies represented an important new competitive force. In the struggle for the attention of (in particular, more sophisticated) readers and the favour of advertisers, newspapers were forced to take due note of the contents of these new weeklies and to anticipate their offerings.

The main effect was that newspapers began to devote more editorial space to background information, opinions, and specialized features on subjects such as art and culture.⁸ The extension of radio broadcasting time and the rise of television, which forced newspapers to reconsider their function as providers of news, led to a further pressure on newspapers to apply themselves to the provision of background information and opinions. Hence, the competition from other media seems partly responsible for the increase in Dutch newspapers' coverage of special interests, the introduction of specialized sections and, last but not least, the substantial increase in the number of art pages.

An additional stimulus to devoting more space to the arts was probably the growing recognition that the arts are not only important from a cultural perspective but also as a source of advertising. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a visible growth of newspaper advertising stemming from institutions involved in the production or distribution of cultural goods. Advertisements for newly published books accounted for the majority of advertising on the elite papers' art pages in the period under review, which has probably boosted the supply of information about literature in those papers. Advertisements by cinemas and visual art institutions (both galleries and museums) are two other important fields of (cultural) advertising, which might partly explain the prominent position of film and visual art in both categories of newspapers.

5.1.3. *Supply-related developments*

Developments on the supply-side represent another major force in the extension of newspapers' coverage of the arts. Since the 1960s, the supply of all kinds of cultural products - books, theatre and music performances, films, festivals, exhibitions, etc. - has increased explosively. In some areas, it has become so big that nowadays even professionals among the audience are overwhelmed by the abundance. As in other Western countries (Heilbrun and Gray, 1993: 227 ff.), the supply was boosted by the increased availability of government subsidies and additional private funds for the arts. It also expanded as a result of the growing numbers of graduates of cultural and artistic training programs, eager to present themselves to the public. This led to a growth in the number of intermediate agencies, which in effect also pushed up the supply.

The expanding supply and the resulting battle for audiences led to an increased pressure on newspapers from cultural producers and disseminators, who were keen to gain recognition for their activities and to bring their products to the public's attention. This pressure was probably difficult to resist, given the dependence of art journalists on these organizations as a major source of information and the ties of many art newsmakers with the Dutch art world. Such relationships had traditionally been manifold, but they seem to have gained in importance in the period under

⁸Newspapers' answer to the threat posed by the opinion weeklies, which flourished in the 1970s, seems to have been an adequate one. In the 1980s, Dutch opinion weeklies suffered severe losses in circulation (Cebuco, 1985), while the aggregate circulation of Dutch newspapers increased (*Gids voor de informatiesector*, 1995/1996: 185 ff.).

review. In addition, as already mentioned, publishers, museums, and other organizations involved in the production or distribution of cultural goods became more important as advertisers.

But the most obvious effect of the apparently ever-growing cultural supply was an increased need for information about the products and events on offer, both on the part of the growing number of professionals in the arts and on that of cultural consumers. For them, choosing from the large, rapidly changing and heterogeneous supply became an increasingly complex task, which newspapers were able to facilitate by extending their provision of information. However, facilitating the process of deciding which products to buy or what events to attend was not the only service rendered in this fashion. By increasing their information supply about the arts newspapers also catered to the wish of many readers to be kept abreast of current events and developments in the domain of art and culture. Many people who are not frequent novel readers or moviegoers, nonetheless want to keep themselves informed about what is going on in the world of literature or film. For an increasing number of people, the consumption of information *about* literature and other art forms has become a cultural activity in its own right that has partly replaced the primary activity of novel reading, movie-watching, etc. This seems to be particularly true of individuals with high occupational status who tend to have wide-ranging networks that require knowledge of a wide variety of cultural forms (DiMaggio, 1987: 444).

5.1.4. *Professional pressures*

Finally, the provision of cultural information in Dutch newspapers was probably also boosted by the growing number of graduates in the arts since the 1960s. The Dutch educational system did not offer enough jobs, which forced many of the new graduates to find an alternative for the traditional jobs in teaching. This led to a marked increase in the number of academics who aspired to (and found) jobs as (free-lance) publicists for literature and other art forms in newspapers and other media.

5.2. *Newspaper coverage of specific art forms in relation to changing audiences*

The developments in the coverage of specific art forms seem closely related to changing cultural interests among the Dutch population and the interests of younger generations in particular. In the period under review, Dutch newspapers became increasingly concerned with the question of how to attract new, younger readers in order to build a readership for the future.⁹ This concern was certainly not unwarranted, as each successive generation spent less time on reading newspapers than its predecessors (Knulst and Kraaykamp, 1996, 1998). Newspapers had to face the challenge of holding on to these new, more individualistic generations, increasingly reared by parents who themselves belonged to the 'TV generation'.

In view of both their readership and advertisers, newspapers were more or less bound to adjust their provision of information to changing arts audiences. The

⁹ Newspapers in other Western countries were presented with the same problem (Bogart, 1981: 256ff.).

following briefly considers developments in the audiences for the performing arts and literature in order to illustrate this point.

The (relative) fall in newspapers' attention to theatre and classical! music corresponds to the declining interest among the Dutch population for live theatre and classical concerts in the period under review. Nowadays, people see and hear concerts and plays much more often at home on television or radio than they did in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1962, before the television era, a larger proportion of the Dutch population aged 12 and over attended a play (10%) or a concert (7%) at least every three months than in 1987, when both participation rates stood at 3% (Knulst, 1995: 60). However, different population groups have turned away from classical performing arts to varying extents. Groups which, in the long term, proved to be least interested in home entertainment (highly educated people without children) remained the most faithful to the theatre and concert hall. The segment of the population that spend the most on audio-visual equipment (groups with lower educational attainment - and children) gave up the theatre and concert hall to a much greater extent than average. Furthermore, young people became much less inclined to attend classical performing arts events than they were in the fifties and sixties (1995: 183). In view of the newspapers' efforts to attract new, younger readers, it is understandable that theatre and classical! music increasingly had to make way for those art forms which could count on more interest from youngsters such as pop music and film.

Once television had become an everyday thing in the Netherlands, there was a clear recovery in live audience figures (1995: 190). However, in terms of relative growth, classical concerts and, more in particular, subsidized theatre, were outstripped by pop music, musicals, and operas, whose audiences attend on an ad hoc basis between one and three times a year (1995: 73-76, 80). This development is in line with the changed distribution of newspapers' attention over various art forms. The proportion of space given to pop music and musicals grew strongly, while, in the 1980s, newspapers also devoted a larger proportion of their classical! music pages to opera. By 1990, items on opera accounted for 22% of the space devoted to classical music, as opposed to 7% in the 1970s.

The substantial increase in the amount of editorial space devoted to literature in the 1970s and 1980s is undoubtedly connected with the high participation in literary and other fictional reading as compared to the participation in other art forms, and with the strong increase in the consumption of literary books (mainly novels) since the 1970s.

While the participation rates for a number of cultural activities - in particular, attendance at theatres, classical concerts and cinemas (Knulst, 1989: Table 2.4) - decreased between 1965 and 1990, participation in book reading remained high. In 1990, about 52% of the Dutch population aged 12 years and over, had read one or more books in the previous month, which is about the same rate as in the fifties and sixties (Knulst and Kraaykamp, 1996: Table 7.2). These books consisted for about 75% of fictional reading matter (1996: Table 7.4). What changed drastically after that time, notably between 1955 and 1975, is the amount of leisure time spent on book reading. In 1955, the weekly average time that was spent on reading books amounted to 2.4 hours, as opposed to 1 hour in both 1975 and 1990 (Kraaykamp, 1993: Table 1.1).

However, compared to the (aggregate) weekly amount of time spent on theatre, museum, and cinema attendance (0.3 hours), the time spent on book reading remained fairly high (1993: 16).

Moreover, after the 1970s, there was a strong increase in literary book sales. Contrasting sharply with the declining trend in the Dutch general book market, the market for literary books continued to grow. In 1970, literary books accounted for 9% of the total turnover of general books. By 1990, their share had risen to 20.5% (Knulst, 1989: 42-49). In 1980, 4.6 million copies of literary books were sold, compared to 6.1 million copies in 1990 (*Gids voor de informatiesector*, 1995/1996).

5.3. Differences between popular and elite papers' coverage of the arts

As expected, the elite papers showed by far the strongest increase in attention to the arts. However, the general profile of their readership (less-educated, less interested in the arts) did not prevent popular papers from also expanding their coverage of the arts substantially. This might have been due to the growing recognition that a newspaper's readership is made up of different interest groups, including, in the case of popular papers, a group of readers who take a lively interest in the arts and whose interests should also be met. As mentioned already, Dutch newspapers showed an increasing tendency to cover the varied and segmented interests of their readers by running specialized sections and features on all kinds of subjects apart from their main news section. An additional explanation could be that popular newspapers turned their attention toward an 'upscale' target audience to ensure a steady stream of advertising income and thus cultivated the high-status groups among their readers by structuring part of their editorial content primarily for them.¹⁰

Underlying this line of argument is the assumption that newspapers and the people who make them actually know what their audience wants. This assumption is by no means unanimously supported by the research literature. Newsmakers tend to be strongly oriented towards the people in their immediate environment (colleagues, professional sources, and personal acquaintances) who, like themselves, belong to the higher-educated segment of the population. Research suggests that they have difficulties in recognizing the interests of their lower-educated readers. Evidence of such misperception by editors of their readers' news interests can be found in a 1977 Harris survey (referred to by Bogart, 1981: 239). This survey questioned 162 leading editors and journalists, along with a cross-section of the public, about fourteen different types of news. The newsmen greatly overestimated the public's interest in local news, sports, fashion, entertainment, and cultural news, while they underestimated their interest in political and international news. Hence, popular papers' increased attention to the arts could partly be the result of an overestimation of their readers' interest in the arts.

¹⁰ This has in fact been the main motive for *De Telegraaf* introducing a special section on business and finance (the 'Financial Telegraph'). This section was intentionally tailored to the alleged information needs of so-called 'decision-makers' in trade and industry to provide advertisers (such as airlines) with the opportunity to reach this important target group (Vasterman and Aerden, 1995: 71).

Nevertheless, the development of popular and elite papers' attention to specific art forms and genres suggests that both categories of papers have taken due note of the (diverging) cultural interests of their readers. For instance, popular papers have sharply reduced their coverage of theatre plays, while they have strongly increased the attention given to cabaret and musicals. This shift in attention corresponds with the growing popularity of the latter category of live performances (particularly) among the lower-educated segment of the population, and the sharp decline in this group's attendance of theatre plays. On the other hand, the increase in the amount of attention elite papers pay to literature seems prompted by the fact that their readers have remained far more faithful to this category of art than to a number of other art forms and that they are the ones who are primarily responsible for the strong increase in literary book sales. At the same time, elite papers appear to have adjusted their provision of information on literature to changing preferences among (higher-educated) readers, who have become mainly interested in works of narrative prose - literary novels and, more recently, also thrillers - while their interest in poetry has waned.

6. Concluding remarks

The analysis presented here shows that major changes in newspapers' coverage of the arts occurred between 1965-1990, resulting in a new hierarchy of art forms in terms of the proportion of space they receive. The art forms that benefited most from this reshuffle are pop music (both in popular and elite papers), literature and film (in elite papers), and cabaret, musical, and show (in popular papers). The big 'losers' in both categories of papers are theatre, classical music, and applied art, while visual art more or less consolidated its position. Dance received considerably more attention, but could not escape its low-ranking position in the papers' hierarchy.

These changes appear to be closely related to various developments and forces from outside of the newspaper organization. Although the influence of these external forces seems beyond dispute, many questions remain to be answered, notably with regard to their relative importance and their interrelations with the changing characteristics of the newspaper organizations and the art newsmakers involved. In addition, more information is required on the changing audiences served by these newspapers and art newsmakers' perceptions and attitudes with respect to these audiences.

The developments in newspapers' coverage of specific art forms suggest that the status of several art forms has changed considerably since 1965. Pop music and film seem to have risen on the cultural ladder, while theatre and classical music appear to have suffered a loss in status. However, the amount of newspaper coverage received is only one indicator of an art form's social valuation. In the case of theatre and classical music, other indicators do not point to a decline in status. Since the 1970s, government subsidies for both disciplines have grown explosively, specialized magazines on theatre and classical music have been introduced, and the number of scholars who have specialized themselves in the study of theatre and classical music has strongly

increased. Pop music and film, on the other hand, present a different picture. Apart from the increase in newspaper attention, other developments indicate that these art forms have enjoyed a growing recognition since the 1970s. Government subsidies for film and pop music greatly expanded, both fields met with a growing interest from cultural scholars, and specialized magazines on film and pop music have been introduced along with critical approaches which are highly comparable to those in the domain of literature and visual art (cf. Peterson and Simkus, 1992: 169).

Hence, while the conclusion that pop music and film progressed to a higher status seems justified, it seems wrong to conclude that theatre and classical music dropped on the cultural ladder or that the old hierarchy of art forms was replaced by a new one. Rather, a process of de-hierarchization seems to have been underway throughout the period studied, which commenced in the 1960s (DiMaggio, 1987; Connor, 1997 [1989]). Long-standing differences in valuation between cultural domains began to shift and the scope of 'legitimate', 'high' culture broadened to (encompass) additional art forms and genres such as pop music and the thriller novel. While these newly legitimized cultural domains adapted institutions and practices from traditional high culture areas - honorific prizes awarded by expert juries, specialized review magazines, etc. - the latter areas increasingly incorporated elements formerly associated with 'low' or 'commercial' culture such as consumer guides, bestseller lists and up-to-date marketing strategies (Twitchell, 1996).

This erosion of cultural boundaries stems from a combination of factors (DiMaggio, 1987), an important one being the growth of mass higher education. Since the 1960s, the group of higher educated people not only grew explosively, but also became more heterogeneous. Increasing numbers of students with lower-educated parents successfully finished professional colleges or university. Previous studies indicated that such upwardly mobile individuals take a particularly strong interest in high culture in order to compensate for their background (Ganzeboom, 1982; DiMaggio and Mohr, 1985). However, more recent data on the cultural behaviour of this group suggests otherwise. It shows that - probably due to the strong impact of early socialization in the family of origin - upwardly mobile individuals are less interested in traditional high arts and partake more of popular culture than higher-educated individuals who have experienced no or less upward mobility (Van Eijck: this volume). The ranks of the higher-educated and high-status professionals have become increasingly made up of people from middle- and lower-class backgrounds, while the group of people who have been raised on high culture has become a minority. This development could explain why the rise in the average level of educational attainment has not led to a corresponding increase in high arts consumption, but rather to a reevaluation of certain forms of popular culture. Rather than appropriating highbrow culture on their way up, social climbers seem to carry popular culture upwards along the social ladder. As more people pass through the same upward social trajectory, the pressure to meet one's desired or newly achieved status by participating in high-brow culture is likely to diminish further.

Of course, this not only applies to cultural consumers but also to the growing number of graduates who became professionally involved in the production and distribution of

cultural goods, and, last but not least, to the new graduates who entered the field of art journalism. As already noted, more information is needed on such changing characteristics of art newsmakers and their effect on art journalism's (re)valuation of certain art forms.

An important question is whether this valuation merely manifests cultural classifications as they exist in reality or whether art journalism's selective activity is a major force in the establishment and modification of such classifications. This is a very complex question to which there is no unequivocal answer. The coverage given to cultural artifacts seems not merely an expression of pre-existing cultural classifications. Rather, it is both that *and* a source of cultural classifications. In dealing with the cultural realm, reviewers and other art newsmakers make use of cultural classifications, magnify them, frame them, and feed them back to an audience. Their treatment of cultural artifacts imposes its own logic in creating a symbolic environment. It may serve as either a brake on or a catalyst for cultural change. By portraying certain artifacts as elements of 'low' culture or by simply ignoring them, art newsmakers may be magnifying a kernel of truth (in the sense that these artifacts are mainly appreciated by lower status groups), but the strength and pervasiveness of such symbols may make it more difficult for such artifacts to be accepted by other social groups; although media portrayals may reflect existing cultural classifications, they may also ensure that new types of classifications become conceivable.

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