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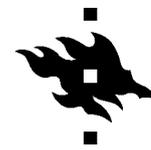
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Mapping Media and Communication Research: The Netherlands

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Abstract: The project 'Mapping of Media and Communication Research in the Netherlands' provides an overview of the main research institutions, current issues, main trends, and future challenges to media and communication research in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is a multicultural society with a large number of inhabitants in a densely populated area. The media system is a mixture of public and private institutions. The Netherlands is a strong research country and the field of media and communication research is well developed. Media and communication are researched and taught in many universities and there are several established research schools. The majority of the research institutions are located in Amsterdam, but important research is also conducted in Twente and Nijmegen. The main orientations of media and communication research in Holland are divided between social scientific communication research and humanities orientated media studies. Within communication research an empirical and quantitative approach is dominant, but also a qualitative cultural approach is favoured. Media studies is dominated by interpretative and qualitative methods and an analytical approach. The popular topics include new media and media technologies, political communication and journalism. Dutch media and communication research has a strongly international character, and Dutch scholars are at the forefront of media and communication research in Europe. The research schools attract a number of foreign researchers, and the Dutch scholars are visible in the international academic community.	
Keywords: The Netherlands, communication, media, research	

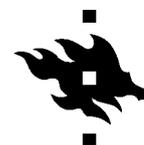


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Introduction

'Mapping Communication and Media Research' is an international project based in the Communication Research Centre (CRC, University of Helsinki). Its purpose is to examine the contents and trends in current research in communication and media in various countries. In June 2007 the project completed reports on media and communication research in seven countries: Finland, the United States, Germany, France, Japan, Estonia and Australia. The countries of the second phase of the project are Belgium and the Netherlands. The project is funded by the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation, which has funded similar projects on communication and media research in South Korea and United Kingdom.

The objective is to provide a general overview of communication and media research in the aforementioned countries. The project identifies the main institutions and organisations as well as the approaches and national characteristics of communication and media research in each country. The focus is on the years 2005 and 2006, but some parts of the project have sample data from a longer period. Data gathering and analysis of the first seven countries were carried out during the autumn of 2006 and the spring of 2007, and for the second phase of the project during during the autumn of 2007 and the spring of 2008. The source materials include secondary data from previous studies, existing statistics and primary data drawn from interviews with key persons in communication and media research in various universities and organisations. There are also specific case studies describing the special challenges of each respective country in every subproject. The project's main research questions are as follows:

- What kinds of communication and media research are carried out in each country?
- How do different approaches relate to each other?
- What is the relationship between communication research and the communication industries
- and what kinds of practical applications does the research have?
- On what is communication and media research focused in each country and what is the direction for the future?

Each country provides a unique context for communication and media research. Thus, research has been organised in different ways in each of the countries examined. In addition, the definitions

and conceptualisations of communication and media research vary among contexts and countries. Therefore, meaningful comparisons of research among different countries prove to be a difficult task. For example, the national media statistics of the countries studied are often based on incompatible data and methods. Therefore, this report will not provide statistically comparable data on the communication and media research of the target countries. Because of these kinds of difficulties in making comparisons, every sub report provides country-specific explanations for the concepts used and for its samples and methods.

To enhance meaningful comparisons among the sub reports, the research questions, research principles and structures are the same for each. The same organisation, themes and questions have also been used in the interviews. Each report starts with an introductory chapter, which briefly describes the target country and its media landscape, including its communication and media systems and its markets.

The most important part of the project are the interviews with key persons. The interviews produce primary data, not only about the facts of communication and media research in each country, but also evaluations and visions of the status and future of the research. These interviews create the backbone of the project; they constitute a unique collection of statements given by recognised researchers.

This report on Media and Communication Research in the Netherlands is prepared on the basis of recent evaluation reports of communication research in Holland and other print material combined with nine interviews with 10 informants. The thematic, in-depth interviews give views, and evaluations of the present state of academic research in the field of Media and Communication research in The Netherlands. These interviews are treated as unified data, and the individual informants are not distinguished in the body of the text. The gathering of data and the writing of the report took place during the autumn of 2007 and the spring of 2008.

The report is organised into five chapters: the Dutch media landscape; the research institutions and organisations; the main approaches in media and communication research, national characteristics; and future challenges. The first chapter sketches a brief overview of the Dutch cultural context and media system. The chapter starts with a short history, including the political and economic background that has influenced media policies and regulation. The second chapter presents an

overview of the most important research institutions and organisations in the field media and communication research, including the most important academic research schools, university departments, foundations and organisations. The third chapter presents research projects with a practical, empirical focus and which are undertaken in cooperation with the media and communication industries. The fourth chapter gives an account of the main approaches in Dutch media and communication research. The fifth chapter presents some of the national characteristics that are particular to Dutch communication research. The sixth chapter concludes the overview by presenting the future tendencies on media and communication research in the Netherlands.

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We wish to thank all the interviewees (here listed only by name, information on their expertise and affiliations can be found in references):

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Helsinki and Amsterdam, 30 June 2008,

Liina Puustinen, Peter Thomas and Mervi Pantti

1 The Dutch Media Landscape

The Netherlands, also called Holland, is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy located in Western Europe, lying between Belgium to the south, Germany to the east, and the North Sea to the north and west. Its twelve provinces constitute the European component of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which also includes the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba in the Caribbean. In 2008, the population of the Netherlands is estimated at 16,408,557. An overwhelming majority of the population regards its origin as 'Dutch'. More recently, the Netherlands has witnessed increasing immigration from non-European countries, particularly from Turkey, Morocco, Northern Africa and, following independence, the former Dutch colony of Surinam. The official language of the country is Dutch, a Germanic language, alongside several regional dialects of similarly Germanic derivation that enjoy official status in some provinces. Additionally, almost three-quarters of the population possess a relatively high degree of fluency in English. Enjoying a high standard of living, the Netherlands has the 16th largest economy in the world and currently ranks 10th in terms of GDP per capita. Its low inflation, low unemployment and high growth rates distinguish the Netherlands as one of the more prosperous zones of the European Union in recent years.

1.1 Dutch History in Brief

The geographical area known as the Netherlands was inhabited by Germanic tribes already in antiquity, when it came under the influence of the Roman Empire. During the Middle Ages, the Netherlands was included within the loose (and often nominal) grouping of states known as the Holy Roman Empire. It eventually fell under the rule of the House of Habsburg and was incorporated into the Spanish empire. Growing trade and affluence and the impact of the Reformation led to the stirrings of a movement calling for independence from Spain, eventually consolidated in the establishment of the Republic of the United Netherlands as a confederation of provinces in 1581.

The seventeenth century is remembered as the so-called 'Golden Age' of the Dutch Republic. The impact of Calvinism and the growth of a liberal mercantile bourgeoisie marked a period of international expansion and eventually an informal colonial empire, administered by the private

company of the VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or ‘United East Indian Company’, now commonly known as the ‘Dutch East India Company’). In this period, the Netherlands was one of the most economically powerful countries in the world. Domestically, it was distinguished by a tradition of liberal tolerance and cosmopolitanism (in part, necessitated by its trading relations), which attracted scholars and artists from other European countries (e.g. Descartes) and also led to the consolidation of one of the largest Jewish communities in Western Europe, centred on Amsterdam, once described as the ‘Jerusalem of the North’. The Jewish community played a decisive role in the early history of the Netherlands, both in trade and intellectual pursuits (e.g. Spinoza).

The early 19th century witnessed relative decline of the Netherlands on the world stage, as the new English industrial mode of production eclipsed the older mercantile model of Dutch capitalism. Towards the end of the 19th century, Dutch fortunes revived both internationally and domestically, with a stronger administration of its colonial holdings accompanied by increasing industrialisation at home. This period also witnessed an increasing articulation of the already significant system of dykes and barriers against the sea necessitated by the geographical position of the Netherlands, in its turn permitting a consolidation of urban developments. Older traditions of cosmopolitanism and tolerance of different cultures were also transformed in this period into a communitarian system of ‘pillarisation’ of Dutch society, which constituted an important informal basis for the modern Dutch State and its administrative apparatus.

The Netherlands remained officially independent during World War I. Occupation by Nazi Germany in WWII had a profound impact upon the country, the effects of which can still be observed in contemporary Dutch life. On the one hand, the Jewish population of Amsterdam was decimated, with many Jews being transported to concentration camps in the Eastern Europe. There remains a lively public debate on the extent of collaboration by Dutch public authorities and private persons in this process. On the other hand, lingering resentments and recriminations from the occupation period have led to an increased distance between Dutch culture and its closest Germanic neighbour. As a consequence, the post-War period has been marked by closer relations between the Netherlands and the Anglophone world, the United States in particular.

The history of the Netherlands following liberation from Nazi occupation has been one of steady economic growth and a rise in living standards under the aegis of the Dutch social welfare State,

with intermittent periods of social conflict and political realignment. While the 1960s and 1970s were marked by strong left-wing protest movements and social-democratic governments, the 1990s witnessed the emergence of a distinctive Dutch compromise between the welfare state and neo-liberal policies, sometimes referred to as the ‘Polder model’ (in imitation of the ‘polders’, or land reclaimed from the sea, and the consensual social model on which they rely).

Political crisis in the early years of the Twenty-first century led to a realignment of the party political system and gave rise to new political formations on both the left and the right. Nevertheless, despite increased parliamentary partisan conflict and a public rhetoric stressing divisions in the society, a consensus model of decision-making and resolution remains firmly entrenched in Dutch society. International trade (as evidenced by significant corporate expatriate communities, particularly in Amsterdam) remains an important feature of a Dutch economy that, despite recent fluctuations, remains capable of delivering a relatively high standard of living and social services to its population.

The Netherlands Today

The Netherlands in 2008 can be regarded as a laboratory of the trials and tribulations of the latest phase of ‘globalisation’ of the world economy and the processes of European integration. Reactions to these processes range between a confident ‘cosmopolitanism’ that embraces new challenges, on the one hand, and a defensive provincialism that resists such processes by favouring the local and ‘indigenous’, on the other.

In terms of its cosmopolitanism, the Netherlands has old traditions of internationalism, inherited from its trading and colonial past. It was a founding member of the European Union (EU) and its predecessor the European Economic Community (EEC), the ‘Benelux economic union’ (with Belgium and Luxemburg, following WWII), NATO and the OECD. It is also host to a number of significant international juridical institutions, based in The Hague, including the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Court. Strength in the fields of trade and financial services in particular has benefited Dutch society and contributed to its healthy economical position. Additionally, the Dutch are noted travellers and students of foreign languages, with a relatively lower rate of monolingualism than its closest European neighbours, though comparable to other European countries of the same or smaller size, such as the Scandinavian or Nordic countries.

However, particularly recently following political crises surrounding multiculturalist realities and policies, elements of Dutch society have retreated from its traditional reputation for openness and liberal tolerance. Despite the essential role played by migrants from many different countries and cultures at many levels of the Dutch economy, and despite the already strict integration policies imposed by the Dutch State upon migrants, some currents in Dutch political life have argued for tighter controls of immigration policies. Three big parties have dominated the political arena for the last decades: the socialists (PvdA), the Christian party (CDA) and the liberals (VVD); in different combinations they have formed coalitions. While the Netherlands can boast one of the largest and, in electoral terms, successful left wing political parties in Europe, there has also been an increase of centre right and populist/far right political forces. In 2002, the Dutch political system was shaken by the murder of popular politician Pim Fortuyn, which took place just before the general elections. Fortuyn focused in his campaign on social issues like the integration of foreigners, rising crime and the welfare state and was about to cause a landslide in the Dutch political system. The murder also led to discussions about the role of the media, which were accused of being indifferent to problems of 'common' people. Political and social polarisation are indices of deeper unresolved questions regarding national identity and direction in a country whose traditional tolerant cosmopolitanism at home is now coming under pressure from the new forms of cosmopolitanism that are perceived by some as imposed from without.

1.2 The Dutch Media System

The history of the Dutch media system is closely tied to the history of the Dutch Nation-State in the 19th and 20th centuries. The most significant aspect of this is the so-called tradition of 'pillarisation' (*Verzuiling*) of Dutch media institutions, alongside other aspects of daily life in the Netherlands. Unlike other European countries characterised by centralisation in a strong State administrative apparatus, such as, e.g. France, Dutch society has traditionally been organised according to the various communities (usually, religious, though increasingly in the nineteenth century with political dimensions) that composed it. Some of the most significant 'pillars' included the Catholic, Protestant, liberal, social democratic, socialist etc. Each community possessed and maintained its own network of institutions and services, ranging from housing, health care, hospitals, sporting clubs and mutual aid societies to educational institutions, cultural associations and media outlets. In effect, Dutch society was composed of a series of different societies existing alongside each other in the same juridical framework in a relation of mutual, relative tolerance. More recently, however,

from the 1970s onwards, these old allegiances have begun to break down, partly under the pressure of external pressures (such as European Union integration), partly under market-based drives towards increased commercialisation.

In 1989 the first commercial television station (RTL Veronique, later renamed RTL4) started transmitting Dutch programmes from Luxembourg. Soon a second programme followed. In the 1990s the broadcasting law was changed and commercial broadcasting was made possible in the Netherlands both for Dutch and foreign companies.

The legacy of pillarisation in the Dutch media system can be observed in the continuing identification of particular publications with a traditional community, though such associations may be more historical than real and active in current media production and consumption. Newspapers are still often classified according to religious denominational affiliations of the past, though such themes no longer figure in editorial policy or readership. There is no longer any party press, unlike in many other European countries. In terms of broadcasting, the continuing presence of broadcasting associations, sometimes with memberships of (tens of) thousands, attests to the enduring power of certain communitarian identifications and interest groups. The absence of a national government owned television or radio station can also be attributed to the older form of institutional organisation, as these media were traditionally the preserve not of a centralised State bureaucracy, which played a merely administrative role of coordination, but of the various 'pillars'.

The effects of increasing commercialisation, on the other hand, are noticeable in a number of factors, including the disappearance of party political newspapers, the abolition of a telecommunication monopoly and the increasing concentration of media ownership – at last estimate, over 90% of circulation of newspapers was controlled by three companies. However, unlike countries such as France, Italy, the UK, Canada, the US and Australia, this process has not yet given rise to the emergence of the figure of the Media Tycoon such as, e.g., Berlusconi, Murdoch etc. The Dutch media system therefore often exhibits realities than are not in accord with perceptions. Furthermore, the pace of change in recent years means that even recent estimates and assessments of the liberalisation of the Dutch media system will soon be in need of revision. Arguably, despite an historical perception of increasing openness and diversity, the partially deregulated Dutch media system is now more homogenous, in terms of content, and more

concentrated, in terms of ownership, than is the case in other European countries with older traditions of free market media competition. (van der Eijk 2000).

1.3 Media Policies and Regulations

The Dutch Constitution (*Grondwet voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*) guarantees freedom of expression, including freedom of the press. Article 7, Paragraph 2 states that ‘radio and television will be regulated by law’. Paragraph 3 of the same article extends these rights also to ‘non-traditional’ media. The Dutch media therefore operate with a minimal amount of governmental interference regarding content. The Media Law regulates radio and TV, but there is no state supervision (censorship) in advance regarding the content of broadcasted programmes.

Government regulation of the Dutch media system is largely limited to defining the limits and rights of both public and commercial audio/visual broadcasting and print media. Media policy in the Netherlands is mainly broadcasting policy, defining the organization of the public broadcasting system. The government’s policy regarding print media is focused on preventing disruptions of the free market due to vertical and horizontal media concentration. It compares favourably with other comparable European countries (Freedom House, 2001). Significantly, the Constitution does not distinguish between Dutch citizens and non-citizens, which gives the Dutch media environment an openness to international developments. The ‘Television Without Frontiers’ EU Directive has now been implemented in Dutch legislation.

Commission for the Media supervises the implementation of the media law regarding public, as well as commercial television and cable operators. It also allocates broadcasting time to national, regional and local public media and gives licenses to commercial stations, and, in addition, monitors the performance of public broadcasting.

The Netherlands Competition Authority (NMa, established in 1998) oversees ownership concentration and sanctions misuse of economic power in all sectors of the market, with a particularly impact upon mergers and cartels in the media sectors. While the government is planning to limit the concentration in newspaper ownership (to a maximum share of 35%), there are also moves to relax regulations on cross-ownership between different branches of the media, particularly between newspaper publication and television broadcasting.

The Dutch Press Fund plays an important role regarding media diversity, one of the key objectives of Dutch media policy. The Press Fund is an independent authority that supports newspapers, magazines and websites with loans or subsidies. The Press Fund also supports research projects and joint efforts to improve minorities' access to the media.

Media regulation in the Netherlands largely consists in self-regulation by the industry itself or its consumers. In the Netherlands, press policy has always been based on self-regulation by the sector. Only very limited government intervention has taken place. Unlike some countries, for example, the Dutch press does not have a national press ombudsman, who oversees implementation of the rules on the integrity of journalists, the origins of news sources, etc. Some of the larger newspapers, however, have their own ombudsmen for investigating complaints and policy matters. In contrast, the policy practices in the broadcasting sector are characterised by a tradition of strong public intervention.

The Concession Act (the newest version of Media Act, implemented in 2003) obliges the Netherlands Public Broadcasting to organize an evaluation of the public broadcaster's performance every five years. It must install an external assessment commission consisting of independent experts. This assessment is meant to strengthen the legitimacy of public broadcasting. It is also seen as an instrument for monitoring whether broadcasting organisations contribute to the diversity of public broadcasting and in order to ensure that new social groupings have access to open public broadcasting. (Bardoel, 2004).

Pressures for self-regulation within the audio-visual industry resulted in the *Kijkwijzer* (Watchguide), established in 1997, aimed at protecting young viewers against possible harmful effects through rating TV programmes, games and videos/DVDs for content not suitable for children.

The most important organisation of journalists is the *Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten* (NVJ). It has approx 9000 members and functions as a combination of trade union and professional association. (http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/netherlands_the/)

1.4 The Press and Broadcasting – An Initial Overview

Newspapers

Newspaper publishing has a long history in the Netherlands, dating back to the first years of independence of the Dutch republic. The newspaper market was traditionally organised according to the pillar system, though mergers, takeovers and acquisitions have altered this arrangement in recent years. Main features of the press market today are high readership, decline in circulation, and growing concentration and foreign ownership. There are seven national daily newspapers: *De Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *De Volkskrant*, *NRC Handelsblad*, *Trouw*, *Reformatorisch Dagblad* and *Nederlands Dagblad*.

The five biggest national dailies are based in Amsterdam (*De Telegraaf*, *de Volkskrant*, *Trouw*) and Rotterdam (*Algemeen Dagblad*, *NRC Handelsblad*). *De Telegraaf* and *Algemeen Dagblad* (*AD*) are considered ‘popular’ newspapers while the others are understood as ‘quality papers’. Popular papers use more colour, bigger headlines than the so-called quality papers and devote more space to crime and show business, but they have little in common with papers like *Bild Zeitung* or *The Sun*. *De Telegraaf* and *AD* can be considered as (politically) to the right, *NRC Handelsblad* is a liberal-conservative paper while *Volkskrant* and *Trouw* are more to the left. *Nederlands Dagblad* and *Reformatorisch Dagblad* are conservative Christian newspapers.

Nine regional newspapers have a circulation of more than 100,000 in 2005 with *Dagblad de Limburger* (circulation 174.000) as the largest. One-paper-cities are common in the Netherlands because of heavy concentration in the daily regional press.

There are four free dailies in the Netherlands. *Spits* (by *De Telegraaf*) and *Metro* (by Metro International) both distribute circa 450.000 copies through public transport and other crowded places. Both papers started in 1999. In 2007 two other national free daily were introduced: *De Pers* by independent investor Marcel Boekhoorn, which increased total circulation to almost 1.5 million, and *Dag* (publisher PCM).

In addition, four specialized newspapers exist: *Het Financieele Dagblad* (business), *het Agrarisch Dagblad* (agriculture), *Cobouw* (construction) and *Nederlandse Staatscourant* (government).

Magazines

Traditionally, magazines were also connected to pillars. Increasing commercialisation and private ownership has tended to break down this system, but affiliations still subsist, at least in terms of the public perception. Today, magazine publishing is heavily concentrated and traditional magazines have lost readers.

Major current affairs magazines include the leftwing *Vrij Nederland* and *De Groene Amsterdammer*, while the centre-right publications of choice include *Elsevier* and *HP/de Tijd*. Additionally, there are a large number of general interest and speciality magazines that cater to all tastes and lifestyles, including Dutch editions of major international publications.

Other Publishing

Book publishing has also traditionally played an important role in the Netherlands. It is home to several major international academic presses, both commercial and connected to Universities. Despite fears that the Internet and new media technologies would lead to a decline in this sector, book publishing has recently registered improved sales performances, even though this does not seem to correspond to actual usage.

(<http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/methoden/toelichtingen/alfabet/m/market-share.htm>)

Radio

There is an old tradition of radio broadcasting in the Netherlands, which is among the oldest systems in Europe. It was initially developed in relation to the interests of Dutch colonialism. It also was traditionally organised on a communitarian basis, though again, market liberalisation of recent years has reduced this element. Major radio stations include 3FM, ArrowClassic Rock, Arrow Jazz FM, Caz!, KXRadio, KinkRadio, Radio 2 (Netherlands), Radio 5 (Netherlands), Radio 538 and Radio Veronica.

Television

The Dutch broadcasting system is dominated by commercial channels, on the one hand, and a strong public broadcasting system, on the other. The Netherlands has three nationwide channels for publicly funded television: Nederland 1, Nederland 2 and Nederland 3. These three channels

broadcast programming organised by broadcasting organisations, which emerged from the pillarisation system. Regional and speciality programming complete the range of publicly funded television in the Netherlands.

There are also now many national commercial broadcasters, following legalisation of commercial broadcasting in 1988. These channels include RTL Nederland, RTL 4, RTL 5, RTL 7, RTL 8, SBS, NET 5, Veronica and TMF 9. Given the size and population of the country, the Netherlands now has one of the most competitive and wide-ranging commercial broadcasting sectors in Europe.

International channels available in the Netherlands include e.g. Cartoon Network, BBC international channels, CNBC, CNN International, and Deutsche Welle. Some of these channels broadcast Dutch language programming, while others employ subtitles. A significant selection of programming is thus broadcast in English and, to a lesser extent, French and German.

Cable penetration in the Netherlands is one of the highest in Europe: approximately 95 per cent. Since December 2006 all TV signals have been broadcast in digital format only.

Internet and ‘New Media’

The Internet and new media technologies, as in many other comparable countries, has been the largest growth sector in the Dutch Media system over the last decade. The Internet now figures prominently as a preferred medium for the diffusion and consumption of news and current affairs. While this initially had some impact upon the usage of more traditional means of media distribution, diversification of existing enterprises has ensured an integrated system that balances between the old and the new.

1.5 Media Markets and Ownership

Newspapers

All newspapers in the Netherlands are at present privately owned. Additionally, the collapse of the pillar system from the 1970s onwards has witnessed an increasing concentration, both of newspaper ownership and, across the media spectrum, of major companies with shares in different publication and broadcasting enterprises, despite cross ownership regulations. Only seven independent publishers remain (in 1970 there were 35 independent publishers). Three publishing companies control 90 per cent of the total circulation. PCM Uitgevers, publisher of four national dailies (*de*

Volkskrant, *NRC Handelsblad*, *AD* and *Trouw*) is owned by UK-investor APAX. NV Holdingmaatschappij De Telegraaf publishes the newspaper of the same name, the Dutch newspaper with the highest circulation (with a market share of 18.3%). Additionally, Wegener NV (in which Telegraaf holds a minor stake) has large holdings in the regional press market.

Magazines

There are at least 8,000 different magazine titles available for Dutch readers. These can be divided in different categories. First, there are small but very profitable scientific journals (often in English) and many professional magazines. Magazines for the general public have a wide reach. Magazines are now also privately owned though historically connected to pillars. Magazine ownership partially overlaps with newspaper ownership; a subsidiary of De Telegraaf, De Telegraaf Tijdschriften Groep, publishes general interest and specialised magazines. Other major magazine and journal publishers include Elsevier and Wolters Kluwer. A subsidiary of the Finnish media group Sanoma WSOY have more recently acquired a significant number of Dutch magazines (circa 70). These include both ‘traditionally’ Dutch publications such as *Margriet*, *Libelle* and *Nieuwe Revu* and Dutch editions of international publications, such as the Dutch edition of *Playboy*. More than half of the circulation of general interest magazines are published by Finnish publisher Sanoma.

Other publishing

The large newspaper groups are also involved in the book-publishing sector. PCM Uitgevers, for example, has a number of book imprints, including *J.M.Meulenhoff*, *A.W. Bruna*, and *De Boekerij*. Generally, however, book publishing in the Netherlands has remained relatively independent from major players in other media sectors.

Radio

Like television, Radio broadcasting remains strongly marked by the presence of the public broadcasting system, organised by the association of Dutch broadcasters, the *Nederlandse Omroep Stichting* (NOS). This organisation oversees five radio stations. Additionally, there are also 15 private national radio broadcasters, which account for slightly over half of the market share. Bertelsmann, News Corporation, Talpa and Advent International are the most significant enterprises in the commercial radio sector.

Television

The NOS also oversees the organisation of public broadcasting, conducted by eight independent broadcasting organisations representing major interest groups in Dutch society. Public broadcasting has a market share of 36.6% and is thus represents the largest segment of the television market.

The largest commercial broadcaster is RTL Nederland, in which Bertelsmann has a large share. SBS Broadcasting B.V. also operates three channels. Together with Bertelsmann, they control slightly under 50 % of market share. Television broadcasting in the Netherlands, despite recent liberalisation and privatisation, has quickly developed towards strong centralisation and concentration. The Dutch system tends to be guided by a corporate model and an increasing articulation of interests across different sectors of the media system.

Internet and ‘New Media’

All traditional media are currently investing in online formats to reconnect with old audiences and to gain new audiences. Internet penetration is very high in the Netherlands with more than 80 per cent of the population online, which makes it understandable that the media is looking online for audiences and revenues. Several players in other sectors of the Dutch media system now figure strongly in Internet and ‘new media’ ownership. For example, Wegener Multimedia, a subsidiary of the regional newspaper publisher Wegener NV (partially owned by De Telegraaf group) has gained a significant share in this market. The high rate of cable penetration in the Netherlands has also led to a convergence between cable television provision and Internet services. UPC, Essent and Casema are the most significant players in this regard. The Internet and ‘new media’ sector displays clearly what is arguably the defining feature of the contemporary Dutch media landscape: liberalisation rapidly followed by diversification of existing media-based enterprises and new forms of concentration of (cross-) ownership. (International Federation of Journalists 2005).

1.6 Media Reception and Consumption

Newspapers

Newspaper consumption in the Netherlands is in decline, though it still displays a higher per capita consumption of major dailies than the European average. Dutch newspapers have seen their circulation decrease from 4.7 million in 1997 to 3.6 million in 2007. At the same time, almost two million free newspapers are distributed daily, reaching a market share of more than 30 per cent. In

2004 and 2005, 65 per cent of the Dutch read a paid newspaper on a daily basis; when free papers are included this rises to 71 per cent. To attract more readers, most papers have tried to innovate their products by switching to tabloid formats, introducing new sections and design and experimenting with multimedia features and joint ventures with other media. Circulation of paid dailies is going down by 2 to 4 per cent every year for the last five years. More than a million people in the Netherlands (8% of the population) read free dailies only.(Bakker & Scholten, 2007).

The following table provides statistics on the major national dailies over the last decade.

Table 1 Circulation (x 1000) national daily newspapers 1996 - 2004

	1996	2000	2004
De Telegraaf	760	808	727
Algemeen Dagblad (AD)	401	360	283
de Volkskrant	368	346	306
NRC Handelsblad	272	272	254
Trouw	122	126	108
Reformatorisch Dagblad	57	58	59
Nederlands Dagblad	30	32	35
total	2.010	2.002	1.772

(based upon Bakker 2005, 2)

Decline in readership need not pose a problem for the continuing profitability of publishers, however, due to a combination of factors, including a relatively high cover price and the fact that a significant share of a Dutch newspaper's revenue is derived from advertising and classified advertising. Furthermore, 80% to 90% of all daily newspaper sales in The Netherlands are subscriptions, which indicates a relatively stable market basis that will be eroded more slowly than in other media environments with higher rates of individual sales.

Magazines

There are approximately 8000 different magazines and journals on the Dutch market. These include both scientific journals published for an international audience in English, professional journals/magazines and general interest/speciality magazines. Women's magazines and TV Guides are particularly popular: women's magazines have a combined circulation of 1.3 million every week and circa. 540,000 gossip magazines are sold. TV guides reach almost every household (4.2 million in 2005) (Bakker & Scholten, 2007). Magazine publishing is one of the most strongly performing

sectors of the Dutch media system and may even account for recent growth in bookshop sales (see below).

Other Publishing

Television, the Internet and ‘new media’ have had a negative impact upon consumption of printed material. According to Pieter Vankan, the Dutch now spend less time reading books (down from 5 hours per week in 1990 to under 4 hours in 2005), while the amount of time spent watching television and surfing the Internet has increased to over 15 hours per week. However, this trend does not seem to have impacted negatively upon the book publishing industry; ‘in 2007, turnover of bookshops grew by nearly 2.5 percent relative to the previous year’. (<http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/vrije-tijd-cultuur/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2008/2008-2401-wm.htm>).

Radio

On average, the Dutch listen to the radio for more than three hours a day. It is divided between public broadcasting (44 per cent market share) and commercial stations (49 per cent market share) (Bakker & Scholten, 2007). A significant factor in recent developments has been the rise of commercial broadcasters, who have seized a significant market share previously held by the National public broadcasters (and therefore the different broadcasting organisations of the pillar system).

Table 5 Market shares radio in the Netherlands 1990-2004

	1990	1994	2002	2004
National public broadcasters	70	42	32	30
Regional broadcasters	11	18	15	14
Commercial broadcasters	13	13	45	49
rest	6	10	8	7

(based upon Bakker 2005, 5)

Television

Television plays an increasingly important role in Dutch media consumption. In 1988 the average Dutch viewer spent 124 minutes a day in front of his TV set, while this has risen to 195 minutes in 2005. The commercial station RTL4 and public channel Nederland 2 were the most popular stations in 2005. Commercial broadcasters together have seen their market share rise to 50 per cent in 2005;

the three public channels lost viewers and now have a market share of 35 per cent. (Bakker & Scholten, 2007).

Internet and ‘New Media’

The Internet is one of the sectors of the Dutch media system with the highest rates of growth over the last decade. The Netherlands now has one of the highest rates of broadband connection in Europe, with almost 50% of Dutch households connected with high-speed connections. 10 million Dutch use the Internet on a regular basis, which amounts to almost 70 per cent of the population over 6 years old. Many people connect to the Internet through broadband; 60 per cent of the Dutch homes have a cable or ADSL connection.

The Internet has reduced the usage of traditional media such as newspapers and book publishing, though this has not necessarily impacted negatively upon sales of products in these sectors. Conversely, the magazine sector does not seem to have suffered as much as other print media, possibly due to niche marketing strategies. Given the infrastructure, it is expected that Internet and ‘new media’ technologies, including mobile access, will continue to grow strongly in coming years.

2 Research Institutions and Organisations

The media and communication research in the Netherlands is a strong field. The universities have developed national and local research centres designated as research schools. The communication research schools are more developed in the field of social sciences, and many of the humanities oriented research schools are multidisciplinary. This chapter gives an overview of the academic media and communication research and also presents some of the industry-based research institutions.

2.1 Academic Research Institutions – a Brief History

The origins of media and communication research in the Netherlands date back to the studies on public opinion processes driven by mass media campaigns shortly after World War II. The first Lector in Press Propaganda and Public opinion was appointed at the University of Amsterdam in 1947, which can be regarded as the start of communication research in Holland. Chairs of press journalism were established at the then Catholic University of Nijmegen (now Radboud University) (1950) and at Free University of Amsterdam (VU) (1958). (Communication Research in the Netherlands 2001-2007, iii-iv).

Many of the first generation researchers and teachers were editors of newspapers. They were also influenced by the German ‘Science of the Press’, *Zeitungswissenschaft*. By the late 1970s and mid-1980s communication science gained an official position as discipline. The second generation of communication scholars were ‘full academics’, who had received a formal education in communication sciences. They were informed by American empirical research and to a lesser extent also by the qualitative French influence. An important platform for Dutch communication research was *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap*, the Dutch journal for Communication Science, which is still the only Dutch-language journal in the field in the Netherlands and in Flanders, Belgium.

During that time the universities were separated from religion. By the 1980s the ideological atmosphere in the universities changed. Nijmegen, originally a Catholic institution, was inclined more to the right, while Amsterdam tended more to a leftist ideology, with a mixture of socialism and liberalism. The University of Amsterdam has supported the critical perspective and has had relations with the city and the society. However, nowadays three-quarters of MA students chooses

the commercial communication programme and one-quarter chooses the socially oriented communication research (public opinion, political communication, entertainment). Research on organisational and corporate communication is also active. Additionally, in Nijmegen there is more interest among students in media business. The empirical social scientific research tradition is still strong in both universities, when compared to the UK, which is more textually and qualitatively oriented.

Until the 1980s teaching and researching communication and media was conducted within established academic disciplines such as psychology, sociology, literature studies and linguistics. Since the 1980s, these fields have quickly become independent and separate disciplines in Utrecht (UU), Amsterdam (UvA), Nijmegen (RU) and Tilburg. In the 1990s new communication departments were also founded at the University of Twente (UT) and the VU University Amsterdam.

In the faculties of art and humanities in Utrecht, Nijmegen and Amsterdam, the areas of film theory and history had been studied since the 1980s, usually within the department of theatre studies. Since the beginning of the 1990s, film studies, combined with television studies, have been independent study programmes at the University of Amsterdam and University of Utrecht. In the new millennium, the new media (www, digital games, web-based media) have entered into study programmes. Film and Television studies have been renamed to “Media Studies” and “Media and Culture”.

2.2 Research Institutes and Schools of Communication Research: an Overview

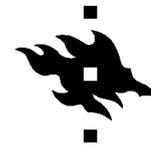
Media and communication research in the Netherlands is divided into two main fields. On the one hand, communication science is to be found in the faculties of social and behavioural science; on the other hand, media studies are located in the faculties of humanities and arts. The tradition of communication research (previously called mass communication) in the Netherlands is older than research on media. There is very little collaboration between these two fields.

The division between communication science in the faculties of social and behavioural sciences and media studies in the faculties of arts and humanities is still clear-cut, but recently there has occurred some crossing of the borders of academics and co-operation between the fields. The whole field of

media and communication research and education has gone through a significant expansion during the last 10 years. First, there was a major expansion of students in the 1990s in the field of communication, and then during the last eight years there has been professionalisation and internationalisation of research.

All in all, the departments in the field of media and communication research that are located in Amsterdam teach almost 50 per cent of all communication students in the Netherlands.

The following chart gives an overview of the most important research institutes and schools in both communication research (social sciences) and media studies (humanities) at the national and local level. The most important research schools are described in more detail in the following chapter.



Research schools in communication and media studies:

Communication research	Media studies
<i>National research schools</i>	
<p>NESCoR – Netherlands School of Communication Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications, management and policy • Media, entertainment and culture • Persuasive communication • Political communication and journalism 	(No national research schools, but Media Studies represented in several interdisciplinary research programmes.)
<i>Local research institutes</i>	
<p>ASCoR - The Amsterdam School of Communications Research (UvA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasive communication • Media, journalism and public opinion • Media entertainment and popular culture 	
<p>Department of Communication Science (VU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: message characteristics and receiver process 	
<p>TWICoR - Twente Institute for Communication Research (UT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing communication and consumer psychology • Media, communication and organization • Psychology and communication on health and risk • Technical and professional communication 	
<p>Department of organization communication (RU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional communication • Persuasive and instructional documents • Professional communication in foreign languages 	
<i>Local interdisciplinary research institutes, with separate communication and media programmes</i>	
<p>NISCO – Nijmegen Institute for Social and Cultural Research (RU)</p>	<p>ASCA – Amsterdam school for cultural analysis (UvA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media and Culture • Transnationalism and multiculturalism
<p>IBR – Institute for behavioural research (UT)</p>	<p>OGC – Research institute for history and culture (UU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging media, comparative media, media culture
<p>Mansholt Graduate School for Social Sciences (WU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication and space for change</i> 	<p>ILLC - The Institute for Logic, Language and Computation (UvA)</p>

(Based upon Verkenningcommissie Media- en Communicatiestudies 2007)

National Research Schools

NESCoR - The Netherlands School of Communications Research is the national communication science research school and Ph.D. programme in communication science, which was launched in 1999. NESCoR unites the Dutch Universities offering teaching programmes in communication science that share the orientation of social and behavioural traditions. The research school includes the VU University Amsterdam (VU), the University of Amsterdam (UvA), the Radboud University Nijmegen (RU) and the University of Twente (UT). NESCoR is thereby related to all bachelor, master, and research master programmes in communication science in the Netherlands; all together, they teach on average 2500 graduate and undergraduate students. In 2000, the joint effort of the universities was accredited by the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences KNAW, as local universities would not be able to receive recognition on their own.

NESCoR provides a network in both national and international academic communities. It aims at fostering collaboration between the universities. For example, NESCoR is one of the organisers of the annual Dutch language conference in communication science, the ETMAAL. The school has over 90 full members, who are all researchers in communication science with a publication track record in international journals and books. The main activity of NESCoR is the English-language Ph.D. programme, which includes some 70 students. On average, 15 dissertations are defended annually. Approximately 40 % of the PhD students of NESCoR are from the two universities located in Amsterdam. The school receives funding from the Dutch national science foundation NWO as well as a number of other science foundations. It also conducts contract research for a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Media Studies does not have a national research school or institute and thus research is conducted within the departments or local research institutes, e.g. Huizinga Institute – Research Institute and Graduate School of Cultural History (Media scholars participate in the following research programmes: Conceptual history; identity and representation, political culture, cultural processes in context).

Local Research Schools in Communication Research (Social Sciences)

ASCoR - The Amsterdam School of Communications Research, a research institute connected to the Department of Communication Science at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), is the largest institute of its kind in Europe. ASCoR was founded in 1997, and today more than 40 senior

researchers are permanently associated with ASCoR. Moreover, its English-language PhD programme hosts more than 20 PhD students (in 2007, 28 students). ASCoR offers a four-year international PhD programme in Communication Science.

The ASCoR Research Programme 2006-2010 uses a tripartite division in research domains, based on primary functions of information and communication, namely: 1) to inform, b) to persuade, and c) to entertain. Thus, research is carried out in three research programmes: *Media, Journalism and Public Opinion, Persuasive Communication, and Media Entertainment and Popular Culture*. Each of these research programmes covers a variety of research projects.

The programme *Media, Journalism and Public Opinion* addresses the information function of communication. It studies how news and other information are produced, their content, how audiences use and process this content, and what effects it has on individuals, groups and society. The programme contains two main research areas: 1) *Production and content of news and other societal information*. Besides looking at the meaning that is constructed in the media and to what extent it represents the diversity of opinions and issues in society, this approach also addresses how media policies and economic and managerial conditions foster or impede the organisation of a public communication system for an open and informed society. 2) *Uses and effects of news and information*. Research within this area studies how citizens, organisations and institutions use media and communication and what effects it has on individuals and groups. The group has a number of internationally recognised scholars, to name a few: Jan van Cuilenburg works on the conditions for and consequences of media diversity; Jo Bardoel concentrates on changing arrangements in media governance; Kees Brants works on political communication and election campaigning and Claes de Vreese, who is currently also the Scientific Director of ASCoR, works on the impact of news on political participation.

The programme *Media Entertainment and Popular Culture* addresses the entertaining role of communication. The programme's orientation is interdisciplinary (combination of communication theory, psychological, sociological, and cultural theories) and its approach is multi-methodological (for instance, experiments, content analysis, surveys, focus groups, participant observation). The core questions of the programme are 1) which factors explain people's use, attention and attraction to entertainment media and popular culture, 2) what are the patterns of use and consequences of

media entertainment and popular culture, and 3) how are cultural identities and citizenship articulated in entertainment and popular culture? The programme has three shared themes: a focus on entertainment media content (for instance, reality TV, games, sports, friend networking sites), a concern about ‘vulnerable’ audiences (for instance, children, ethnic minorities), and a focus on exploring the processes underlying the uses, appeals and reception of everyday entertainment and popular culture. Patti Valkenburg’s research on media, children and adolescence is internationally acknowledged. Liesbet van Zoonen is a specialist in the area of how popular culture constructs identity and citizenship.

The programme *Persuasive Communication* addresses those communication processes that are intended to achieve persuasive goals, such as marketing communication, health education and public information campaigns. The research is aimed at understanding the processes, uses and effects of mediated persuasive communication: factors that explain individuals’ selection, attention and attraction to commercial and public information. Three projects of the programme are 1) *media strategies in campaigns* (e.g. mixing persuasion with entertainment, multimedia campaigns), 2) *message strategies in mass media campaigns* (studying conditions under which message strategies such as persuasion are effective), and 3) *effects of reception contexts* (for instance, intercultural aspects, social influence by peer groups and family communication, personality traits). The programme leader is Peter Neijens, an expert in media advertising and public information campaigns.

The approaches in ASCoR research programmes are multidisciplinary: key theories of communication science are combined with methods and theories from, for example, political science, sociology, psychology and history. At the core of the research agenda is developing and empirically testing theory.

Communication Science at the **VU University of Amsterdam** is organised in a single programme within the Department of Communication Science at the faculty of social sciences. The Department was established as an independent unit in January 2003. Most of the researchers previously worked in other departments at VU studying issues related to media and communication and were then united in the new department. The Department has grown rapidly; it has a staff of some 20 persons, currently directed by Peter Vorderer.

The VU Department of Communication Science is known for its special interest in political communication and its emphasis on the approach of media psychology. The focal areas of the

department are identified as: media and social interaction, political communication, emotion and communication (emotion theory, social psychology), entertainment research, marketing and new technology, health communication, organisational communication, motivational processes (motivation research on human behaviour). The areas of expertise are: 1) Automatic content analysis (with the internationally known scholar Jan Kleinnijenhuis), 2) Social psychological approach to media related phenomena, and 3) New media and new technology.

The research programme of the VU Department of Communication Science focuses on two aspects of communication: *message characteristics* and *receiver processes*. The first research line of *message characteristics* investigates how people are influenced by media content (primarily on political issues), with an agenda setting and framing approach. The second research line of *receiver processes* is focused on micro-level effects of communication by analysing psychological processes in receivers in both individual and group interaction settings. The central research methods are content analysis and experimental studies.

The Department of Communication Science does not have a separate research institute in communication science, but it hosts an interfaculty institute **CAMeRA@VU** (Center for Advanced Media Research Amsterdam) within the VU University Amsterdam of Amsterdam. Among the founding faculties are: social sciences, humanities, psychology and pedagogy, and science. There are some 30 researchers in the member faculties connected to CAMeRA@VU. The organisational structure is loose and only four people are working in the management. The institute is a mixture of basic and applied research.

CAMeRA@VU is focused on (new) media developments, and the psychological approach is dominant. The purpose is to combine new media research with the areas of learning and entertainment, language use and multimodal communication, emotion regulation, health, social interaction and psychological wellbeing. The focus in terms of types of media is on digital games, multimedia, virtual reality, intelligent bots and agents and mobile and static interactive systems. Examples of the ongoing projects include: in the fields of health communication and computer sciences, a project on developing artificial medical doctors and therapeutic personnel as avatars; in the field of research on entertainment, the detrimental effects of video games; new modes of PR and internet advertising.

University of Twente is another small university with a department of Communication Science. Research is organised in **The Twente Institute for Communication Research** (TWICoR), which has recently witnessed rapid growth, with a doubling of the number of tenured staff and a trebling of the number of PhD candidates between 2001-2007. In 2004 it was incorporated into **The Institute for Behavioural Research** (IBR), a new institute that employs both basic and applied interdisciplinary research in the context of problem solving for the “knowledge society”. Within this new structure, TWICoR functions as a research platform and maintains its membership of NESCoR.

TWICoR aims to investigate the effects of human communication on individuals and groups in their social context, as well as the determinants of these effects. The focal areas include: new media, marketing, organisational communication, health and risk communication (psychological orientation), textual analysis and usability research (linguistic orientation).

Several research programmes in the TWICoR research platform in the IBR deal directly with communication research. Programme 1, *Communication and Social Influence*, is directed by Ad Pruyn and Erwin Seydel. This programme deals mainly with the determinant social psychological processes of communication effects. Behavioural theories are applied to various fields of communication, including health care communication, risk communication and marketing and consumer behaviour. Empirical research and surveys constitute an important research instrument of this programme. Programme 2, *Design, Implementation and Use of Communication Means*, is directed by J.A.G.M. Van Dijk and M.F. Steehouder. It focuses on communication means and processes, the effectiveness of communication means for individuals, organisations and societies. There is a particular focus on organisations. The programme adopts an interdisciplinary conception of communication science and aims to further develop theoretical approaches in the field, as well as to contribute to debates about the role of new communications means in society.

(Communication Research in the Netherlands, 2001 – 2007).

Local Interdisciplinary Research Institutes

NISCO – Nijmegen Institute for Social and Cultural Research is a research institute in the faculty of social sciences of the **Radboud University Nijmegen** (RU), one of the oldest and most important universities in the Netherlands. In 2000, the Communication programme of RU was

ranked second in the national research evaluation. Communication researchers increasingly cooperate with other NISCO members who represent other disciplines of social sciences, and all recently started PhD projects are supervised by at least one NISCO staff member outside the Communication programme.

In line with the NISCO mission statement, the Communication programme of RU aims to explain the role of mediated communication with regard to the general NISCO themes of *cohesion* and *inequality*. In relation to the theme *cohesion*, three questions are central for the NISCO communication programme: How do media representations reflect the society? What are the possible consequences of these representations for society? What is the impact of media policy on media representations (e.g. studies on the performance of public broadcasting)? Two questions are relevant for the theme of *inequality*. The first question concerns access to media and use of media by specific groups in society. The second question addresses the way in which societal groups are represented in the media (studies on the representation of asylum seekers and ethnic minorities). To answer these questions the Communication programme has employed a variety of research designs. The main designs are content analyses, surveys and interviews.

Comparative research has been strongly encouraged in this programme. Examples of comparative study include the study of developments in European television news, of children and European media environments, of the portrayal of Germany and The Netherlands in regional newspapers between 1946 and 2000, and the development of sensationalism in Dutch Television News between 1995-2001.

Research within the Communication programme has been conducted in three lines of research: 1) *media use in everyday life*, 2) *the role of media in society and culture*, and 3) *media campaigns*. These three research lines correspond to the research interests of the four chaired professors of the department of Communication Science of RU: Hans Beentjes (media and children, media campaigns), Jo Bardoel (media policy), Karsten Renckstorf, (media use as social action), and Fred Wester (mediated interpretative systems).

Media use in everyday life research line takes the social action model of mass communication as a starting point. The model considers the audience as a central element in the mediated communication process. In addition, communicators such as journalists are seen as important

participants in communication processes on the basis of their specific objectives, intentions and interests. The main research issues are routines in media use, the use of television news, and media use by ethnic minorities. Studies on routines have drawn attention to the embeddedness of media behaviour in the context of daily life. Accordingly, research on television news has pertained to watching television news in everyday settings. Research on ethnic minorities has addressed the media experience of these groups.

The role of media in society and culture. A common denominator in the research projects of this line is the idea of mass communication as a cultural phenomenon: communication is considered to be the core element in collective meaning-construction processes. Furthermore, media texts and production and reception dynamics are considered to be strongly dependent on each other as well as central elements in the on-going maintenance and transformation of culture (i.e. collective beliefs, values, norms and behaviours). Specific research projects in this line focus on the media and identity, cultural consequences of media (studies on, for instance, values and norms in story lines in television drama and scientific coverage in Dutch newspapers), and media and community (studies on ‘virtual’ communities and professional communities within organisations)

Media campaigns. The third line of research investigates mediated communication processes that are designed to achieve changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of the target groups. Specific studies address the topics of health information campaigns and advertising brands.

Communication Strategies Group is located at **Mansholt Graduate School for Social Sciences**, which is part of **Wageningen University** (WU). The Communication Strategies Group focuses on the role of communication in processes of change. Research approach is interdisciplinary, including communication studies, (rural) sociology, social psychology and anthropology. The research topics range from technical innovations to social change, in the thematic areas of agriculture, health and environmental management – in countries of the south and north. The research group aims at improving problem solving capacity of individuals, groups and communities in relation to individual and collective problems. The objective is to generate scientific knowledge that contributes to scientific discussion and improves professional practice.

Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) is located within the faculty of humanities at the **University of Amsterdam** (UvA). This interdisciplinary research institute brings together scholars active in literature, philosophy, visual culture, religious studies, film and media studies,

argumentation theory and science dynamics. The ASCA curriculum provides PhD training with a broad vision of cultural phenomena and a specialised knowledge of underlying philosophical issues. ASCA conducts research on media within two programmes *Transnationalism and Multiculturalism* and *Media and Culture*.

One of the projects within Programme I *Transnationalism and Multiculturalism* is called *Transnational Media*, and it focuses on the role of transnational media (especially film and television) in a globalised and multicultural world. The project study for example the questions of identities formed in the context of multiple intercultural encounters and multicultural societies. The sub-projects investigate the media landscape in diasporic communities in various postcolonial counties and in the Western world (especially the Netherlands).

Programme IV, *Media and Culture* (Programme Directors: José van Dijck and Thomas Elsaesser) has seven projects which all investigate media in its larger cultural context.

Project 1 *Digital Ontologies* deals with digital technologies and computers, which have become ubiquitous in all social areas. The project outlines questions on “new media” theory vs. media theory as whole: what new cultural forms and formats does “new media” generate? How are network cultures (through internet, LANs, wireless networks, cell phones etc.) constituted, and how do they operate? The five areas of the programme are: 1. media theory, 2. digital games, 3. interface: visualisation, 4. network cultures and 5. sound technologies.

Project 2 *Photography, Film & Displacement* brings together interdisciplinary research projects concerned with still and moving images and their production, circulation and presentation in contemporary culture. Areas and topics are diverse, such as photographic and audiovisual archives and their use in research; the recontextualisation of film and photography documents into museum artefacts; visual anthropology and issues of representation; film and digitisation; and documentary practices.

Project 3 *The Rhizotarium* looks at audiovisual images from a ‘rhizomatic’ perspective starting from the theories of Gilles Deleuze. The concept of the rhizome is understood as a metaphor for the grass-like network structure of the organisation of the brain, which is seen as the junction between art, philosophy and science, the three domains of thinking.

Project 4 *Cinema Europe* focuses on Europe and its cinema(s). The research touches the questions of e.g. “the nation” (as in “national cinema”) and the idea of the artist as creator of a unique vision (as in ‘auteur-cinema’).

Project 5 *Imagined Futures* is concerned with the conditions, dynamics and consequences of rapid media transfer and transformation. Media encompassing all imaging techniques and sound technologies are studied in historical perspective. The project is composed of three strands: 1. historical, 2. theoretical, and 3. ‘applied’ (product- and practice-oriented covering all applications of (media) technologies, ranging from social issue uses, locative media projects, to commercial schemes, military applications, and public space projects).

Project 6 *Television & Popular Culture* aims to understand contemporary television in its present textual, affective, technological, and institutional dimensions. The project studies three types of practices: 1. practices of production, 2. practices of reception, and 3. practices of critique. These practices involve all aspects of television and popular culture: specific texts, the producers and users, and their contexts from a Cultural Studies approach.

Project 7 *The Structure and Rhetoric of Multimodal Discourse* looks into multimodal means of various media (for example, websites and blogs combine verbal information with visuals and sounds, often providing considerable freedom in the order in which information is accessed). The central areas are: Multimodal metaphor, Relevance Theory, Graphic design, the role of language in films, within the genres of documentary, comics and animation films, and advertising.

ILLC - The Institute for Logic, Language and Computation at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) combines researchers from the faculty of science and the faculty of humanities for interdisciplinary projects. The disciplines involved include logic, mathematics, computer science, linguistics, cognitive science, artificial intelligence and philosophy. ILLC focuses on studies of fundamental principles of encoding, transmission and comprehension of information. Emphasis is on natural and formal languages, but also other information carriers, such as images and music, are researched.

OGC – The Research Institute for Culture and History at the University of Utrecht (UU) includes one project group dedicated to media studies (led by Frank Kessler). The group’s research focuses on the cultural construction of media. The project has a strongly historical and comparative

approach and it attempts to bring together different dimensions (economic, socio-cultural, technological, aesthetic), particularly in terms of media interactions with audiences.

Communication Departments (without specified research schools in communication or media studies)

The VU University Amsterdam also has teaching and research in the field of media and communication in the faculty of arts. The faculty offers BA and MA programmes in Communication and Information Studies and have research groups on language system and use, and mediation. The dominant research approach is mainly cognitive linguistics (combination of linguistics and psychology) with a quantitative methodology.

The University of Utrecht has a Department of Media Studies with an international MA programme in media studies. The department also has a strong research profile with the common nominator of cultural construction of media. The focal areas of research are noted as emerging media (cinema studies, television history, and research on digital media), comparative media studies (historical, thematic, and inter-medial comparison), media cultures and media dispositifs (discursive constructions, economic strategies, and socio-cultural functions, as well as technological factors, modes of audience address, and aesthetic norms). The Media Studies Department at Utrecht has a broad historical approach and comparative research design.

Erasmus University Rotterdam, faculty of history and arts, has recently launched the Department of Media and Journalism. The new department has two professors, and one assistant professor. The department does not have organised research teams, nor does it offer PhD education, since the main activities are so far concentrated around teaching the bachelor's and master's programmes. The focal areas of the master curriculum are: Media and Society, and Media as Cultural Industry. The department is growing and has dynamic international networks. The University of Rotterdam also has a research centre of corporate communications that conducts academic and applied research.

The University of Groningen has a department of Communication and Information Studies that offers BA and MA programmes in Communication and Information Sciences, Information Science/Humanities Computing, and Journalism.

At the University of Leiden, the Department of Rhetoric has recently started a programme of journalism and new media. The MA programme and research conducted by the small staff (10 persons of which 4 full-time) is focused on journalism and new media work. The programme of journalism aims to bring a more practical point of view to the faculty of arts and therefore most of the part time teachers of the programme are journalists, copywriters or similar. The areas of the research range from argumentation, rhetoric, media industry, media work, media hype, urban legends, criminal journalism to representation of ethnic minorities. As methods the researchers rely on surveys, content analysis of, for example, websites, discussion groups and TV programme surveys, media effects approach. There are no large research projects going on but the researchers are active in organising symposia and conferences (Crime Media, New Journalism for Digital Media, Rhetoric and Society).

The Radboud University Nijmegen also has a recently established department of Comparative Arts and Cultural Studies, in the faculty of arts. One of the interdisciplinary research areas of the Department is visual culture and film studies.

2.3 Polytechnics

Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim Polytechnic in the city of Zwolle has a Faculty of Journalism and Communication that has study programmes on Communication Studies and Journalism. The polytechnic trains students to work on newspapers and magazines or as reporters or programme makers for radio, television and the Internet.

The faculty has a staff of 250 and 1800 students. In 2004 Windesheim created an alliance with the VU University of Amsterdam, as part of the governmental policy of locating more research in polytechnics and bringing a practical orientation to the universities. A few university researchers from VU work part time professors at the polytechnics and give MA courses on research, theory and methods. The master students of the universities are also participating in the practical courses of media and journalism at the polytechnics.

Hogeschool Utrecht's Research Centre for Communication and Journalism has also hired a research professor from the University of Amsterdam who is leading research group Cross Media Content of seven researchers. The research group focuses on journalism, development of quality journalism, research journalism, development of new digital forms of journalism, convergence,

multitasking, multiskills, digital publishing. The approach is empirical research that is applied to how journalists work, and how they teach and train future journalists. The research centre is a mixture of basic and applied research connected to the industry of journalism and media. The theoretical and methodological background of the research is in the framework of political economy, economic theories, methodologies of social sciences, quantitative approach (statistics on market shares etc., readership data, circulation, surveys).

2.4 Other Important Institutions

Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities (QANU) is an independent organisation, which works within the statutory framework set up for the assessment, accreditation and funding of university education and research in the Netherlands. QANU conducts universities external assessments of academic education and research programmes, and advice on ways of improving internal quality assurance. QANU's services include: peer review of university education and research, support for submission of applications for accreditation from universities in the Netherlands and abroad, and advice on improvement of internal quality assurance.

QANU is authorized as an assessment agency by the **Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO - Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie)**. The organisation supervises the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and the Dutch-speaking area of Flanders in Belgium.

The Royal Science Academy (KNAW) hosts a **Virtual Knowledge Studio (VKS) for the Humanities and Social Sciences**. VKS started at the beginning of 2006 in order to support researchers in the humanities and social sciences in the Netherlands in the creation of new scholarly practices and in their reflection on e-research in relation to their fields. A core feature of the Virtual Knowledge Studio is the integration of design and analysis in a close cooperation between social scientists, humanities researchers, information technology experts and information scientists. This integrated approach aims to provide insights into the ways e-research can contribute to new research questions and methods.

The commercial sector has a great deal of research agencies in the Netherlands, which conduct applied business oriented research in media and communication. **TNO - Technical Scientific research laboratory** - is a major private research organisation that makes surveys and clearances for various industries and government. The areas of research are varied and among them is the media sector. Other commercial research organisations that also deal with the media in the Netherlands are, for instance, TNS Nipo, Center Data, Motive Action, Gallup.

The large broadcasting companies, the public NOS and the commercial RTL, also have their own research departments for audience measurements and marketing research. These departments have close contacts with some academic media and communication scholars. The researchers are sometimes hired in projects as advisors, but they do not often conduct applied research without a basic research point of view.

3 Research and Practice of Media and Communication

The Dutch media and communication research is well financed by the universities and foundations when compared to other fields of science. Applied or business orientated research is not common in the academic communication research in the Netherlands, but it is typical for the research to have strong ties to the practice of media and communication. The scholars co-operate often with the media companies or public organisations.

3.1 Funding of Academic Research

The research funding of the Dutch media and communication research is divided into three categories: the first category is the university funding; the second, the public foundations research project funding and individual grants (for example, for PhD students); the third category includes contract research with private or public institutions or companies. The universities's operation costs and research in the Netherlands are mainly funded with public money from the first and second category. The third category is not very common in the field of media and communication but it is increasing in particular at the independent research institutes.

The substantial funding source for research in the field of media and communication is the **Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)**. NWO is a general funding organisation for all academic disciplines of research. Researchers can apply for subsidies within research programmes as defined by NWO or as apart of a Free Competition (the research object is put forward by the researcher). Personal grants are intended to support researchers in different stages of their scientific career. The most prominent and highly esteemed is the Innovation Research Incentives Scheme, consisting of Veni grants for researchers who have recently taken their PhD, Vidi grants for researchers who want to develop their own innovative line of research and appoint one or more researchers, and Vici grants for senior researchers to build their own research group. Currently, ASCoR has two Vici-holders: Prof. Dr. Patti Valkenburg and Prof. Dr. Claes de Vreese.

The science foundation money is increasing and the universities budgets are decreasing. The graduate schools need increasingly to seek for money from foundations or elsewhere. The major research centre at the University of Amsterdam, ASCoR, has received much funding for its projects from the NWO; therefore, partnerships with industry are less important in this context. They are in a situation where they can choose the applied projects that are interesting and also beneficial for their interests in basic research. In ASCoR half of PhD students (about 15 of circa 30) are funded by the university (first category), about 10 receive funding from the science foundation or, for example, EU research council projects, and the last part of the projects (5 PhD students) are sponsored by media corporations, which are chosen according to their relevance in terms of the focal research areas of ASCoR.

Some projects are also funded by the Royal Science Academy, European framework programmes, EU research council and networks of excellence like COST. Many of the research schools like NESCoR were founded in order to join the forces of a number of universities for applying for funding for PhD education. The second stream of funding has increased significantly during the past years, as communication studies has become an established field in the Netherlands.

The polytechnics are receiving an extra budget from the government in order to increase research. The first category of funding is therefore most significant at present. For example, the Cross Media Content research group in Utrecht Polytechnics has two types of research. The first is independent academic research which, however, has a practical orientation and empirical focus. The second type of research is contract research that is funded by industry (for example, a newspaper or media company, or governmental organisation). But the purely applied and business oriented research is quite rare in the Netherlands in the field of media and communication (which is different compared to e.g. Flanders, where they have an important branch of business-oriented research mainly coordinated by the IBBT).

In general, Dutch communication scholars consider contact with the industries of media and journalism to be very important, and there is a significant amount of research with a practical orientation without any significant financial ties.

Funding of Doctoral Education

As mentioned, NESCoR has an important role in gaining funding for doctoral work. In the year 2007, 16 NESCoR doctoral students defended their theses. The PhD students are trained as researchers, and they are encouraged to start publishing in journal articles already while working on their dissertation. The recommended time span for the doctoral dissertation work is 4 years, but the median is around 4,5 years. Doctoral education is well structured and there is a more solid basis for funding doctoral work in the Netherlands compared to other European countries.

The main sources of funding are the universities' grants and NWO grants for projects that often include PhD work. The doctoral students are fairly well paid: the salary is around 1700– 2500 Euros/month, the wage increasing progressively if the work is progressing as planned. The students receive a bonus of 3000 Euros if they finish the dissertation in 4 years. Moreover, a 1100 Euros grant is given for publishing the dissertation and for promotional purposes. The PhD students in the graduate schools are required to reserve 15% of the working time for teaching in the department. The PhD students are also funded for participating in national and international conferences once a year.

The Dutch doctors in the field of media and communication have very good chances in finding employment at the level of their degree. As an example, there is a zero unemployment rate for ASCoR PhD students; 60% of ASCoR PhD graduates are employed as academic faculty.

3.2 Research Meets Practice

In the research area of media and journalism it is quite common that the Dutch researchers have connections to practitioners in the media institutions. It is common for Dutch scholars to function as advisors or consultants in practical issues which are close to their research interests. Moreover, there are larger projects that involve several researchers and students of BA or MA programmes. Still, this kind of research commissioned by the industries or public bodies are mainly based on bilateral contracts with a specific researcher or a group of researchers and the institutions, meaning there are not many institutionalised arrangements.

In general, knowledge of journalistic practice and media work is considered to be very important among the Dutch communication scholars. The governmental policy for academicising the

Polytechnics is also encouraging the universities to offer practical courses on media work to their students.

Practice oriented projects provide good data for research and also for communication students' courses. It is important that the students can work on real and up to date data. This also helps the students to become familiar with the broadcasting institutions and media production. The practice-oriented projects are not sought for external funding, even though they are considered as part of the third category of funding.

Most partners of practical problem solving research are press companies, national and regional broadcasters and local administration. The projects are realised in co-operation with the media company's research departments that provide basic data on audience shares and ratings. The research departments are usually focused on gathering quantitative basic data, and they are not advanced in qualitative audience research. They therefore ask for advice from the academic media researchers.

Professor, at the Department of Communication at VU University of Amsterdam, Irene Costera Meijer is specialised in solving problems in media institutions. She has advised the broadcasters NOS (*NOS Journaal* on how to reach out to young viewers), VPRO and KRO and some local broadcasters. She has worked on, for example, the representations and practices on multiculturalism in public broadcasting, quality of television programming (the dilemma of defining the quality of the programs vs. audience figures), how journalists deal with Internet and citizen bloggers. Currently Costera Meijer is working on local media and local democracy, with questions such as: how can local broadcasters improve their social efficiency? And how can local media give people a sense of citizenship and promote social cohesion? The project is undertaken with the city of Rotterdam and local television channel in Amsterdam AT5. In 2007, she had a similar project on a large scale, headed by the Mayor of Amsterdam, on local reality of a soap opera. It was an audience research combined with production research and content analysis with six researchers and 60 communication students.

An example of a project with practical orientation in ASCoR is the project *Media Responsibility and Media Governance*, which investigates the new arrangements of media governance in the changing media environment and criticism and debate on media. The project deals with such questions as how media is showing accountability to citizens, public and politicians, and media responsibility. The

project is also examining how media responsibility is put into practice at the governmental level and in public broadcasting. The data of the project relies on content analysis of policy documents and interviews in the companies.

Research on policy point of view is sometimes done with Media monitoring institutions, for example, audience research department of NOS (public broadcaster), commissariat for the media – media commission, Social and cultural planning agency (longitudinal studies since 1975, every two years), TNO (Technical Scientific research laboratory).

Contract Research

The Dutch communication departments have a strict policy that contract research has to contribute to basic scientific knowledge. The interviewed researchers say that they receive many requests from companies, but often have to refuse because the nature of the research is not scientific. Contract research is accepted only if it contributes to the academic research agenda and the programmes in the curriculum (i.e. students' education).

The researchers are not only concerned about preserving academic objectivity, but the project management is also very complicated and time consuming. This increases the work load of the administrative staff of the departments. However, the policy for accepting contract research varies from institution to institution. For example, in 2007, the percentage of contract research of the annual budget was 6 % at ASCoR at the University of Amsterdam and 18% at TWiCor at Twente University.

Most contract research is done in the field of advertising and commercial communication research, and it usually includes consultancy work or various kinds of data gathering and analysis. The researchers of organisational communication in ASCoR have conducted projects on market competition and diversity; another project was conducted on the music industry sponsored by the copyrights institution of the Netherlands.

Yet, the future trend is that the importance of the second and third category of funding is growing in the field of media and communication in the Netherlands. This means that the contract research is increasing. Governmental policy aims to distribute the research funding on the basis of competition. The NWO funds are limited and there is more money available in industry. Some new

research centres or institutes have already been created for serving the purposes of both applied and basic research.

For example the research group on Cross Media Content at Utrecht Polytechnic (led by Piet Bakker) is so far funded by its parent institution, but it is expected to become financially independent from it by attracting second and third category funding. The Cross Media Content research group is known for research on journalism and especially free newspapers. The research group conducts practice oriented research on journalistic work and journalist training. It is also researching the problem of journalism dealing with the digital environment. The research group works on developing business models for media in the transition from traditional to new media.

The interfaculty institute at VU University of Amsterdam, CAMeRA@VU, is a mixture of basic and applied research. The university funds the institute for the first five years; after that, it should be independent, running on the basis of collaboration money. The institute is therefore seeking partners with companies (already existing applied research projects with, for example, Philips, Amsterdam Zoo going online – science communication, entertainment communication), foundations, and public administration. CAMeRA@VU is emphasizing the interdisciplinary approach, and believes that it is necessary in order to meet the requirements of the complicated research problems coming from the business and public organisations.

The **Foundation for Fundamental Research for Commercial Communication (SWOCC)** is a **special organisation** which gives grants for business oriented research projects and PhD work. The foundation money is raised by the fees paid by 150 companies for membership of the foundation. The SWOCC organises an annual ‘business meets science’ conference, which attracts both researchers and practitioners.

4 Main Approaches to Media and Communication Research

According to the report of the Foresight Study committee that has mapped out the existing studies in the area of communication, media and information in the Netherlands and made proposals for future research and practises, a garden-variety of new research topics has emerged in recent years. These topics include media and cultural heritage, media and technology, intermediality, digitalisation of media, the role of media and multimedia in conflicts, the changes in journalistic ethics and organisation, the relationship between public and commercial media, the development of creative industries and the role of search engines and digital games in social environments (Verkenningcommissie 2007).

In its report, the Foresight Study committee has also indicated a number of dominant social trends that will direct communication and media education and research in the near future. These trends are 1) increasing use of media (*mediatisation*), 2) *digitalisation*, and 3) increased dependency information technology (*informatisation*). Consequences or directly related aspects of these trends, and therefore also vital for communication and media research, are *commercialisation*, *globalisation* and *intercultural considerations*.

This chapter gives an account of the main research fields, themes and approaches based on the interviewed Dutch communication scholars and information given by the universities in their websites and reports.

4.1 Variety of Research Fields and Themes

Political communication is a strong research area within the social scientific tradition. For example, there is a solid tradition on the mediation of the Dutch political elections (media coverage, polls, content analysis and so on), and there are large international comparative projects on communications and European elections. The study of the political role of media in society is a strong area in ASCoR at the University of Amsterdam, but it is also a main focal area at the VU University Amsterdam Communication Department that has a psychological orientation.

Political communication overlaps with the field of *Journalism*, which is a popular research topic in Dutch communication research. The questions deal with the transformation of journalism in the epoch of new media and also the new social and political circumstances of journalism. For example, there is research on journalism in Europe in the political context. In particular, the *News* seems to be a particularly intensively researched area, (considering that there were six panels on various aspects of news media in the *Etmaal 2008* conference). The news research handles the production (the work at the news desk), content (the meanings constructed by media) and uses of news information by audiences.

Media policy and governance research has strong roots especially at the ASCoR. It has been the most visible part of Dutch media and Communication research in the international arena because of researchers such as Denis McQuail and Jan van Cuilenburg. This area is also characteristic of the communications department in Nijmegen (for example, Nick Jankowski).

Commercial communication including organisational communication, marketing and advertising is also a popular field with strong support by the Foundation for Fundamental Research for Commercial Communication (SWOCC).

New media, new information and media technologies (ICT) is a strong research area in the Netherlands. The transformation of communication technologies and cultures, the Internet and the uses of the Internet and ICT are researched in many universities. For example, the VU University Amsterdam conducts studies on the use of e-mail and Internet. Also, the new media content, such as discussion groups and forums in the Internet, are often used as research data when researching, for example, changes public opinion or political views.

Television and audience studies have long traditions in Dutch communication research and still have a strong hold, but the *convergence* of the various media and media genres, and *cross media* content are important research topics at the moment.

Computer games is already a visible research interest among the communication scholars, and it is an area in which students display much interest. The researchers are interested in the uses of computer games and its effects on children and youth.

Research on children, adolescents and the media is a growing, internationally acknowledged area of research, attracted NWO-funding and recognized with awards. The growing status and interest in this area is demonstrated, for instance, in the establishment of a new ICA special interest group: 'Special Interest Group Children, Adolescents and the Media', (led by Patti Valkenburg). At ASCoR, a research centre CAM (the Centre of Research on Children, Adolescents and the Media) aims to understand the role of media in children's and adolescents' lives and to explain the consequences of children's and adolescents' media use. Projects look at, for instance, the long-term consequences of different types of online communication for friendship formation, friendship maintenance, self-esteem, identity formation, and well-being, and how and why adolescents use sexually explicit online material and with which effects on their sexual attitudes.

The social conditions of the country also give impulses to research on *intercultural communication, minorities and media*, as well as questions of *democracy, citizenship and media* (political and cultural citizenship). Issues of *immigration, globalisation, multiculturalism and media, and multicultural society* are considered important questions especially in Media Studies. For example, Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) has a project on 'Transnational Media'.

Entertainment and popular culture is an important theme, which is studied in many universities. The field of popular culture is emphasised more in the research conducted within the humanities faculties, while it is a minor theme in the social sciences departments. However, there are some strong and internationally known researchers with their own research groups on popular culture in University of Amsterdam both in ASCoR (for example Liesbet van Zoonen) at the social sciences and ASCA at humanities' Media Studies (for example, Joke Hermes). Topics of popular culture research include studies on television entertainment programs and their audiences, music videos and young people and gender studies.

As an example to demonstrate the variety of research themes in Dutch media and communication research the catalogue of the annual conference *Etmaal van de Communicatiewetenschap* presents a selection of the current research themes in the field. The following research areas were presented as panels in the conference held in February 2008:

<i>Theme:</i>	<i>Number of panels per theme:</i>
News	6
Marketing and advertising	4
Journalism	2
Popular media	2
Message factors	2
Health communication	2
Internet	2
Games	2
Media use and reception	2
Organisational Communication	1
Television & Broadcasting	1
Public communication	1
Media and emotions	1

4.2 Research Methodologies

The theoretical and methodological orientations of Dutch media and communication research are rich in variety. Empirical and quantitative social scientific research is what characterises the communication research, whereas the media studies are more inclined towards qualitative and interpretative methodologies. For example, in ASCoR about 80% of research can be regarded as quantitative social science research; the empirical methodologies range from quantitative content analysis, surveys, experimental settings, to media effects research. Even though the qualitative research is the minority in ASCoR, it is still considered significant. The qualitative research methods are often combined with the quantitative, and the focus group interviews and qualitative methodologies of textual analysis such as discourse analysis, frame analysis, semiotics and methodologies of cultural studies are also used.

A multi-methodological approach is favored, for example, in the *Media entertainment and popular culture* group in ASCoR: researchers use a combination of different research designs from experimental to inductive. The multi-methods for data gathering include content analysis, survey, laboratory experiments, focus groups, in-depth interviews and participant observation.

ASCoR maintains a special communication laboratory called *Com lab* that provides researchers facilities with software and hardware tools and staff for undertaking empirical research like surveys, qualitative research and experimental research. The Com lab has developed an Internet survey tool

that is used by the researchers and taught to students in the research methods courses. For qualitative research, the Com lab offers, for example, a 'living room' where researchers may conduct observation of, for example, television viewing habits of; the laboratory has a video room for analysing recorded audiovisual material. Additionally, the Comlab also provides a space and technical set-up for experimental research; for example, for Internet webcam and chat modules, various video or recording set-ups in the observation room. The laboratory cooperates with big polling agencies and media institutions in order to gain access to larger bodies of data.

The orientation of psychological research (Media Psychology) is clearly emphasised at the VU University Amsterdam. The emphasis is on content analysis and experimental studies; additionally, the researchers use such techniques of data collection as survey research, quasi-experimental methods, field experiments, physiological methods, observational methods and studies of computer mediated communication.

In the humanities faculties, philosophical and cultural perspectives within Media Studies are popular, as well as Cultural Studies, Critical Theory, and Semiotics. There is a strong tradition of Film studies that has expanded into Analysis of Visual Culture comprising all the new audiovisual media.

5 National Characteristics of Communication Research in the Netherlands

The Dutch are at the forefront of communication and media research. They are internationally recognised specialists in several fields, for instance, in the fields of political communication and film history. Typically, Dutch communication scholars publish the results of their research in English more than in Dutch. Between the years 1988 and 2006, the amount of publishing in international peer-reviewed journals increased circa two per cent per year (Van den Besselaar, 2007). Communication scholars publish more in ISI-journals than media scholars, who hold books in higher esteem (than communication scholars). This is because in communication science the books or non-English language publications are not counted as ‘outputs’. These differences in output-criteria are also a clear indication of the fact that communication scholars and media scholars speak different theoretical and methodological ‘languages’.

The field of media and communication research is well established, and increasingly recognised in the Netherlands. Compared to some other European countries, Dutch communication research is independent and strong, for example in France the field is still very dependent on other ‘traditional’ disciplines. Like in other countries, Dutch research of media and communication is still characterised by many perspectives and interdisciplinarity. On the social scientific side, the influence of political science is significant, and on the humanities-oriented research side, visual studies or film studies dominate.

Over the past eight years Dutch media and communication research has received many grants from the National Science foundation NWO, which means that the field is succeeding in the competition with other fields of science. Similar to the Nordic countries, Dutch research is dependent on public funding, which in turn depends on the current governmental policies. The funding of research is increasingly channelled through the science foundations; therefore, the state subsidies to the universities are decreased and transferred to the competitive structures of funding. Similar policies are being implemented in Belgium in the Flanders region.

The Netherlands is a strong research country, and Dutch Social Scientific research is known in the world. As a small nation The Netherlands has a strong push towards internationalisation. The report by the Foresight Study committee states that the Media studies conducted in the humanities faculties

is institutionally fragmented, and it needs national collaboration such as that which communication research in the social sciences already has. There is a demand for a platform for interdisciplinary education and research in communication, media and information. The report is also calling for more attention to social and economic relevance of communication and media research (Verkenningcommissie, 2007).

5.1 Open to International Influences

The Netherlands has a trading history, and as a small country it has always regarded international contacts as very important. The national identity is to be international and the Dutch are often pleased to have an occasion to practice their English.

The Dutch are eager to take up new technological innovations. A non-native Dutch scholar states: 'The Dutch are not full of themselves, and therefore they are more open to international influences. This is an advantage in the research of media and communication and in particular of new media.' This open attitude is different from other old European countries, which often foster the attitude that they are the ones who started the traditions and have the big names. Therefore they lack the urge to make international contacts and learn from other cultures. Openness is required for being interested in new things, and to look outside of one's own cultural area.

In the 1940's, at the beginning of mass communication research, Dutch research was influenced by German *Zeitungswissenschaft*. The countries are located as neighbours, the Dutch language belongs to the same language group as German, and therefore it is easy for the Dutch to learn it. The first professors of Journalism and Media (e.g. Kurt Basvitch) came from Germany. Nowadays the ties to Germany have become looser and have been replaced by the international English speaking research community. Still, political communication and in particular studies on the public sphere are still informed by the German Habermasian tradition. There are several German researchers working in the Dutch universities (for example, professor Peter Vorderer in VU University Amsterdam), but most often those Germans are also socialised to the international community by writing and teaching in English.

In terms of the questions of citizenship and media, the Dutch have commonalities with the Nordic countries. There has also been cooperation in research on public broadcasting. From the English

speaking countries, the American influence is greater than that of the UK. The social scientific empirical tradition is strongly developed in North America and therefore it is closer to the Dutch, for example, in the traditions of media effects and media psychology. Media studies in the UK, on the other hand, have the emphasis of cultural studies and a humanistic approach.

Dutch scholars are visible in the international research community. They are regular writers in prestigious international journals and members of editorial boards of major journals. They are often seen in international conferences presenting papers, giving talks, chairing panels, and even organising big international conferences. Considering the small number of the population, the Dutch are still more numerous in the international conferences than researchers from large population countries like France and Germany.

The Dutch are active in the international research associations such as ICA (International Communication Association), IAMCR (International Association for Media and Communication Research) and ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association). Moreover, Dutch universities display great hospitality for visiting and permanently residing international academics. For example, a significant number of the researchers in ASCoR come from other countries and VU Department of Communication invites regularly internationally known scholars. This is possible because the foreigners do not need to speak Dutch, as they can work with English alone. In Holland one can manage in English even in the grocery store.

5.2 English - the Main Research Language

In general, the Dutch speak fairly good English. Compared, for example, to Germans and French people, they have much better language skills. This is due to it being a small country and small linguistic area, thus obliging them to learn foreign languages. Television programmes and films in the Netherlands are also shown in original versions with the subtitles, whereas in e.g. Spain, Germany, and France, all the audiovisual products are dubbed in their language. Therefore the Dutch grow up hearing English and other foreign languages, and this is a major advantage when they enter into the international academic domain.

In the twenty-first century the major part of Dutch communication research is published in English. Dutch scholars read mainly research written in English, but also some in German. Many of the master courses are taught in English in order to attract international students and to prepare Dutch

students for English speaking academic work. As a small nation and language area, the Dutch (just like, for example, the Flemish of Belgium, and Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish people) do not see much use in publishing in their own language. ASCoR at the University of Amsterdam ranks first in Europe in terms of number of English language ISI-ranked articles in the category of publications by a European research institute in communication over the past ten years. Also, some of the ASCoR's English-language articles are among the most highly cited in the field.

On the other hand, it is still considered important for the researchers to participate in national public discussions, to give interviews to the national media, to hold public talks and so on. Generating new knowledge is the primary work of a researcher, but getting publicity is considered important as well.

Most Dutch researchers do not have reservations about the English language dominance. They are proud that most of their publications are in English. But others ponder the negative effects of the English language dominance, arguing that it is made for the academic community but is not useful for the field of media institutions or the general Dutch public. Some emphasise that it would be important to serve also the national community and not only publish in English. Academics who only communicate with the international scientific arenas are often quite irrelevant for the professional communication and media practitioners. There is an exception with the practical oriented projects, in which the reports are written in Dutch, but the researchers use the same research data to publish articles in English-language in refereed journals in order to gain the scientific merit. However, it is double work for the academic to publish in international journals in English and also publish in Dutch in order to maintain contact with the journalists, media institutions, citizen and other relevant groups. When teaching the courses in English, the university teachers also find it sometimes problematic when they are analysing the Dutch media.

6 Future of Media and Communication Research

The field of media and communication research is expected to keep growing in the future in the Netherlands. There are already a large number of recently established study programmes on journalism, media and related fields in the universities and polytechnics. The programmes attract a great number of students, and communication research is also very successful when competing with other disciplines for research foundation funding. Some researchers estimate that the tradition of humanities is in danger, and that media studies are the future of arts and humanities faculties. There is a call for more cooperation between the humanities and social sciences research in the larger field of media and communication.

The report of the Dutch Foresight Study committee gives three suggestions of prominent research areas that provide opportunities for researchers from the faculties of humanities, social sciences and life sciences (information) for joining their forces. The collaboration is seen as a key for the highest quality research. They are suggested to develop the following areas in the future:

Search engines: technology aspect combined with the aspect of *social* use of information and the *cultural* context of the content.

Media, communication and social participation: the public sphere is changing due to mediatisation. New forms of technology invite questions about news forms of engaged citizenship, about the digital divide and about the role of the media, on the hand, in the communication between government and citizens, and on the other hand, about the different opportunities for an (alternative) identity construction.

Cross media and media literacy: cross-media relationships give a new impulse for research on media use and analysis of media products. (Verkenningcommissie 2007).

The dominant themes of the Dutch research agenda in the future are digital and mobile media, convergence, cross media, globalisation, entertainment and phenomena of popular culture. The relationship between the media and the political realm i.e. political communication also continues to be a strong field of research.

Digital Media, Convergence And Cross Media

Opening up to new media and technology does not only mean learning to use and produce contents for the new device but it is changing the ways to communicate, think, feel, behave.

The digitalisation of media and communication technology is a current hot topic; it is estimated to become even more important in the near future. For example, the concept of text and reading has been completely transformed: ten years ago reading was still restricted to press and books; now it means not only television but also audio reading in digital environments. The new media change the daily life of people and this poses many challenges to media institutions and research.

The media industries need knowledge about how to deal with new media and this gives an impulse to studies on *media production*. The studies on media production are still in the minority, as the mainstream media research is still focused on content analysis of media products. This is a more traditional and therefore comfortable way of doing research in terms of gathering and producing research results in an effective time schedule. Media production is still seeking for proper research methods and approaches.

The *political communication* and media continues to be a strong issue within communication research. For example, the NWO has recently granted a Vici grant for a large project called 'Communication and the Future of Europe'. The research programme aims to advance understanding of media effects in a comparative context and to understand euroscepticism as a function of both new information provided by the media and existing attitudes and opinions. The project uses data from, for example, European election campaigns.

Audiences and media use continue to be an important research field. Traditionally, it involved research on television and press audiences, but in the new media environment the concept of audience is also in transition. There is emerging research on *Internet* users and effects of the Internet on people's lives and the whole society, such as the question of the 'digital divide'. Emerging topics brought by digitalisation also include computer gaming, music in the new environment (for example, I Pod studies), mobile media and communication, user generated content (internet journalism) and citizen journalism. Future studies in the VU University of Amsterdam will investigate effects of using blogs and popular online communities such as *YouTube*. The studies will increasingly involve the whole

process of communication including the interaction between source, message and receivers. This is conducted, for example, in the Internet studies by on-line experiments in which participants are shown media content while their reactions are simultaneously recorded by means of webcams and/or real-time electronic questionnaires.

Cross media is an emerging research topic. A researcher of this field comments: ‘a pertinent question to the publishers and broadcasters is: how to deal with the rapid transition of audiences going online and how not to lose them? And in journalist schools they need to think how to train journalists for this.’ The print media is not estimated to disappear because it still has a high status in the Netherlands. Print media also provide the main source of information for broadcasters. As part of the transformation of the media, a new phenomenon in the commercial press is, for example, the recent explosion of free newspapers. This is part of the commercialisation of the media. Commercial communication and commissioned research is therefore expected to grow in the future.

Convergence of various forms of media and communication is estimated to turn the whole media field upside down. The researchers are exploring questions such as: How are different media related to each other? How are topics and contents scattered in various media? Also, *Social responsibility and accountability of media and broadcasting* institutions is an emerging question: how reliable are the ‘new’ media? This makes Media ethics, and questions of credibility and trustworthiness of media as an important issue.

The new media, contents, uses and production in the field of *entertainment* are also continuously important topics. The media entertainment will be studied from various perspectives: textual, affective, technological and institutional. The psychological approach will explore how the use of entertainment may affect knowledge about, for example, health, politics and environment. The importance of *media education* is expected to grow in the future, and not only for children but for various social groups. This means an increase in the education and research in the field.

The issues and context of *globalisation, global economy and culture* are still among the future themes, as well as the problems of the *multicultural society*. For example, the media use of the ethnic minorities and meanings on the minorities created by the media, are important social, cultural and political issues for media and communication research.

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