

1. Research Question

In 1975 the VPRO produced an internal programming policy paper titled: "The Dummies dummer and the Smarties smarter"? ¹⁾ That was the way Jan Haasbroek woke up to Tichenor's knowledge gap alarm. This alarm was phrased as a very general hypothesis: "As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socio-economic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease". ²⁾ The gap was thought to be explained by factors such as different communication skills and informational motivation between more and less educated subgroups of the community.

It was insufficiently noted, that this general thesis, originally, was supported by a test under very specific conditions only, namely print media in relatively small midwestern American communities. Despite the fact, that Tichenor specifically pointed this out in his report, writing: "this analysis has concentrated to a great extent on print media aspects of mass publicity and may not apply to learning from television – at least, perhaps, not to the same extent . . . There is a possibility that television may be a "knowledge leveller" in some areas. Whether TV does in fact have such a levelling function seems to be an urgent matter for research". ³⁾ The knowledge gap hypothesis, thus, became one more example in the history of mass communication research where a thesis is exported out of its original territory to other areas, i.e. to other countries and to other mass media, and is considered more as an established law than a proposal still to be tested. The reasons for this may have

something to do with the face validity of some of the notions behind the hypothesis and with the fact that the thesis fitted the heritage of mass communication research from the sixties: that mass media were seen to predominantly reinforce existing social inequities and social power relations instead of being effective means for social change.

Keeping the hypothesis in its own tested territory, Tichenor elaborated on it by investigating structural community factors which might facilitate or hinder the development of a knowledge gap in public affairs information. Specifically, he suggested that the knowledge gap may be closing in case the community suffers from considerable social tensions and the incoming news is related to these conflicts. The underlying assumption is that in case of a conflict, all social strata are motivated to be informed, including the lower strata, and that conflict, thus, "overcomes at least some of the selective dissemination and selective self-exposure patterns". ⁴⁾

In the second half of the seventies, the conditional and tentative status of the knowledge gap hypothesis surfaced. For example, in his overview of new research perspectives for mass media effects, Chaffee concluded that: "conditions under which (widening or closing of the knowledge gap) can be expected to occur pose an important research problem". ⁵⁾ At about the same time, Etema and Kline, reviewing available studies, found very mixed support for the knowledge gap hypothesis; this led them to suggest that a theory of the knowledge gap should at least look at personal differences between members of different subgroups (for example communication skills), at differences in motivation to be informed based on perceived utility of the information, and at

* Voordracht gehouden tijdens Sommatie 82, 24-26 maart 1982 te Veldhoven. Aansluitend de door Paul Rutten verslagen discussie met De Bock naar aanleiding van diens lezing.

ceiling effects due to message and personal learning variables.⁶⁾ In the Netherlands, Henk Verhagen wrote a critical evaluation of the knowledge gap studies and concluded that there was only a very small basis for the thesis indeed because too many theoretical and methodological issues had not yet been properly dealt with.⁷⁾

This paper addresses the very heart of the knowledge gap hypothesis which Tichenor waited to expose until the very last sentence of his 1970 article, namely the idea that "the knowledge gap by definition implies a communication gap", as communication is a necessary condition for issue perception which in its turn is a condition for issue learning.⁸⁾ More specifically, the question to be dealt with here is: *to what extent does The Netherlands suffer from an "exposure gap" between more and less educated subgroups with regard to public affairs information dissemination by radio and, especially, television? Data are presented for a "normal" period without unusual socioeconomic and political events or unusual mass media activity; they are compared with data from a period of maximum national socioeconomic and political conflict and accompanying mass media activity, the 1981 parliamentary election campaign.*

The motivation for this approach is as follows. If there is a knowledge gap between more and less educated persons on public affairs information and if broadcasters want to do something about it, the first condition is that less educated persons are exposed to the information broadcasters offer: then processes may develop which bring this information into these persons' mental schemata so that they are more at par with their more educated fellow citizens in factual and structural knowledge about the socioeconomic and political environment as basis for a more equal participation in power political social confrontations.

2. Research Design

a. Radio and TV programs in analysis

The exposure gap analysis focuses on the following programs:

- Radio: ANP Newscasts on Hilversum 1, 2 and 3.
- TV: NOS TV-Newscasts (Journaal) Public affairs background information programs of the A status broadcasting organizations (Aktualiteitenrubrieken) Political party broadcasts NOS parliamentary program The Hague Today.

b. Periods of analysis

The analysis is conducted for two periods, one normal and the other a conflict situation.

The normal period is November 1981 (and occasionally the complete 4th quarter of 1981); November is several weeks after the temporary fall of the present government, medio October, and several weeks before the institution of martial law in Poland, medio December. In November, there were no major extraordinary news events causing unusual media activity.

The conflict period is May 1981, the weeks immediately before parliamentary election day, May 26. The parliamentary election campaign is the most typical period of organized, institutionalized national political conflict. It brings out the sharpest possible distinctions in the nation and it is a formidable media event. At the same time, all contestants know that after election day, a coalition government must be formed: so the conflict is kept under control and no communications breakdown takes place. The latter is important as Tichenor has suggested that his finding of a closing knowledge gap in case of a conflict situation may not hold when the conflict is so intense that the community falls apart in several sections which do not communicate anymore.⁹⁾

c. Data base and data analysis

All data on audience behavior are secondary analyses of the regular quantitative and qualitative studies conducted by NOS Audience Research Department. Almost all analyses are limited to the age category eligible to vote (18 years of age and older) because an elec-

tion period was chosen to represent the conflict condition.

Two types of composite quantitative audience data are used: average and cumulative audience size. Average audience size refers to the mean audience rating for a series of programs. Cumulative audience size refers to the size of the audience which watched (or listened to) at least one program of such a series of programs.

Differences between educational categories in audience ratings are presented in absolute as well as in standardized percentages. Standardized percentages are calculated with the rating in the most educated category set at 100 and serve to present the exposure gap between most and least educated categories under normal and conflict conditions in a directly comparable way.

3. Results

a. *The reality of the knowledge gap:*

The Netherlands seems, indeed, to suffer from a political knowledge gap between more and less educated persons. Table 1 shows data from the national voters' study April 1981: less educated persons were less able to identify 10 national politicians from a picture by name, party affiliation and position. An NOS election study (in Table 2) on the great TV-debates of May 1981, found higher percentages of "no opinion" among less educated persons on questions about politicians' personality evaluation and government or opposition policy evaluation.

Education	Scale Score		
	Low	Medium	High
LL	48%	31%	21%
L	45	32	23
H	23	42	35
HH	10	32	59

NB. - National Voters' Research, April/May 1981, 17+

Table 1: The Political Knowledge Gap: Scale Scores.

b. *The potential of radio and television:* Tichenor's suggestion, that television might help fight the knowledge gap is in

The Netherlands made plausible by the data from Table 3, which show that less educated people are relatively heavy users of television.

Counter to popular belief especially among more educated people, education categories do not differ as Table 4 shows, in distribution of their viewing time over program categories: all devote about 20% of their time to political information programs. Less educated people do not choose diversion relatively often and more educated people do not choose information relatively often.

Education	Television	Radio	Newspaper
LL	156	174	34
L	138	228	32
H	120	186	39
HH	96	138	40

NB. - NOS-Survey, Autumn 1981, subjective estimate, 18+

Table 3: Mass Media Use by education: Minutes per Day.

The combination of heavy use of television and similar distribution of viewing time over program categories means, as Table 5 shows, that in *absolute* number of viewing hours less educated persons spend more time watching political information programs than do more educated persons. In fact the least educated watch almost twice as much as the most educated.

So, there is every reason to see whether radio and television create an exposure gap in favor of the less educated. This is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for radio and television to counter the political knowledge gap resulting from other socialization and media use factors.¹⁰⁾

c. *Radio:*

The newscasts by ANP, The Netherlands Press Agency, are the most important source of political information on radio as they are broadcast most frequently and most regularly on the three national radio stations with the largest audiences: Hilversum 1, 2 and 3.

Table 6 shows a larger audience in less

	LL	L	Education H	HH
a. Personality impression				
– Van Agt	18%	11%	10%	6%
– Den Uyl	17	11	11	8
b. Policy evaluation				
– Government	22%	22%	13%	13%
– Opposition	27	27	20	18

NB. – NOS Election Study, April 1981, 18+

Table 2: Political Knowledge Gap: % no opinion during the election campaign 1981.

Program category	LL	L	Education H	HH
News (Journaal)	13%	11%	9%	8%
Public affairs	3	4	4	5
Heavy information	5	5	5	6
TOTAL POL INFO.	21	20	18	19

NB. – NOS-CKO, 4th Quarter 1980, 18+

Table 4: Distribution of Viewing Time over Program Categories: share per quarter.

Program category	LL	L	Education H	HH
News (Journaal)	29%	19%	13%	12%
Public affairs	6	5	4	5
Heavy information	11	8	7	7
TOTAL POL. INFO.	46	32	24	24

NB. – NOS-CKO, 4th Quarter 1980, 18+

Table 5: Distribution of Viewing Time over Program Categories: hours per quarter.

educated categories, both in the normal and the conflict situation with an unaltered exposure gap in favor of the less educated. The same pattern holds for Hilversum 2 with no change in exposure gap in the conflict situation.

Hilversum 3 shows a somewhat different picture for the exposure gap does not hold too much for the least educated; the explanation is that this pop music station is not popular among older persons who happen to be the least educated.

Average audience size per program does not tell the complete story: important events are not reported only once, but are reported repeatedly in successive newscasts; so cumulative reach per day is perhaps a better indicator for the extent to which radio infuses information into different social strata.

Table 7 for Hilversum 1 shows a larger cumulative reach for the less educated and a slight increase of the gap in the

conflict situation. Hilversum 2 shows mainly the same pattern and this is very much the case for Hilversum 3 in the least educated category.

Thus: radio delivers the audience which needs to be airlifted across the political knowledge gap. Radio newscasts expose less educated persons more to political news than more educated. This exposure gap in favor of the less educated shows a tendency to widen in case of a conflict situation judging from the cumulative reach data.

d. Television:

Similar analyses are made for the television programs, mentioned above, which can be considered to be the prime carriers of political information.

Table 8 shows that the main newscasts of 8.00 and 9.30 p.m. attract a larger audience among the less educated than among the more educated. This exposure gap in the normal situation is about the same in the conflict situation. Educa-

Station	Education	Condition			
		Normal			Conflict
Hilv. 1	LL	9	180	10	167
	L	7	140	9	150
	H	7	140	7	117
	HH	5	100	6	100
Hilv. 2	LL	5	167	9	180
	L	3	100	5	100
	H	3	100	3	60
	HH	3	100	5	100
Hilv. 3	LL	13	144	17	170
	L	22	244	22	220
	H	15	167	15	150
	HH	9	100	10	100

NB. - % in absolute and standardized form
- November/May 1981, mo-sa 6.00-18.00
- 18+, NOS-PLO

Table 6: ANP Radio News on Hilversum 1, 2 and 3: Average Rating.

Station	Education	Condition			
		Normal			Conflict
Hilv. 1	LL	37	123	47	138
	L	32	107	38	112
	H	32	107	34	100
	HH	30	100	34	100
Hilv. 2	LL	23	135	25	147
	L	14	82	16	94
	H	14	82	11	65
	HH	17	100	17	100
Hilv. 3	LL	40	108	51	128
	L	58	157	57	143
	H	49	132	50	125
	HH	37	100	40	100

NB. - % in absolute and standardized form
- November/May 1981, mo-sa 6.00-18.00
- 18+, NOS-PLO

Table 7: ANP Radio News on Hilversum 1, 2 and 3: Cumulative Rating per Day.

Broadcast/ Education	Condition				
	Normal			Conflict	
a. Main 20.00	L	32	139	24	141
	H	23	100	17	100
b. Main 21.30	L	9	150	10	167
	H	6	100	6	100
c. Late Ch. 1	L	3	100	3	150
	H	3	100	2	100
d. Late Ch. 2	L	5	125	5	167
	H	4	100	3	100

NB. - % in absolute and standardized form
- November/May 1981, mo-sa 18+, NOS-CKO

Table 8: TV News (Journaal): Average Rating.

tional categories differ very little in viewing the late newscasts, but in the conflict situation the trend of the data is still in favor of the less educated. The Hague Today (Table 9) attracts similar audiences in the normal condition

among less and more educated people. The political parties however attract considerable more viewers among the less than among the more educated people, as do the public affairs background information programs in the

normal situation. The one remarkable finding in the conflict situation is the closing of the exposure gap for political party broadcasts, mainly due to a loss of interest on the part of the less educated. As was true for radio, major news events are topics of a program at more than one occasion. For example, they will be covered by both main newscasts of an evening and by the late newscasts in their overview of today's news. So cumulative reach of a program over time is at least as important as average audience rating per individual broadcast. In the normal situation, the news daily reaches more than half of the least educated people as opposed to less than one-third of the most educated. This

exposure gap is about the same in the conflict situation (Table 10). Normally, political party broadcast's reach much further into the less educated segments of society; this exposure gap almost disappears in the conflict situation because of increased interest among more, and decreased interest among the less educated (Table 11). Cumulative reach of The Hague Today was higher among less than among more educated people especially in the conflict situation (Table 12). Such an exposure gap is also found for the cumulative weekly reach of the public affairs background information programs (Table 13).

Program/ Education		Condition			
		Normal			Conflict
a. The Hague Today	L	5	100	3	150
	H	5	100	2	100
b. Political Parties	L	9	225	4	133
	H	4	100	3	100
c. Public Aff. Background	L	23	144	21	140
	H	16	100	15	100

NB. - % in absolute and standardized form, NOS-CKO
 - a. Nov. (n=14), May (n=5) 1981; 18+
 - b. 4th Quarter (n=14), May (n=20); 18+
 - c. Nov. (n=19), May (n=16) 1981; 18+

Table 9: Political Information Programs on TV: Average Rating.

Education	Condition			
	Normal			Conflict
LL	54	180	45	188
L	36	120	28	117
H	36	120	25	104
HH	30	100	24	100

NB. - % in absolute and standardized form
 - main and late newscasts, mo-sa
 - November, May 1981; 18+, NOS-CKO

Table 10: TV News (Journaal): Cumulative Rating per Day.

Education	Condition			
	Normal			Conflict
LL	54	257	44	129
L	30	145	37	109
H	25	119	30	88
HH	21	100	34	100

NB. - % in absolute and standardized form
 - 4th Quarter/two-week May-specials
 - 1981, 18+, NOS-CKO

Table 11: Political Party Programs: Cumulative Rating.

Education	Condition			
	Normal			Conflict
LL	39	139	15	214
L	25	89	7	100
H	27	96	6	86
HH	28	100	7	100

NB. - % in absolute and standardized form
 - Nov. (n=12), May (n=5) 1981, 18+, NOS-CKO

Table 12: The Hague Today: Cumulative Rating.

Education	Condition			
	Normal			Conflict
LL	64	160	55	153
L	50	125	43	119
H	46	115	37	103
HH	40	100	36	100

NB. - % in absolute and standardized form
 - Nov. (n=19), May (n=16) 1981, 18+, NOS-CKO

Table 13: Public Affairs Background Programs (Aktualiteitenrubrieken A-organizations): Cumulative Rating per Week.

Thus television, just like radio, delivers the audience which is most in need of being airlifted across the political knowledge gap, both in the normal and in the conflict situation. No clear patterns of change in the exposure gap exist in the conflict situation, except that the gap almost disappears for political party broadcasts as the least educated seem to shield away from this bombardment of extra election programs during the two weeks before election day.

The conflict situation, the election campaign, is characterized not only by special political party broadcasts, but also by debates on TV in which several combinations of leading politicians debate the main issues of the campaign. A table (not printed here) shows these May 1981 debates had an almost equal cumulative reach among different educational categories.¹¹⁾ So, although there is no clear exposure gap in favor of the less educated, they certainly are not less exposed to the issue discussion on TV than the more educated persons. In that sense, TV again serves a positive function in that it levels out exposure to issue positions.

4. Perspective of TV's future role

The perspective on TV's future consists of several panorama's:

- the way 8-11 year old children use the NOS TV-newscast specifically de-

signed for them (Jeugdjournaal) as a forebode to possible future exposure gaps;

- people's use of the news section of NOS' electronic newsmedium Teletekst - changes in viewing behavior resulting from the ever increasing availability of foreign TV channels in Holland, presently by cable and soon also by satellite.

a. Children's TV-news

To prepare young children for the avalanche of information they will encounter later, NOS has a daily newscast of about 10 minutes, Jeugdjournaal, with as prime target group children age 8-12 years. Table 14 shows viewing behavior of children from different social backgrounds, as indicated by the highest level of parental education in the family. There is a slightly higher average audience among the children of less educated parents than among children of more educated parents. This difference turns into a larger exposure gap in favor of disadvantaged children in cumulative reach of the five programs over a week. Thus, TV again creates an exposure gap in favor of those children whose personal social environment predisposes them to be on the low side of the exposure gap, later on.

b. Teletekst

The Teletekst service currently consists of 200 pages available as long as one of

Type of rating

- a. Average
- b. Cumulative

NB. — % absolute, 8-11 years old, NOS-CKO
 — cumulative: mo-fri, November 1981

Highest Parental Education

Low	High
28	26
49	37

Table 14: Children's News (Jeugdjournaal): Average and Cumulative Ratings per Week.

the two national TV channels is on the air. Its first section is the news and it consists of a number of standard pages for certain types of information.

Data on the use of this Teletekst section from 1980 and 1981 show almost universal exposure to Teletekst news among less and more educated Teletekst viewers. The less educated have a tendency to more often "leave" through the section, just to see what there is to read. There is a slight difference in using Teletekst as an update-medium to check on latest developments of an event about which TT viewers were informed earlier through another medium. However, less educated turn less often to other media to follow-up more extensively on events which they became aware of in Teletekst. Less and more educated TT viewers did not differ in frequency of reading individual pages, except those pages covering the main articles in daily newspapers and serious opinion weeklies: less educated persons read those pages more often than more educated, perhaps as a substitute for the real thing which for factors of readability and comprehensibility is less accessible to them.

Thus, Teletekst exposes more and less educated persons to about the same extent to the political news and thus helps to counter the knowledge gap, especially as the less educated do not follow up so much on Teletekst in other media (they depend more on TT alone) and rather use TT to see what news print media are reporting.

c. Foreign TV competition

The third perspective on TV's future role deals with increasing foreign TV access. At present 80% of the Dutch can watch at least one foreign station. All Dutch together spend about 13% of their eve-

ning viewing time with foreign TV; those who can watch both Belgian and German TV almost 25% of their time. These foreign stations reach about 79% of these viewers at least once a week, only slightly less than the cumulative weekly reach of the two national channels of 95%.

Viewing foreign TV is motivated primarily by the search for attractive programming when Dutch TV does not offer that; and attractive means in practice: diversion, i.e. movies, musical and entertainment programs, crime series, sports and children's programs.

This vulnerability to foreign diversion programs is almost universal among different educational categories as was shown a recent study on the effect of introducing a cable system in Sluis, making available 13 foreign TV-channels (Table 15).

Introducing mainly German, British and French television more than doubled the foreign share.¹²⁾ And here again, programs chosen were diversion only, at moments that Dutch TV did not offer attractive programs of that nature.

These data highlight the function of TV: diversion.

Everybody uses TV for information, but its main function is diversion. Diversion takes up about 45% of Dutch broadcast time, but much more (69%) of Dutch viewing time. And the top 10 of the 1981 4th quarter underlines this diversion function.

By the way, nr. 8, the news, was on a day that it was sandwiched between nr. 2 and 3 on the list (Table 16).

Thus, increased foreign access carries the potential of a threat to TV's bearing power to airlift less educated people across the knowledge gap, as it increasingly provides them with an escape to preferred diversion programs.

Education/ Year	N 1+2	Channel		Total
		BRT (+)	Other (=)	
LL 1979	89	11	0	11
1980	82	9	9	18
L 1979	87	13	0	13
1980	68	11	22	33
H 1979	88	11	1	12
1980	67	8	25	33
HH 1979	83	16	1	17
1980	65	10	26	36

NB. — % absolute, 12+, weekly average

— 18.45-24.00, 1980 13 foreign channels, 1979 2 foreign channels (BRT)

Table 15: Share of Foreign TV Channels in Sluis, Zeeland, before and after introduction of cable TV.

1. André van Duin Show	63%
2. Mies	63
3. Babelonië	54
4. Wie van de drie	52
5. Dallas	52
6. Football: France-Netherlands	51
7. Ted Show	50
8. TV-News (Journaal)	50
9. Showbizquiz	49
10. Weekendquiz	49

NB. — 12+, 4th Quarter 1981, NOS-CKO

Table 16: Top-10 Television Programs: Audience Rating.

5. Conclusion

In The Netherlands, radio and television deliver the less educated audience which is most in need of being airlifted across the political knowledge gap. The less educated tend to enjoy a favorable exposure gap. This conclusion does, of course, not fully answer the question raised in the theme of the conference; but it offers hope, because audience penetration is a necessary condition for a medium to help close political knowledge gaps.

Compared to newspapers, television seems to be at a disadvantage in political information transmission. Reviewing over 100 studies for the American Newspaper Publisher's Association, Weaver and Buddenbraum concluded: "exposure to newspapers seems to lead to more concern over political issues and to more political knowledge than does exposure to television".¹³⁾ So, in addition to attracting large audiences, broadcasters must set out to be as effective as they can. However, they do not control most factors determining information acquisition. Genova and Greenberg have argued, that inter-

est to be informed is crucial, interest based on perceived utility in the receiver's social environment.¹⁴⁾ Similarly, Rogers, at Sommatie 1981, stressed that the human component of mass communication research should consist of the relationships between individuals rather than individuals themselves.¹⁵⁾ (And this resembles Brouwer's Mycelium — or mushroom model of mass communication).

So, broadcasters should stress the relevance of their information for the audience's personal condition and social interaction.

Broadcasters may feel encouraged by evidence showing that television may have an airlift capability. For example, Ettema and Kline refer to a Scandinavian study that found a narrowing gap in national affairs public information after the introduction of television into three northern Norwegian provinces.¹⁶⁾ Another example is the recent IIC-report on the role of television during the 1979 elections for the European Parliament.¹⁷⁾ In his concluding perspective on this extensive cross-national project, Blumler deduced:

"(Television) is a solvent to sociological barriers to election awareness . . . TV demonstrated its power to throw some bridges across (social) divisions and to reach quite far into the ranks of even those who lacked any interest in the campaign. If it could not do much to close prior knowledge gaps, at least it was not heavily engaged in reinforcing and widening them . . . Television penetrated the least involved sectors of European publics more effectively than any other channel".

Researchers have the task to more stringently test the role of radio and television as to political knowledge gaps. Generalizations are unwarranted until studies have been conducted which meet the requirements McLeod and Reeves have set for arriving at generalizations on mass media effects: studies which include: media content, media exposure, media effects, and conditions which facilitate or hinder media effects.¹⁸⁾

Researchers may ultimately come out with a positive verdict on radio and especially television, if broadcasters would be so kind to:

- a. keep the less educated persons as audience for public affairs programs by countering competition from foreign television diversion and
- b. to present their information in such a way that it is useful in the audience's day-to-day social interaction processes.

NOTES

1. Jan Haasbroek, "De Dommen dommer en de Slimmen slimmer?", Hilversum: VPRO, 1975.
2. P.J. Tichenor, G.A. Donohue and C.N. Olien, "Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge", in *Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol 34 (1970), p. 159-170.
3. P.J. Tichenor et. al., op. cit. 1970.
4. G.A. Donohue, P.J. Tichenor and C.N. Olien "Mass Media and the Knowledge Gap", in: *Communication Research*, Vol 2 (1975), p. 3-23. See also: P.J. Tichenor, G.A. Donohue and C.N. Olien, Mass Communication research: Evolution of a Structural Model, in *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 50 (1973), p. 419-425.
5. S. Chaffee, "Mass Media Effects", "New Research Perspectives" reprinted in G.C. Wilhoit and J.H. de Bock (eds.), *Mass Communication Review Yearbook Vol 1*, Beverly Hills (Calif.): Sage Publications, 1980, p. 77-108.
6. J.S. Ettema and F.G. Kline, "Deficits, Differences and Ceilings: Contingent Conditions for Understanding the Knowledge Gap, in: *Communication Research*, Vol 4 (1977), p. 179-202.
7. H. Verhagen, *De "Knowledge Gap" Hypothese: Evaluatie*, Nijmegen: K.U. Nijmegen, 1976 (scriptie).
8. P.J. Tichenor et. al., op. cit. 1970.
9. G.A. Donohue et. al., op. cit. 1975.
10. P.M. Hendriksen "Omroepen in de Woestijn", in *Masscommunicatie*, Vol VII (1979), p. 55-66.
11. Cumulative reach (18+) was 50% (LL), 41% (L), 47% (H) and 41% (HH) for three debates.
12. *Eén jaar Sluis*, Hilversum: NOS afd. Kijk- en Luisteronderzoek, 1982.
13. D. Weaver and J. Buddenbaum, "Newspapers and Television: A Review of Research on Uses and Effects", reprinted in G.C. Wilhoit and J.H. de Bock (eds.), *Mass Communication Review Yearbook Vol 1*, Beverly Hills (Calif.): Sage Publications, 1980, p. 371-380.
14. B.K.L. Genova and B.G. Greenberg, "Interests in News and the Knowledge Gap", in: *Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol 43 (1979) p. 79-91.
15. E. Rogers, Manifestation and Mass Communication: Lessons from Research on the Diffusion of Innovations" in: *Masscommunicatie* Vol IX (1981), p. 149-158.
16. J.S Ettema and F.G. Kline, op. cit. 1977.
17. J.G. Blumler et. al., *TV in the European Parliamentary Elections of 1979: Final Report on a Cross National Analysis*, London: I.I.C., 1982.
18. J.M. McLeod and B. Reeves, "On the Nature of Mass Media Effects", reprinted in: G.C. Wilhoit and J.H. de Bock (eds.), *Mass Communication Review Yearbook, Vol 2*, Beverly Hills (Calif.): Sage Publications (1981) p. 245-282.

Discussie met H. de Bock

Henk Verhagen (Rijksvoorlichtingsdienst, Den Haag) oppert, dat hoger opgeleiden in plaats van naar de televisie te kijken de krant lezen en op die manier de kloof instandhouden. Ontstaat er wanneer men de krant erbij betreft niet een heel ander beeld? De Bock antwoordt, dat hij heeft willen betogen, dat men voorzichtig moet zijn met het zondermeer als wet overbrengen van een hypothese van het ene (pers) naar het

andere medium (televisie). Hij vergelijkt het verband tussen beide media met communicerende vaten. In het ene vat zitten kranten en hoger opgeleiden, in het andere televisie en lager opgeleiden. Dit wil niet zeggen, dat televisie net zo effectief is voor lager opgeleiden als de krant is voor hoger opgeleiden. Hij heeft willen aangeven, dat televisie de potentie heeft om politieke informatie aan lager opgeleiden te verschaffen. Jan Bierhoff (School voor de Journalistiek, Utrecht) informeert naar de kwalita-

tieve aspecten van het televisie kijken door de lager opgeleiden. Het is dan wel gebleken dat lager opgeleiden naar politieke informatieprogramma's kijken, maar komt die informatie werkelijk over? Moet nu niet het onderzoek naar de perceptie van informatie aan bod komen?

Volgens De Bock kan men uit het onderzoek in elk geval concluderen, dat lager opgeleiden ook naar politieke informatie kijken. Wanneer men de op til zijnde invasie van buitenlandse programma's in aanmerking neemt, kan gezegd worden, dat het nog niet te laat is. Immers men heeft nog niet de kans gehad veelvuldig naar buitenlandse amusementsprogramma's uit te wijken. Politiek van aard zijnde programma's bereiken lager opgeleiden nog steeds. Er is daarmee een basis aanwezig om na te gaan hoe we informatie zo kunnen presenteren, dat zij werkelijk overkomt. Hierbij hebben we te maken met leerprocessen. Programma-ritme en snelheid van consumeren van televisieboodschappen zijn hier bijvoorbeeld van belang. Het lezen van de krant heeft nu eenmaal het voordeel van de eigen tempobepaling waarin men de informatie tot zich kan nemen. Bij televisie bepaalt de zender de snelheid. Het is de vraag of er in televisieprogramma's niet bepaalde rustpunten moeten zitten. Het enigszins in de vergetelheid geraakte onderzoek naar het 'stopping behaviour' bij het lezen van teksten zou hierbij van belang kunnen zijn.

Wim Beckers (NOS, Hilversum) vraagt naar de effecten van een eventuele zenderkleuring bij de Nederlandse tele-

visie op de huidige exposure-situatie met betrekking tot informatieve programma's.

De Bock zegt voorstander te zijn van een zenderkleuring naar programmacategorie. Dit prefereert hij boven een confessionele versus een niet-confessionele zender, zoals die vroeger bij de radio bestond. Wanneer men voorstaat om aan minder opgeleiden politieke informatie te verstrekken middels televisie, omdat zij nu eenmaal minder politieke informatie via de gedrukte media krijgen, moet allereerst geprobeerd worden deze mensen 'in eigen huis' te houden. In dat kader is er een beleid nodig dat inspeelt op de ontspanningsfunctie die de televisie vervult. Van deze functie moet gebruik gemaakt worden teneinde mensen massaal bij de Nederlandse programma's te houden. (Politiek) nieuws dient zo gepresenteerd te worden, dat er een gegarandeerd groot bereik is onder de lager opgeleiden. De bekende 'sandwich formule' lijkt hiervoor geschikt.

Een vraag met een meer ethisch karakter stelt de heer John Knecht uit Vlaardingen: Is het wel wenselijk om mensen met weinig opleiding informatie 'op te dringen'?

De Bock acht dit een waardengebonden kwestie. Hij vindt in ieder geval niet dat zendgemachtigden het *moeten* doen. De Bock gaat uit van de integriteit van de diverse omroepverenigingen, die naar zijn mening het beste met het publiek voor hebben. Een privé oordeel over hoe zij hun politiek getinte informatie aan de man brengen, is in dit kader niet van belang.