

ENTERTAINING POLITICS, SERIOUSLY?!

HOW TALK SHOW FORMATS BLUR CONCEPTUAL BOUNDARIES



BIRTE SCHOHAUS

Entertaining Politics, Seriously?!

How talk show formats blur conceptual boundaries

© 2017 Birte Schohaus, Groningen.

www.birteschohaus.com

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-90-367-9671-2

ISBN: 978-90-367-9670-5 (e-book)

Cover design: Rommie Schilstra

Printed by: Netzodruk Groningen



rijksuniversiteit
 groningen

Entertaining Politics, Seriously?!

How talk show formats blur conceptual boundaries

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de
 Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
 op gezag van de
 rector magnificus prof. dr. E. Sterken
 en volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties.

De openbare verdediging zal plaatsvinden op

dinsdag 14 maart 2017 om 11.00 uur

door

Birte Schohaus

geboren op 20 August 1983
 in Aurich, Duitsland

Promotores

Prof. dr. M.J. Broersma

Prof. dr. H.B.M. Wijfjes

Beoordelingscommissie

Prof. dr. G. Voerman

Prof. dr. H. van den Bulck

Prof. dr. E.A. van Zoonen

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	9
2	Blurring boundaries - theretical framework	23
	- between information and entertainment – infotainment	25
	- between the public and the private – personalization	41
	- between planning and spontaneity – talk show formats	58
3	Methodology	85
4	Negotiation games	109
	Play metaphors in the journalist-source relationship between political PR and talk shows	
5	Weighing talkability and political	139
	How television talk show formats shape the choice of political guests	
6	Formatting personal talk	173
	How talk show formats impact political	
7	Politics without politicians	205
	How experts shape political talk show interviews	
8	Entertaining politics, seriously?!	239
	Conclusion	
	References	265
	Appendix	285
	Nederlandse samenvatting	293
	Deutsche Zusammenfassung	303
	Dankwoord	313

Introduction

1

After the unexpected result of the 2016 American elections, news media, as well as established politicians and parties across the western world, have been accused of ignoring or even disregarding political concerns and opinions of a large segment of people in their countries. This claim fits into a tradition of accusing media, and especially Public Service Broadcast, of not or only one-sidedly representing the whole spectrum of political opinions, ideologies and problems, preferring specific parties or ideologies above others (cf. Takens et al. 2010; Ruigrok et al. 2011). The same concerns were voiced in The Netherlands back in 2002, when the populist politician Pim Fortuyn was assassinated, and preceding the new Media Act of 2008 when new public broadcasting associations were introduced (Wijffes 2005; Ruigrok et al. 2011). However, inspired by the recent events, several prominent journalists and media celebrities have called for a new talk show that should address these presumably ignored political perspectives. This call suggests that there is a lack of talk shows in which these topics or opinions are discussed. It contradicts the rich Dutch talk show tradition that is known for formats that discussed extraordinary opinions and varying political perspectives. It is espe-

cially this genre that has become known as not sticking to traditional news sources, but also voicing the concerns of ‘the man on the street’ (Leurdijk 1999; Wijfjes 2009).

In 2016 there are at least six talk shows on national television that are discussing current events in politics, sports, culture and social topics. Do all of these fail to give a pluralistic account of political and public affairs? This dissertation will shed light on how Dutch talk shows deal with politics, how talk show formats influence the choice of political topics and whether they prefer specific political guests or groups.

Despite the ongoing growth and emergence of new online news media, along with alternative ways to gather information, for example via social media, television is still one of the crucial sources of political information for citizens worldwide, especially when one takes all sorts of programs into account, not only news shows (see e.g. Van Zoonen 2003; Wasko 2005; Cushion 2012; Blankson 2012; Papanassopoulos et al. 2013). In election campaigns, for instance, television is the only medium on which people can follow a live debate between candidates, not only in the US, but in many countries. Even beyond election time, news items and talk shows featuring political talk are widely watched. The interaction between politicians and journalists on television has, however, changed markedly during the last few decades and is still altering. These changes are occurring on both sides. Politicians are aware of the importance of a good image and increasingly negotiate about their appearance on television shows. Using spin-doctors, media training and tactics like leaking information, they try to influence how they are depicted (e.g. Dahlgren 2003; Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009; Houtman and Achterberg 2010).

Journalists and television producers, on the other hand, try to reach a larger audience by introducing new programs and formats every season, playing with earlier programs’ conventions and merging information and entertainment to keep the viewers’ attention. (Thorburn, Jenkins, and Seawell 2003; Ellis, Esser, and

Lozano 2016). This has an impact on the selection of topics and interviewees and on how these are approached and presented. The audience's demands and expectations seem to be more important than ever (Van Santen and Van Zoonen 2009; Brants et al. 2010). While journalists and politicians alike want to reach as many viewers or voters as possible, their ideas of what they want the public to see differs and sometimes even clashes. Both groups of actors try to control the interaction, the politicians to boost their image, the journalists to create exciting, entertaining and informative television.

Talk shows are significant and extraordinary players in the relations between journalists and politicians. They can easily switch between serious and more entertaining topics or questions, including talk about strong opinions, personal stories or emotions. While politicians feel forced to adjust to these formats, they also see an opportunity for getting their message across more easily than during news programs where they get only a few seconds of speaking time (Kee 2012).

Traditionalists see the shift towards more emotional and entertaining formats as a corruption of both politics and journalism. They fear that the focus on politicians as witty, emotional and trustworthy individuals, originating in the wish to be attractive to as many voters as possible, might be at the expense of the political content, and information about current policy, undermining the democratic function of political reporting (Patterson 1993; Fiske 1994; Schudson 1998a; Glynn 2000; cf. Van Santen and Van Zoonen 2009; Vreese et al. 2017). More optimistic scholars see the ability to reach a broader audience that would otherwise have been out of touch with political affairs, as a positive outcome (Norris 2000; Baum 2003; Van Zoonen 2005).

The history of politicians hitting the talk show circuit is almost as long and rich as that of the genre itself (Van Santen 2012). Researchers agree that "the relationship between politics and the media has thus become recognized as an inseparable part of contemporary democratic life." (Cushion and Thomas 2013). As Brants (2005) suggested, talk

shows with their hybrid forms of discussion, informative interviews and entertaining chat, in which the personal has become political and the other way around, are probably the best examples of mixing journalistic styles, forms and conventions. “The personal and the political, the emotional and the rational, the involved and detached might merge and combine in a variety of discourses that together construct a hybrid political persona” (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000, 48).

It is often said that politicians are forced to respond to the media’s rules, aims and constraints, and thus lose control over how they and their political agenda are covered and interpreted (Altheide and Snow 1979; Strömbäck 2008; Voltmer and Brants 2011). This would mean that television has the power to impact a politician’s success or failure. On the other hand, journalists complain that PR advisors negotiate each detail of the politicians’ action on screen. Thus, the question is: How does this power struggle shape the relations between journalists and politicians? Due to the fact that a decisive part of this struggle takes place off-screen and the production processes are invisible to the viewer, research into this hidden part of the relationship is required.

Although the power relations between journalists and politicians have been a core research topic (see e.g. Strömbäck and Nord 2006; Davis 2009; Cook 1997; Eriksson and Östman 2013) their implications and construction in the specific case of talk shows has not been studied extensively. They have often been studied from the perspective of their implications for the dissemination of information, and therefore for democracy. This perspective often been characterized by a normative overtone in the debate about talk shows that relates mainly to the (ideal) role of television in democracy. How exactly these relations are created and how they are influenced by the medium television in general, and talk shows in particular, has hardly been empirically studied. Moreover, the form of those shows has often been neglected in this debate, even though it plays a significant role in the style and appearance of the shows,

and therefore also impacts its content. Every talk show format has its own conventions and style that influence the representation of politics. Therefore, it is necessary to study not only the interaction between journalists and politicians, but also the format as a decisive factor in the coming into being of the talk. The focus of this dissertation will therefore be on the following research question:

In which way is the on- and off-screen interaction between actors in the fields of politics and television journalism in Dutch talk shows affected by the programs' formats?

To answer this question, both aspects, namely the form and content of Dutch talk shows, will be analyzed, using a mixed-methods approach. A combination of quantitative and qualitative content analyses of specific cases, ethnographic research and interviews with journalists, producers, politicians and PR-advisors will shed light on both the visible and the hidden aspects of the formats and the relations between journalists and politicians in these shows.

Comparing recent developments in politics and television journalism, similar trends can be observed: a shift towards more emotional, personal and entertaining presentation. That seems logical, since they often have the same underlying cause: whereas politicians try to find new ways to reach more voters, television journalists are looking for means to reach a large audience. Thus, on both sides, the changes are caused by the desire to reach the public. These goals lead to similar, mutually influenced developments in both fields. Television programs adjust to changes in politics and political communication, on the one hand, and politicians have to cope with format requirements on the other hand. The resulting changes in media as well as politics have often been addressed using the concept mediatization (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999; Hjarvard 2008; Voltmer and Brants 2011; Hepp 2013; Strömbäck

and Esser 2014; Hjarvard 2014; Kunelius and Reunanen 2016).

According to Hjarvard (2008), mediatization is a ‘double-sided process’ in which social and political institutions have to accommodate the principles and conventions of media. According to this theory, politicians who want to have access to the media and want to be depicted in a favorable way have to comply with the media’s logic. On the other hand, those institutions, for example political ones, have created their own ways of influencing the media. Scholars have argued that mediatization nowadays is a mutually reinforcing process. Not only do media determine the conditions that politicians have to adapt to, and have therefore changed the ways of communicating politics, but politicians also adopt this media logic and use it for their own purposes, for example to find new ways to reach the public (Kepplinger 2002; Strömbäck 2008; Voltmer and Brants 2011; Kunelius and Reunanen 2016). These processes can influence the form and content of this communication, but also its general structures and conventions. They can all be referred to as mediatization, which makes the word a broad umbrella term for the interaction between media and politics, and general developments on both sides. It has been used to describe developments on different levels, from general fields, such as political communication, to specific institutions and processes. Therefore, “mediatization has the character of a theoretical perspective or framework rather than a proper theory” that refers to “all activities and processes that are altered, shaped or structured by media or the perceived need of individuals, organizations or institutions to communicate with or through the media” (Strömbäck and Esser 2014).

Due to the fact that the aim of this study is to conduct detailed analysis of the interaction, including content and form, a different approach has been chosen as the basis of this study. It can best be summed up as ‘blurring of boundaries’, because television journalism and politics, in their attempt to reach a wider audience, push the

boundaries of conventions that have long been taken for granted in journalism, as well as in politics. This notion resembles the concept of mediatization in its focus on the interaction between politicians and journalists, but instead of describing all changes and developments as a form of mediatization, it is the common denominator of several, more specific areas and concepts. Each of which deals with one particular development that has influenced the interaction between journalists and politicians in a certain way, and still does: infotainment, personalization and format. These concepts will be used to structure the theoretical part of this research (chapter 2), and to determine the perspectives for the case studies (chapter 4-7). To answer the central research question, four case studies have been conducted that discuss and analyze the talk show phenomenon from four different perspectives, reflecting the three areas of boundary blurring. Together these studies provide a cohesive view of politics in Dutch talk show formats.

Traditionally, journalists, and often also researchers, considered only those topics politics that were related to party or parliamentary affairs and policy, mostly with politicians as the main actors. Nowadays a broader, more inclusive interpretation of politics has become common, also embracing public debate among citizens, who are not necessarily affiliated to a political party (Norris 2000; Van Zoonen 2003; Baum 2003; Blumler and Coleman 2015). By presenting politics in an entertaining, subjective or emotional way and combining it with other topics, talk shows expand the traditional notion of politics. In fact, it is this diversity that defines talk shows as a genre on its own, balancing on the edge between information and entertainment (Livingstone and Lunt 1994; Costera Meijer 2001; Timberg and Erler 2002; Baum 2005; Van Zoonen 2005; Baym 2005; Keller 2009; Cao 2010).

In this interpretation of politics, the role of politicians has changed. They are no longer officeholders, but public figures, whose personal thoughts, stories and emotions have become part of their public appearance (Corner 2000; Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000). This

broader sense of politics has provided the space to feature new voices and opinions that are not necessarily based on political facts, but can also derive from emotions and personal stories (Van Zoonen 2012). As (Nieminen and Trappel 2011) have argued, this has also broadened journalism's watchdog role; not the task is not only to focus on politicians, but to also cover other participants in the field of politics, such as experts, journalists and citizens. This research will show that this broader definition of politics is at least partly prompted by television's particular form and logic, which shape the specific formats.

Although the focus of the empirical studies, as well as of the cases in this dissertation, is on the Dutch context, the results have universal and transnational implications. The media system in the Netherlands resembles that of other Northern European countries, and has been described as the democratic corporatist model (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Brants and Van Praag 2006; Eriksson and Östman 2013). Moreover, television specific elements that are used to shape the talk show formats are universal and are used in shows in other countries as well. Thus, despite its specific national focus, this dissertation will contribute to the international research into politics and journalism, and provide new insights into the field of television talk show formats.

Structure of this dissertation

In order to answer the previously outlined research question, a literature review was conducted first, which is presented in **chapter 2**, the theoretical framework. 'Blurring boundaries' is the overarching theme of this chapters, which is divided into three parts. First, the two broader concepts of infotainment and personalization will be discussed, leading towards an analysis of the concept of television formats, the core concept of this dissertation.

The first part deals with the blurring of boundaries between information and entertainment on television. It will discuss the jour-

nalists' struggle to meet viewers' expectations and to fulfill their informative task at the same time. Since its invention, television's ability to convey information as well as entertainment has caused many discussions. It will be argued that in the past this debate was influenced by normatively driven theory, such as the discussion about the usefulness of television to contribute to the public sphere. On a more pessimistic note the media malaise theory accused the media, but especially television, of eroding the democratic debate. The aim of this study, however, is to empirically analyze how the boundaries are blurred. Here the concept of infotainment will be discussed, as it focuses on the merging of form and content into a new form that combines information and entertainment.

As the first part of the theoretical framework, focuses on television, the second part discusses the politicians' role and how they try to reach more voters by using media and adjusting to their rules. This part is called 'blurring boundaries between the personal and the public', because politicians are no longer mere representatives of a party or governmental or oppositional positions, but they have to perform a complex image of themselves, building upon information and characteristics from the public as well as from the private realm. In this context, personalization will be the key concept.

In the third part, 'blurring boundaries between planning and spontaneity', the two prior parts come together in the discussion of talk show formats and their balancing act between informing, amusing and affecting the audience. In this part the notion of format will be further scrutinized. As will be argued, formats consist of a unique combination of form and style elements that are often characteristic of the medium or the genre. Therefore, the concept of media logic is crucial here, since it focuses on the influence of the specific form of the medium on the development of content. Together these three parts combine concepts from the field of television studies and political communication that provide insights into the changing dynam-

ics between television journalism and politics in talk show formats.

This theoretical part will be followed by **chapter 3** on the methods used in this research project. From a grounded theory approach three methods were utilized: content analysis, interviews and ethnographic research. These methods were used to study different cases, therefore the notion of case study research is also discussed in this chapter. The advantages and risks of each chosen method, as well as their combination will be discussed. The data collection and the cases of the research in general will also be described. As the research for this dissertation consists of four separate studies that have been or will be published as separate articles, the specific method for each study will be discussed in the respective chapter.

The first case study in **chapter 4** analyzes the interpretive repertoires used by public relations (PR) advisors of Dutch politicians to describe their relations with talk show journalists. A qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews revealed that the dominant repertoires come from the realm of play. Studying the interpretive repertoires of advisors working in PR and how they fruitfully combine the elements of struggle and cooperation sheds light on the structures and strategies that define journalist-source relationships. It provides insights into how PR advisors perceive and enact their own roles, which often go unnoticed both in research and by the general public.

On the one hand, one might say that politicians' fear of surprises is understandable, considering that an unsuccessful appearance will stick to their reputation for a very long time. They even might prevent future appearances, which are seen as crucial to get exposure for their ideas and themselves as influential politicians. On the other hand it is this caution and preparation that might prevent talk shows from inviting them, as the study in **chapter 5** demonstrates. It shows that talk shows use a combination of two criteria to choose political guests; they have to be in a powerful or relevant political position and they have to be a talkable talk show

guest who can tell an interesting, newsworthy story in an attractive way. A comparison of a quantitative analysis of the political items in five Dutch talk shows in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 seasons with interviews with journalists and political actors reveals how the specific talk show formats determine the ratios of these two criteria and therefore how often and with whom politics is discussed. With this analysis, this study offers new empirical insights in how talk show formats, influenced by television logic and journalistic conventions, determine the choice of political guests on those shows.

While chapter 4 discusses political communication and chapter 5 covers a topic in the realm of television studies, the study in **chapter 6** relates to the concept of personalization, which in turn relates to both fields of study. It shows that the personalization of politics in talk shows takes shape via the show's formats. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of two Dutch talk show formats is compared to a single case study of the presentation of a politician's personal story on both shows. This approach enables us to not only determine the various elements of talk show formats, such as interview style, setting and cinematography, but also to analyze their particular influence on the different forms of personalization; individualization, privatization and emotionalization. With its combination of a broader content analysis with a specific case study, this study provides a detailed examination of the link between television formats and the personalization strategies of both journalists and politicians, which therefore contributes to the field of study of political personalization on television.

Whereas the focus of chapter 5 and 6 is solely on the relation with politicians and how they are presented on the shows, in **Chapter 7** the talk with politicians is compared to items in which politics is discussed with various non-political guests. In a combined quantitative and qualitative content analysis of a case study of three Dutch talk shows in the 2015/16 season, a typology of types of experts used in political talk show talk is developed, in order to show

their impact on political talk. While interview types in news programs have been analyzed previously, in this study the concept is related to the realm of talk shows and insight is provided into the position experts are given by talk show formats to discuss politics. Building upon a case study concerning the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe, this paper shows that the choice of experts influences the direction a talk takes and the angle and framing of a particular topic.

In the final **chapter 8** the results of the four studies are compared and triangulated, relating them to the main research question regarding the impact of talk show formats on the interaction between political actors and journalists in those shows.

Blurring boundaries

Theoretical Framework

2

Blurring the boundaries between information and entertainment - infotainment

The media in general and television in particular play an important role in politics. They are not only a prominent means for politicians to get their messages across, but also inform the public about current affairs (Dahlgren 1995; Schudson 1998a; Norris 2000; Nieminen and Trappel 2011; Blumler and Coleman 2015). Even now, with the Internet and social media functioning as a prominent source of news, television is still an important source of information for a large group of people and therefore an ‘inescapable part of modern culture’ (Wasko 2005, 3; cf. Van Zoonen 2003; Cushion 2012; Papathanassopoulos et al. 2013). While it will be argued that it is the television format that determines the amount of information provided by a specific show, broader concepts that play a role in determining these formats have to be discussed first in order to analyze their impact on formats and how formats are constructed, which will be in the last part of this theoretical framework. Therefore, televi-

sion's role in providing information will be discussed in this first part of the theoretical framework. Due to the fact that it is not only a strong medium for disseminating information, but also a prominent source of entertainment, the blurring of boundaries between information and entertainment will be the guideline for this discussion. The concept of infotainment will be discussed in this context.

The informative task

From its introduction onwards, people have argued that television, as other media, should provide people with information and knowledge that will enable them to participate in the public sphere, and react to and control politics and the government (MacNair, Hibberd, and Schlesinger 2003; Bignell 2004; Blankson 2012; Cushion and Thomas 2013; Asp 2014; Grabe and Myrick 2016). Initially introduced in the early 1960s by German sociologist Jürgen Habermas (Habermas 1962), the public sphere concept has often been used by researchers to assess media based on their contribution to the realization of democratic ideals, starting from the idea that well informed citizens and discussion among them is the foundation of political opinion and therefore of democracy (Dahlgren 2005). An informed citizen, according to this idea, is able to distinguish between useful and useless information and has enough knowledge to actively participate in politics.

The reason for which television is especially attractive to politicians in this democratic respect stems, at least partly, from medium-specific characteristics. It has the ability to convey information as well as emotion and to connect abstract ideas to concrete images and examples (Wasko 2005). Moreover, the fact that it is live offers the ability to reproduce images of what is happening elsewhere in the world at the very moment the events are taking place (Fiske and Hartley 1978; Bignell 2004). With these qualities, television seems

to be able to give viewers immediate and reliable access to the world. In the early days of the medium people hoped that this immediacy would erase illiteracy and even bring peace, because seeing people in different countries would eliminate misunderstandings (Wasko 2005). This has been proven to be an idealistic and unfulfilled wish, but the appeal of immediacy still exists, today maybe even more than ever before. Some researchers, for example, see reality TV as the latest development to satisfy people's appetite for immediate images of the 'real'. Television news programs are popular for the same reason, namely their immediate access to the world (Hill 2005). For other programs with a less strong focus on news and factual information, such as talk shows, this function is not so clear, as will be discussed later on.

Programs and channels that focus on market share and ratings have been criticized for neglecting their educational and informative task and for failing to provide the information needed for participation in society and politics, while focusing on the presentation of entertainment (Blumler and Hoffmann-Riem 1992; Donders and Van den Bulck 2014; Goodwin 2014). Due to the fact that the idea of educating the public is the basis of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), this argument regarding market failure has often been used to legitimize PSB's existence in the last decades. From this point of view, PSB should help to elevate people, give them political and other knowledge to enable them to participate actively in society (Steemers 2003; Van Dijk, Nahujs, and Waagmeester 2005; Bardoel and d'Haenens 2008; Bergès Saura and Gunn 2011; Ferrell Lowe, Goodwin, and Yamamoto 2016; Donders and Van den Bulck 2016). This can be clearly seen in the Netherlands, where the PSB has an educational and democratic mission: to serve as a forum for all social groups, for all opinions and discussion of all views (e.g. Daalmeijer 2004). The Media Act, which regulates the Dutch Public Service Broadcasting system, determines that information and diversity are

two of the most important pillars of Dutch PSB, while entertainment, should play a minor or even no role at all (Daalmeijer 2004; Van Dijk, Nahujs, and Waagmeester 2005; Bardoel and d’Haenens 2008; d’Haenens, Sousa, and Hultén 2011; Mediamonitor 2015). Because the boundaries between information and entertainment are shifting, the main reason used by PSB to legitimize itself has shifted towards that of pluralism and diversity concerning representation, as well as reaching a diverse audience (Van Dijk, Nahujs, and Waagmeester 2005; d’Haenens, Sousa, and Hultén 2011; Donders and Van den Bulck 2016)

Despite huge differences among European countries, their PSB, especially television, faced similar developments throughout the past three decades. Broadcasters are constantly trying to find a middle ground between the democratic ideal, steered by normative values such as educating the public and maintaining cultural identity, and market constraints introduced by the commercial broadcasters (Steemers 2003; Bardoel 2003; Dahlgren 2005; De Haan and Bardoel 2009; Norris 2010; Goodwin 2014).

In fact, what seemed to be a contradiction at first, the traditional PSB notion of determining what the public should watch versus the commercial approach of designing programs according to the public’s wishes and therefore reaching for a large audience, has become a part of PSB policy. Because PSB should be for all people and reach a diverse audience, aiming for a large market share has become a legitimizing tool in itself. As Collings et al. (2001) state: “Public service broadcasting cannot succeed unless it is popular” (cf. Brants and Van Praag 2005; Brants et al. 2010; d’Haenens, Sousa, and Hultén 2011). However, due to their market-driven attitude PSB are facing a dilemma: the more they are led by public demand, the more they will resemble their commercial competitors and therefore undermine their right to exist as a special public service (Costera Meijer 2005; Van Dijk and Poell 2015).

During the last few decades, several scholars have pointed out that the public sphere, introduced above, represents a normative idea rather than an empirical concept (e.g. Dahlgren 1995; Van Zoonen 1998; Van Zoonen 2005). This begs the question of whether television is actually enhancing the public's participation in the public sphere. It might simulate this participation, encouraging a passive role by the viewer, who stays at home watching television instead of actively taking part in society (Corner 1999; Bignell 2004). In that sense one could also argue that 'television takes over the job of relating the viewer to the world around them, and separates the viewer from their experience of reality' (Bignell 2004). Besides, it is questionable whether most citizens want to actively participate in democracy, which is probably not always the case (Dahlgren 2005). They could also watch television as a source of distraction rather than information. On the other hand, entertainment and popular culture could serve a more subtle form of information gathering and enhance participation in society, despite their lack of obvious factual information (e.g. Van Zoonen 1998). This legitimizes the question of whether this idea of informed citizenship, and television's task in it, might be too strict, ignoring the very characteristics of this medium: its ability to provide information and entertainment in a variety of different forms.

Competitive markets creating room for popularization

One reason for the blurring of the boundaries between information and entertainment on television is the shift towards a more market driven journalism. While television has always been trying to find a middle course between its democratic ideal and market constraints, this struggle has intensified since the 1980s, when commercial television was first introduced, competing with the traditional idea of PSB

in many countries (Wijfjes 2005; De Haan and Bardoel 2009). The question of whether television should provide information and have an educational function, or should aim for high ratings, no matter what, by providing the viewer with whatever he¹ wants most, has become one of the most asked questions in this debate.

A growing body of literature states that increased competition between public and commercial broadcasters has resulted in a more market-oriented attitude of PSB. In order to reach a bigger audience, media do not determine what the public should watch anymore, but let the people decide what they want to see and adjust their programs according to these wishes. As Brants and Neijens put it: ‘There has been a shift from programs in public interest to programs the public is interested in’ (Brants and Neijens 1998, 150; Brants et al. 2010). Public demand is increasingly influencing decisions about which topics and news events are covered and about the formats in which these are presented (Patterson 1993; Brants and Van Praag 2005). These trends are especially noticed in election campaign coverage, which is said to have become more image driven, conflict oriented and spectacular (Van Praag and Brants 2014).

As a result of this shift, the distinction between information and entertainment on television has been under pressure. Both purposes, entertaining and informing, are inherent to the medium, and the struggle and contradiction between them has been a subject of discussion since the very day television as a public service was born (Corner 1999). More recently, however, the idea emerged that the distinction between information and entertainment cannot be as clearly drawn as has been argued in the past.

Elements of popular culture, such as music and film, are mixed with more serious topics, presented in a combination of facts, personal opinions and the feelings of guests. Gossip, humor and sensation

1 For the sake of readability and comprehensiveness, actors such as politicians, viewers, hosts and experts are referred to as ‘he’, implying that they can be both male or female.

have entered the realm of the more serious programs in the form of human interest topics (Glynn 2000; Street 2003; Van Zoonen 2005; Gripsrud 2008; Van Santen and Van Zoonen 2009). Through this popularization, which has also been referred to as tabloidization, the boundaries between facts and emotion, but also between public and private, and between information and entertainment are stretched (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Holtz-Bacha 2004; Van Santen and Van Zoonen 2009).

In this discussion the Dutch PSB talk shows are of particular interest, because they stem from a different tradition than, for example, Anglo-American shows. Originating in the 1950s in the US, talk shows have traditionally been associated with personalized, entertaining and distracting talk. The talk show tradition in the United States and the United Kingdom is largely restricted to two famous kinds of talk shows. On the one hand, the entertaining and satirical one-man late-night shows focused on ridiculing daily news and mocking famous guests. Examples of these shows are David Letterman's *Late Night* and *Late Show* and *The Colbert Report* in the United States, and *The Graham Norton Show* in the United Kingdom. Then there were, on the other hand, the 'daily talk shows', which were very successful in the 1990s, mainly in the US but also, for example, in Germany, with *Oprah* being the most famous example (Gerhards 2002; Shattuc 2005). They contained more conflict, confrontation, emotion and sex than earlier generations of talk shows. In those afternoon shows scandals and emotions of the 'common people' were discussed, sometimes with experts, such as psychologists, sometimes with relatives, or with the studio audience.

In Dutch television programming popularization emerged with the introduction of the public broadcast association TROS, which started broadcasting in 1966 and which tried to reach a large audience with easily accessible entertainment (Van Zoonen 2004a). While it did not occur on all channels and broadcasters, the term

‘vertrossing’ even entered the Dutch dictionary Van Dale, meaning tailoring programs to the audience’s taste by presenting value-free and lowbrow entertainment with little information or educational value (Van Zoonen 2004a). The same definition was later applied to programs of commercial television channels, which entered the Dutch television landscape in the late 1980s.

In The Netherlands talk show formats were established for the first time in the 1960s by public broadcasters. Since then several public broadcasters have developed many successful, widely watched talk show formats that all contained a certain mix of information and entertainment, discussing current affairs and newsworthy topics (Wijffes 2009). It is from this rich tradition that the commercial broadcaster RTL4 developed the talk show format *Barend & Van Dorp*, which was more entertaining, personal and emotional than its PSB predecessors. It is often referred to as the prototype of the current Dutch daily talk shows.

Given their ideological and idealistic ideals, described above, the PSB shows combined characteristic talk show elements such as entertaining topics and personal talk with the ideal of informing the public. Therefore, they are located in the heart of the blurred boundaries between information and entertainment.

Theories concerning the negative effects of the described developments in television journalism can be summarized under one common denominator: media malaise. Advocates of this theory argue that the shifts towards a more popular approach to the news and the blurring of the boundaries between information and entertainment are damaging the informative function of television and are therefore damaging democracy. ‘Media malaise’ can be seen as an umbrella term to cover the claim that the mass media have a substantial and malignant impact on politics and social life (Newton 2006).

Technological innovations such as cable television and 24/7 broadcasting, combined with a liberalized market, which together

made it easier to air an increasing number of channels, did not necessarily lead to a more diverse television culture, critics argue. They claim that it conversely led to mostly low-budget and populist programming, enforced by financial decisions. Being the main motivation of commercial broadcasting, high ratings seem to have become more important than diversity or educational purposes (Fiske 1994; Cushion 2012). As a result of this shift, traditional political news seems to be replaced by more entertainment-based news coverage, in which sensationalism, conflicts and scandals are emphasized. This would lead to a situation in which news does not provide citizens with the information needed for a healthy democracy anymore. Tabloid news, therefore, would be a threat to the function journalism has to fulfill in a democracy (Schudson 1998a; Corner and Pels 2003a; Dahlgren 2003).

Talk shows are often mentioned in these concerns. Critics see talk shows as mere consumer goods for a large audience, causing a decline in taste, manners and even civility, trading the higher values of society for mere entertainment (Corner 1999; Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Tolson 2001; Timberg and Erler 2002). Therefore the talk show has been treated as *the* example of moral decline (Dahlgren 1995; Van Zoonen 1998; Tolson 2001; Gerhards 2002).

In relation to political information and the coverage of politics, television news, as well as talk shows have often been accused of 'dumbing down'. This means that they adopt populist news values and present them in a superficial and popular way in order to stay in the competition for the biggest share of the market (Cushion 2012). Both terms, 'media malaise' and 'dumbing down', exist only in relation to normative ideas about quality, 'good' and 'bad' television, whereas the conventions and values of television journalism are not clearly defined at all. The characteristic of immediacy, for example, is often interpreted in a negative way, 'since many perceive, in the directness and immediacy of images, a threat to the pseudoscientific

objectivity of official news work' (Glynn 2000, 21; Shattuc 2005). It would undermine the well-considered news story and let journalists focus only on images that serve this immediacy well. Such an interpretation implies that there was a right or best way to provide news and information at one point, without taking into account the medium-specific abilities to find new forms of information supply.

Other scholars, therefore, emphasize the fact that the theories of media malaise and dumbing down, or the narrative of decline, as McNair (2009) calls it, are nostalgically romanticizing an age of journalism that has never existed in a pure way or perfect form (McNair 2009; Cushion 2012). This sums up the limitation of the media malaise theory: it is based on normative assumptions about what television and journalism should be, while television is a medium that is ever-changing; therefore the conventions and norms are changing accordingly. They are evolving with the introduction of new programs and formats, but also with changes in politics, as will be discussed below. This short overview of this perspective shows that these pessimistic ideas are deeply rooted, but they are mostly based on incidents rather than on long-term analyses (Brants 1998). There is a lack of detailed empirical research on how information can be disseminated on television, detached from normative views about its quality and social impact. Moreover, other researchers have stressed the possible positive effect of talk shows, which will be discussed in the following section.

Infotainment

Because 'popularization' is an umbrella term for differing techniques and elements concerning content, form and style in media in general, it is broader than the distinction between information and entertainment or the lack thereof (Van Santen 2012). Therefore, the concept of infotainment could be more useful to study this specific field of

boundary blurring. It is often used to describe the influence of entertainment elements on informative programs, for example the use of live music in an informative talk show, as well as the appearance of informative elements in entertainment programs (Van Santen and Van Zoonen 2009). Although these developments might be normatively judged, infotainment is a useful concept to define, distinguish and analyze hybrid forms of information and entertainment.

In television news the market-oriented approach has an impact on the choice of topics and the form in which they are presented, because both have to appeal to a broader audience. As a result, stories about the ‘man on the street’, his emotions and mood, have been given a more prominent place in television news (Wijfjes 2005). Interviews with politicians, on the other hand, have become shorter and their answers are mostly being used as sound bites that journalists can use as building blocks at any place in an item (Hallin 1992; Eriksson 2011; Schohaus 2013). In those items it is nowadays very common to interview journalists as experts, for example foreign correspondents on location, emphasizing the immediate and spontaneous character of the program, as well as the journalist’s knowledge (Lundell 2010). Journalists’ accounts are often perceived as more truthful and authentic than purely factual reporting (Eriksson 2011; Van Zoonen 2012; Kroon Lundell and Ekström 2013).

Researchers from various traditions have found that news journalism in general has become more interpretive, as well as critical towards politics (Patterson 1993; Van Praag and Brants 2000; Entman 2004; Djerf-Pierre and Weibull 2008; Eriksson 2011; Kroon Lundell and Ekström 2013; Fink and Schudson 2014; Salgado et al. 2017). Salgado et al. (2017) found in their comparison of 16 countries that while interpretive journalism is more prevalent in television news in some countries, in others it happens more in print news or online. In the United States and the United Kingdom, for example, election news coverage on television is increasingly filled with talking jour-

nalists instead of with politicians. As a result, journalists are speaking for the candidates, who rarely get the chance to tell their own stories (Farnsworth and Lichter 2008). This changes the (power) relations between journalists and politicians to the journalist's advantage. The latter's control over the news is enhanced (Hallin 1992; Steele and Barnhurst 1996; Farnsworth and Lichter 2008; Salgado et al. 2017). In this interpretive style reporters feel that their knowledge and professional skills allow them to truthfully interpret and frame events and the utterances of politicians. They assume that they know 'what is really happening' and are thus selecting facts mainly to support and illustrate their framing of the news (Brants 2008, 50; Schohaus 2013). Instead of merely observing current affairs, journalists are supposed to analyze them. Altheide (2002) even argued that the interviewees are approached not only with specific questions, but also with particular answers in mind, so that the main role of the interviewee comes down to providing the appropriate piece of information within a limited time. On the other hand, as interviewees became aware of those procedures and of the way their answers could be edited, they began to frame their answers accordingly, considering different interpretations. With the interpretive style the journalist not only becomes more powerful, but also tries to react to the viewers' wishes. At this point there is so much information that one cannot expect a viewer to follow everything and filter the useful information out of this mass. With their interpretations journalists are doing this job for the viewers, trying to hold on to them (Schohaus 2013).

Journalists who appear in studio interviews as experts or commentators interpreting political reality for audiences might connect citizens who otherwise would not be interested in politics, and voice the presumed interests and needs of the public (Djerf-Pierre and Weibull 2008). Interpretive journalism thus potentially strengthens the journalist's ability to be critical and control politicians, aiming 'to find out the truth behind the verifiable facts'. On the other hand,

critics have stated their concerns about its negative effects on the news making process. It would provide viewers with interpretations as facts at the cost of reporting news facts and statements of sources (Patterson 1993; Djerf-Pierre and Weibull 2008; Salgado and Ström-bäck 2012; Salgado et al. 2017).

All of these techniques serve one goal: to reach and satisfy a broad audience. While high ratings are the only criterion for commercial broadcasters to assess success, public service broadcasters want to reach a diverse audience and therefore a reflection of society. However, due to the fact that the target audience of prime time shows on the first national channel is a broad and large group, the task of these shows to reach a diverse public fits the aim of high ratings. Therefore the difference between commercial and public broadcasts in their aim for high ratings seems to be diminished, at least concerning shows aimed at a large audience. Both strive for a large audience, not least because it is a means to receive financing (Van Zoonen 2004b). In this interpretive form of television news, elements that are traditionally more associated with entertainment, such as the emphasis on emotion or stylish editing, are no longer excluded from news items, because they can help to make the news appealing and more comprehensible. Overall, one can say that the specific features of the television medium are used more extensively than ever before (Wijffes 2005; Schohaus 2013); therefore the concept of infotainment, focusing on the mutual influence of elements from different realms, is useful here.

Studying the influences of infotainment, researchers have found possible advantages of blurred boundaries between information and entertainment. The focus on infotainment might also lead to a form of journalism that is more comprehensible and accessible, and to more reports on issues the public is concerned about. Thus infotainment could contribute to public discourse and empower citizens because it is a kind of television in which conventions and forms

from various genres have been put together to provide new ways of informing, engaging and entertaining the public about public affairs (Jones 2005).

The educational and innovative influence of infotainment and popular television has been recognized by a number of researchers (e.g. Bonner 2003). The breaking of traditional cinematographic rules could have a positive effect, since it diminishes the space between the host, participant and audience and therefore brings topics closer to the audience (Tolson 2001). For some researchers the talk show has shown that a more inclusive, less emotionally repressed public discourse is possible (Livingstone & Lunt, 1994). This kind of television could therefore invite people who would otherwise have never watched the news or paid attention to politics and who are not a part of the highbrow culture and public sphere to engage with politics. It could be seen as a means to attract a more socially diverse audience (Fiske 1992; Langer 1998; Norris 2000; Van Zoonen 2005; Costera Meijer and Adolfsson 2006; Biressi and Nunn 2008), not least because ‘many people engage with news that is trivial or emotionally driven’ (Glynn 2000; Cushion 2012). Moreover, research has demonstrated that people remember dramatic and personal news stories. Thus the core journalistic values of detachment and objectivity might need to be complemented or replaced by involvement and subjectivity, because emotions might help viewers to gain insight into news and politics (Costera Meijer 2001). The component of pleasure can also play an important role here. According to Corner, providing pleasure has been the primary imperative of most television productions since the first programs came on air (1999). This pleasure can take different forms and occur on different levels; it can be merely visual, it can be dramatic and it can be social. It can be in the form of fantasy, as a distraction from reality, but it can also be in the form of humor about current events. Limiting knowledge to the sphere of the rational implies that the more subtle contributions to common

knowledge and civic culture that can be achieved by entertainment, humor and emotion are overlooked. For example, basic values such as trust and affinity could be brought across via entertainment or personal stories (Dahlgren 2005).

This holds especially true for research into political representation, which has worked with reductive ideas about the transfer of information, as Corner (1999) points out, ignoring the ways television is producing meaning and knowledge through pleasure. Moreover, no evidence has been found of a negative influence on the political knowledge of people (Norris 2000). Instead, Baum (2005) found in his research that people who watch soft news shows in search of entertainment often learn something about politics accidentally. These effects, however, are limited and not exclusively positive (more informed voters react more cynically). However, to state that it has a negative influence would be too one-dimensional.

In this debate, another group of scholars does not blame television or journalism, but looks at the social and cultural changes underlying the shifts in television news and politics. Glynn (2000), for example, points out that “the construction of a cultural hierarchy that distinguishes ‘serious’ journalism from disreputable tabloidism is an important example of the more general process whereby dominant social taste formations elevate themselves culturally and exclude ‘others’ from apparent worthiness”. The changes in journalism therefore only mirror broader changes in society.

Arnsfeld (2005) emphasizes that many people are politically disengaged and that a balance between entertainment and political information is the best solution to providing as many people as possible with political knowledge (see also Fiske 1994; Van Zoonen 2005). Instead of blaming television for it, entertainment could play an important role in the creation of confidence and trust in politics. Humorous political talk shows could integrate popular culture and politics in a way that enriches citizenship (Jones 2005; Aalberts 2006).

This introductory discussion of the blurring boundaries between information and entertainment has shown that the debate about the informative function of television has often been a normative one. The more inclusive and optimistic approach discussed above also departs from the normative notion of educating the public. However, there is still a lack of empirical research. In the long tradition of discussing and researching the positive or negative effects of those changes, how they are manifested in the programs in detail and how this effects the interaction between journalists and politicians has still scarcely been analyzed empirically in the Dutch context.

Therefore the aim of this dissertation is not primarily to confirm or find a position in this debate. Different aspects and elements of the realms of entertainment and information will be analyzed empirically to show how they affect the discussion of politics in talk shows. In chapter 5 a different perspective will be added to this discussion by studying which politicians appeared on which shows in the last two seasons. It will prove that while shows want to inform about politics, their approach to politics is influenced by the medium of television and its aim to address and entertain a broad audience. In chapter 7 the notion of interpretive journalism, with its study of the role experts play in talk shows, will be further explored. Here again a combination of entertainment elements and the aim to inform the public plays a role in the choices talk show producers make to discuss political topics with politicians and/or experts.

Before discussing these studies, however, the next part of this theoretical framework will be devoted to another concept related to the realm of blurring boundaries: personalization. It will be shown that the shift towards a more market-driven approach can be seen in politics as well, which results in a struggle for power, since both journalists and politicians want to reach the audience in a way that is most useful and profitable for them.

Blurring the boundaries between the public and the private - personalization

The influence of personalization on the relationship between journalists and politicians has been studied frequently but, as several researchers have stated, its definition has long been confusing and contradictory (Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009; Van Aelst, Sheaffer, and Stanyer 2012; Van Santen 2012). The term has been used to describe different developments, from the supposedly increased attention to the personal characteristics of politicians, to the increased media focus on Prime Ministers (Hofer, Van der Brug, and Van Praag 2013). As of today, there is a broad consensus in the literature that personalization is multi-dimensional, but there is still disagreement about the dimensions themselves (Van Aelst, Sheaffer, and Stanyer 2012; Van Aelst et al. 2017). To get a better idea of how the boundaries between the public and the private are fading, the concept of personalization will be further explored in this section. The several definitions of this concept and how it is used in politics will be discussed. As in the first part, the normative discussion attached to this development will be summarized to show which implications are feared. This discussion will further illustrate why personalization is a multi-layered concept. Finally, the specific elements of personalization that are relevant to this research will be discussed.

Politics and media: a symbiotic relationship?

It is not only television and its modes of news production that have changed during the last few decades. The way in which politicians present themselves in these media has also evolved. Several scholars have described the relation between journalists and politicians as a ‘marriage de raison’ or even a symbiotic relationship (Holtz-Bacha 2004; Brants et al. 2010; De Beus 2011). In the biological sense of

the word, this means that two unequal beings coexist by mutually benefiting each other. Thus they need each other to profit from their relationship. Holtz-Bacha thinks that the inequality of the two 'systems' lies in their different goals: politicians are seeking power; journalists are looking for information. Brants et al. (2010) describe the deviating goals differently. According to them, journalists want to know what politicians hide and politicians want to create a favorable image of themselves. Both comparisons are somewhat exclusive and generalizing, but they show that both sides need each other to achieve their individual aims. The mutual benefit lies in the way both parties try to achieve their goals: politicians give information to the media to get more attention and therefore reach more voters, and journalists give them this attention in exchange for, preferably exclusive, information.

Apart from their different interests, they also have the shared aim of reaching a large audience. Both sides are facing an increasingly instable target group. Whereas television, especially the PSB, has to cope with 'zapping viewers', who immediately zap away if they do not like a show, politicians and political parties have to deal with 'floating voters', who are not affiliated to or do not have preferences for one party (Simons 1998). Both target groups have the same characteristics; they are changing their minds quickly, making it difficult to reach them and keep their attention. Journalists and politicians therefore need each other to reach this fluctuating group. This dependent relationship implies that changes on the one side influence the other side and vice versa. Developments such as mediatization, therefore, cannot be attributed to either the media or politics, but are a result of the intertwined symbiotic relationship. This becomes even more obvious in one particular development, often mentioned as a result of mediatization, namely the blurring of boundaries between the private and the public. In their pursuit of their own interests, media and politics find each other in focusing on the politician as a

person.

Scholars have argued that journalists seem to emphasize personal stories and details about politicians to reach a large audience with attractive and exciting television. Politicians, on the other hand, emphasize their image as a ‘normal person’ instead of as a representative of a political party in order to appeal to voters. This results in more personalized news reporting, in which personal credibility becomes more important than ideological principles (e.g. Strömbäck 2008; Driessen et al. 2010; Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012). However, the increase of this so-called personalization has not been proven univocally by empirical research (Achterberg and Houtman 2013).

Both sides have blamed each other for outbalancing the symbiotic relationship and exploiting the other for their own benefits without giving something in return (Holtz-Bacha 2004). Journalists have been accused of exploiting politicians’ personal lives. They try to reach a large audience with sensational stories about events and aspects of politicians’ private lives, their families or personal histories that politicians would rather keep out of the public eye (Grabe, Zhou, and Barnett 2001; Nuijten et al. 2007; Brants et al. 2010). Politicians, on the other hand, have been criticized for being obsessed with their image in the media. It is claimed that they are more concerned with their public image and getting media attention than spreading the political message of their party or trying to initiate political changes (Blumler and Gurevitch 1995; Strömbäck 2008; Voltmer and Brants 2011). It seems as if both sides decided to fight openly about those accusations (De Beus 2011). As Holtz-Bacha (2004) summarizes, “Journalists now complain about being used by politicians, while politicians complain about the way they are treated by the media” (41). Apparently these complaints and accusations have become part of the game, part of the symbiotic relationship. Both sides need each other to frame themselves as the innocent victim in this power struggle.

Self-promotion and reputation management

Politicians use their personal images in order to control and limit the media's influence on their functioning and on politics as such (Driesen et al. 2010). Because the media are inevitably creating a certain image based on journalists' ideas, PR advisors think that it is preferable to be proactive about shaping an image that fits the politicians (Brown, 2011). Organizational campaign strategies and even policy preferences are reshaped in order to try to regain power in the communication process (Votmer and Brants 2011). This professionalization of the politician's reputation involved changes in organizational structures, new campaign methods and the employment of external experts, including public relations consultants, pollsters, marketing specialists, image consultants and even journalists, writers and film makers (Davis 2013).

To shape their image, politicians and their spokesmen meet journalists, experts and citizens directly instead of providing them with general party information (Manin 1997). They actively contact television programs with a story they find newsworthy and personal advisors and spokesmen are eager to relate how politicians are in private to support their personal image (Van Weezel 2011; Kee 2012). "To maintain reporter interest, politicians emphasize the personal, deliver ideas in sound bites, keep 'on message' and avoid complex policy statements" (Davis 2013, 149). They try to keep direct contact with editors and reporters to make agreements about the right time and topics, and use off-the-record briefings and controlled leaking of information to influence the content (Davis 2013, 92). With this exclusive information they try to keep journalists in a dependent relationship. Whoever wants to get first-hand information has to frame the provider in a favorable way (De Beus 2011).

The production process is the context in which marketing experts and PR advisors have the most impact on the representation of 'their' politicians. Spin-doctors negotiate conditions for interviews in

order to control the image of the politicians (Davis 2013). They spin news and desired images, and often use personal stories on purpose to simplify a political issue, to distract from uncomfortable issues or to highlight the party's 'friendly face' (Holtz-Bacha 2004; Brants and Van Praag 2005; De Beus 2011; Kee 2012). While highlighting specific aspects, they deny access to other information and try to control journalists' access to newsworthy information or restricted areas (Brown 2011; Davis 2013).

These contacts with journalists are also used to compete with other politicians or parties. Media function as platforms to put up a struggle with other parties, since emphasizing others' shortcomings can be used to stress own qualities (Van Weezel 2011). Personal qualities are often thrown into the fray, especially when a reputation needs to be improved (Pauka 1991). As Brown (2011) summarized: "The rules of the game prohibit lying, but accept that it is legitimate for politicians and their spin doctors to present information in a partial and misleading way, while at the same time it is understood that journalists present that information in a similarly selective way" (63). Many of these PR strategies are invisible to the audience, not only because politicians and their spin doctors like to keep them off screen, but also because institutions as well as individuals have become more promotionally oriented, as Davis (2013) stated. Therefore "the need to promote has simply become unconsciously internalized by people and institutions" (2013: 4). Promotional activity has become common and is therefore not noticed as such anymore. This unawareness is one of the reasons for which research into these processes is needed. By analyzing the dynamics between journalists and politicians and how their interaction is prepared and shaped, an awareness of the tactics and motivations behind politicians' appearances on television will be created.

As this part has shown, politicians try to use media appearances for their own purposes. They use personalization to shape a favor-

able image of themselves and to reach the voters, who have become less easy to reach. In their attempt to control their image in the media, politicians have to face reporters and journalists who have an own agenda. This can lead to tension between the two sides. How these differing interests meet in talk shows will be discussed later on, in the third part of this theoretical framework. Before this can be examined, however, it is necessary to pay closer attention to the different forms of personalization, because they can be used to analyze politicians' and journalists' strategies more closely.

Personalization – different forms and definitions

Personalization in general is a very broad concept. One speaks of personalization when 'politicians are more than before the center of interest, instead of the institutions and organizations they represent' (e.g. Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009). This would mean that politics on television is by definition a matter of personalization. Even if politicians are speaking for their parties, political events or issues are almost always explained and discussed by their representatives: the politicians. As a result, it is easy to find an increase of personalization, simply because the number of television programs and other media outlets in which politicians appear has been growing during the last decades. The vague and all-embracing character of this definition explains why already in the 1980s critics argued that election campaigns on television had become increasingly personalized (Schütz 1995; Holtz-Bacha 2004). It might also be due to this conceptual vagueness that scholars did not find much evidence of and little consensus about a recent shift towards personalization in their literature studies (Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012; Van Santen 2012; Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2013). Ascribing this to a lack of conceptual clarity, they developed more specific categories. Now there seems to be consensus about the following division: within the

broader development of personalization one can distinguish between a focus on individual politicians (individualization) and a focus on the politician as a private individual, instead of a public figure (privatization) (Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012).

Individualization implies an emphasis on politicians' personal characteristics or achievements in politics. This is often seen in election campaigns in which the party leader or candidate for presidency gets much more attention than the competing parties in general. In the US this is the common way of campaigning, but the use of this tactic has increased in other countries as well. In Germany, for example, it is called the 'Kanzlerbonus', when the chancellor candidates receive the most media attention (Holtz-Bacha 2004). Van Santen added that individualization not only implies that the media focus on party leaders and their political skills and traits; there is also institutional personalization, meaning that within politics there is an emphasis on individual politicians and their competences, for example by positioning someone as the 'face of the party' (Van Santen 2012, 41).

Privatization, on the other hand, implies that news organizations focus on the personal and private facts about politicians. Politicians often use these facts to emphasize their human character, trying to close the gap between the politician as a public person and the audience (Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012; Van Santen 2012). This privatization can be further divided into a focus on personal characteristics, on the one hand, and attention to personal life, such as family or upbringing, on the other hand (Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012, 207).

Van Santen (2012) added another level to this division. Next to individualization and privatization, she introduced emotionalization: the attention to the private narratives of politicians. Here the personal emotions of politicians are highlighted in relation to personal or political matters (2012, 46). This additional category is useful for this research, because it makes a distinction between content or facts,

and emotions. A politician can, for example, talk about his work in a very emotional way, emphasizing his feelings about a certain decision, his fears or doubts, but he can also talk about personal facts in a non-emotional way, using them in a serious debate. Whereas the first situation is an example of emotionalization, the second one can be categorized as privatization.

A shift towards the audience

As mentioned earlier, not only are journalists facing the problem of a ‘zapping audience’; politicians also increasingly have to deal with an unpredictable, and therefore intangible, electorate. A growing number of people is not bound to a specific party anymore, but change between parties more frequently than ever (Manin 1997; Boogers and Voerman 2010; De Beus 2011). Undeterred by party memberships, they can cast their vote for politicians who fight for specific topics they find interesting or relevant. During the next elections they might change their minds and find a politician of a different party more appealing (Mazzoleni and Voerman 2016). Besides these floating voters, there are the so-called ‘monitorial citizens’ (Schudson 1998), who are less politically active but are passively waiting and monitoring what happens with respect to topics that interest them. They watch politics from the outside, via the media, like an audience, and form their opinion based on the ‘political show’, the politicians’ performances on television. Researchers have called this development a change from a party democracy, in which the political parties were the dominant actors in politics, into an audience democracy, in which personalities’ performances and authenticity are more important than party programs or ideologies (Manin 1997; De Beus 2001). As Van Aelst, Sheafer and Stanyer (2012) stated, this ‘candidate-centered politics’ is the result of two related factors: the weakening of traditional bonds between voters and parties and the

mediatization of politics, especially the growing role of television in political communication. Van Aelst et. al. (2017), for example, observed a link between competition between television stations and personalization in their comparative study on personalization in 16 countries. They found that a higher number of television stations led to an increase in personalization.

Because voting behavior has become increasingly unpredictable, politicians changed their strategies to reach the audience. Political parties adapted to the media's logic in their campaign communication with professionalized and more personalized campaigns. They increasingly focus on a few topics they consider appealing to voters and they try to brand them as 'their topics' so that the voters associate them with a particular party (Patterson 1993; Davis 2013). They try to figure out citizens' possible reactions to specific ideas and proposals and decide which topics should be communicated based on these results (De Beus 2001; Aalberts 2006). The focus on one politician as the 'face of the party' is part of this strategy, which can be stressed by media exposure, especially on television, where potential voters can see that candidate.

Personalization plays a significant role in these tactics and is used in different spheres. With regards to appearances on television, the difference between frontstage and backstage plays a crucial role. This difference relates to what Goffman in 1959 labeled 'front regions' and 'back regions'. The front region refers to 'the place where the performance is given' (1984) [1959], 110), which on television is the scene that is available to the viewers. This frontstage region implicitly contains certain forms of behavior and norms, which are taken for granted by viewers as well as by performers and which are therefore hardly noticed anymore. They become clearly apparent only in 'times of crisis' when someone does not adhere to these rules (Banks 1992), for example, in this case, when a politician does not stick to or is not able to adjust to the rules of a show's format.

The back region, or backstage, refers to a place where the performance is prepared, out of view of the audience. “It is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed. (...) Here costumes and other parts of personal front may be adjusted and scrutinized for flaws. Here the team can run through its performance, checking for offending expressions when no audience is present to be affronted by them; here poor members of the team, who are expressively inept, can be schooled or dropped from the performance” (Goffman 1984[1959], 114). As Sigelman (2001) correctly noted, this distinction does not mean that backstage behavior is honest and front stage behavior dishonest, but that the former is enacted in a closed setting, not visible to the audience.

Following this theory, the self-presentation process of public figures has been analyzed frequently, resulting in the self-presentation model of human behavior that assumes that “people constantly attempt to portray particular self-images to others in order to manage the impressions of an omnipresent audience [and] ... that people are flexible and adapting, changing to meet the demands of the situation just as a chameleon takes on the coloration demanded by the environment” (Buss and Briggs, 1984, cited in Sigelman 2001). Personal style and image building are employed to reach people who are not inherently interested in political parties.

Goffman’s theory has been criticized for being too strict and ignoring potentially significant differences in motivation to manage impressions in different situations (Sigelman 2001). This also goes for the distinction between the performance of the private and public aspects of politicians in talk shows. As stated above, politicians use the different spheres of private and public to perform their roles as politicians in different situations. Therefore one cannot say that the private belongs to the backstage and the public to the performance on stage. Politicians use parts of both spheres to adjust their performance to the form and norms of a format.

Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that, especially in the case of television, there are two spaces or regions in which journalists and politicians encounter and interact, on stage and backstage. As Goffman stated, it is in the back region that the performance is planned and given shape. The interaction between journalists, politicians and their advisors and assistants in that space determines, at least partly, the performance on stage, visible to the viewer. So, to investigate the relationship between the format and the interaction between journalists and politicians, both spaces have to be taken into account.

Performing authenticity

Not only have political figures become more important and visible; their representation has also changed. As Van Santen describes, private details have become part of politicians' public stories (2012). In their aim to create an authentic image of themselves, politicians use all three forms of personalization discussed above.

Politicians do not operate in the sphere of political institutions anymore, but also have to 'perform the self' in the sphere of the public and popular, according to Corner (2000). "It is in this sphere that the identity of the politician as a *person of qualities* is most emphatically and strategically put forward" (393). To create this identity, politicians try to emphasize their 'human' character, instead of focusing solely on their political ideas, by providing personal details or opinions on matters hardly connected to their political function. According to Corner, politicians therefore have become 'mediated persona', acting in the political, public and private spheres, using all of them to create a desirable and convincing image of their performance as a politician and representative of their parties.

Especially in election campaigns, politicians use privatization and emotionalization to shape the image of an ordinary, common and therefore accessible person with preferences, emotions and families,

like everyone else (Pauka 1991). In this context, politicians like to have the opportunity to talk about different topics, in order to show that they are interested in a variety of (non-political) subjects, like everyone else (Kee 2012). Through this they hope to reach voters with a low interest in politics or no party affiliation (Brown 2011). The personal, therefore, becomes a part of their representation as a public figure (Houtman and Achterberg 2010).

Coleman attributed the emphasis of ‘being themselves’ to the shift in the function of politicians. They are less and less advocates of an ideology, but act as managers, whose competence is a matter of trust in their integrity. To create an honest impression of themselves, they have to present a complex image of personal and political qualities (Coleman 2011). People will believe his political message only if he, the person as such, is perceived as honest and authentic, , he thinks. Therefore, politicians increasingly use media experts to frame their trustworthy qualities, focusing on personal qualities (individualization) instead of party political issues (De Beus 2011). By presenting themselves as authentic, they try to make the voter believe in the person, who is almost accidentally also member of a party.

However, politicians gain the voters’ trust only if they seem capable of dealing with political affairs. Therefore they have to combine the personal story and individual qualities with political knowledge and competence to meet the expectations of the viewers (Schütz 1995). They have to be able to switch easily between the private and the public to create a reliable and trustworthy image of themselves (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000). Politicians have to be able to perform both, the public and the personal, in their performance. They have to keep the right balance between their public role and personal stories, since only the right mix will create a reliable and authentic image that can convince the public.

To create this image, politicians consider appearances on television to be crucial. In a study of politicians’ appearances in comedy

shows, their most important reason for their attendance appeared to be the ability to frame themselves as human beings. This enabled them to reach audiences and voters who decided on the basis of personalities (Van Zoonen, Coleman, and Kuik 2011). They use this form of self-marketing as a strategy to express their ideas. Through media training, focus groups and rehearsing, they try to improve their appearance on television. That is the reason for which not only journalists, but also a lot of politicians themselves nowadays expect a politician to be able to tell his story in different kinds of television programs (Baum 2005). Performing in different television shows has thus become a part of their function as politicians (Baum 2005; Kee 2012). Nowadays it is common that politicians who are not naturals in performing get media relations training (Davis 2013) as part of their reputation management tactics, which will be discussed in the following section.

Normative concerns about personalization

As with the blurring boundaries between information and entertainment, personalization has also caused a normative debate. As in the debate discussed in the paragraphs 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, the same fear is underlying this discussion: the decline of political reporting and therefore ultimately a decline of the quality of democracy. Personalization in particular has often been used as a negative qualification for the quality of democracy and election campaigns (Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009; Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012; Achterberg and Houtman 2013; Van Aelst et al. 2017).

The blurring of the distinction between the public and private has been described as especially troublesome, because it contradicts the concept of the public sphere. Aspects traditionally associated with the private sphere, such as emotion, intimacy, subjectivity, pleasure or consumption, can now enter the realm of the public sphere and

could finally dominate the arena of politics (Corner 1999; Dahlgren 2003). In their attempt to close the gap between voters and politicians, politicians might create a gap between themselves and politics as such, by focusing on the person instead of on political matters, critics fear (Houtman and Achterberg 2010).

Others have noted that personalization can lead to a growing intimacy between voters and politicians on the one hand, and between journalists and politicians on the other hand. This trend could not only damage political debate, but also cause growing cynicism among citizens (Hart 1994) and a ‘spiral of mistrust’, because politicians seem to be more likely to be chosen because of their ability to deal with media instead of their political know-how (Voltmer and Brants 2011). The strategic negotiations and deals between politicians, spin-doctors and journalists are believed to undermine trust in politics and democratic institutions (Cappela and Jamieson 1996). Miller (Miller 2004), however, nuanced this idea by pointing out that “it is not the development of spin techniques or multi-channel television in the abstract that are problematic, but rather what this signifies in terms of the decline of the democratic process and the increasing dominance of business interests in politics ” (376). He sees spin as a feature of ‘a society in which private interests have almost entirely replaced public interest’ (2004, 380).

Politicians are aware of the importance of being widely known for their careers. This ‘fame’ can only be reached through appearances on television and some politicians use personal stories to increase their celebrity status, which they think is necessary for success (Plake 1999; Holtz-Bacha 2004; Kee 2012). Houtman and Achterberg (2010) called this striving a result of the seemingly compulsory normative expectations that they have ‘to be themselves’ and the need to part with the traditional institutional role of politicians. This could result in a situation in which only politicians who understand how to present themselves on those shows have a chance to get their

message across. Political qualities such as knowledge of specific cases or governmental matters would then have become unimportant, or as Davis (2013) stated: “Public visibility is falsely equated with democratic participation” (121).

Other scholars also believe that this shift in the power balance could lead either towards a situation in which the media have the ultimate control over how politics is presented to the audience or, on the other hand, to a coverage that is completely determined by politicians who have succeeded in instrumentalizing the media for their own purposes (Strömbäck 2008; Voltmer and Brants 2011). This might eventually even lead to a decline of serious politics and therefore of democracy, critics have warned (Hallin 1992; Patterson 1996; Street 2003). These fears, however, are not sufficiently supported by empirical studies, nor by literature reviews comparing several studies of personalization (Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009; Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012).

Moreover, several researchers have noted that these fears are not new but arise every time new media or techniques are introduced. Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema and Takens (2009), for example, show that the fear of the negative effects of personalization is as old as democracy. Already Plato, who saw personalization as a defining characteristic of democracy, because politicians should always strive to be loved by their voters, feared that this fleeting ‘cult of persona’ could restrain politicians from making long-term decisions that were unpopular with the public. Such criticism therefore would testify ‘more to a nostalgia for an ideal form of politics and citizenship that has never existed’ (Van Zoonen 2003).

From a more positive perspective, personalization, like infotainment, has been described as a possible solution to the complexity of politics, because it makes politics understandable and concrete and can therefore work to get support and sympathy. Appearance in television programs such as talk shows could help to close the

gap between politicians and the audience. Not only because their personal stories are easier to understand and closer to what viewers experience themselves, but also because different camera angles and close-ups could also help to minimize the distance between political professionals and the public, revealing more expressions and personal details that could bring politics closer to the viewing public (Pels 2003). Public relations should therefore not be seen as a ‘bad thing’, but as communication tools that could also help to reach the voters fast and efficiently, some researchers argue (Street 1997; McNair 2000; Norris 2000; Van Zoonen 2005; Davis 2013). Moreover, no evidence has been found in the Dutch context of general negative or positive effects of personalization. Neither does it imply a shift away from substantive news coverage, nor a contradiction between personalized news and attention to political issues; they can be parts of the same story (Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009; Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012; Achterberg and Houtman 2013; Van Aelst et al. 2017). Studies on personalization also often failed to take the interaction between journalists and politicians into account and focused solely on one side of the coin, which created an incomplete story (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Miller 2004).

This short overview has shown that neither the pessimistic nor the optimistic views provide empirical information for the analysis of how personalization takes place in the interaction between journalists and politicians. Blaming the media or politics for developments that might be unhealthy for democracy, moreover, does not solve the problem, as Miller (2004) has stated. More empirical research is therefore needed to analyze how exactly the interaction between journalists and politicians causes a blurring of the boundaries between the private and public. This dissertation will help to provide these insights, especially with the case study of a politician’s personal story in chapter 6.

One thing this theoretical part has illustrated in particular, is the

active role politicians and their PR-staff play in influencing media discourse. The tactics applied by politicians and especially by their spokesmen and spin-doctors are, however, invisible to the audience. In the Netherlands the attention paid to negotiations behind the scenes is increasing, for example in television programs such as ‘De Waan van de Dag’, in books about the production process of talk shows and other programs (see for example Van Weezel 2011; Kee 2012) and in research (see for example De Haan and Bardoel 2011). Although PR advisors, as well as journalists, are trying to keep their strategies secret, viewers are increasingly aware of the artificiality of what is presented as spontaneous and authentic. Those observations have not yet been combined with the research of form, style and content of these programs, however. Moreover, viewers are still unaware of how the production process, and especially the role politicians and their advisors play in it, influences the interaction on screen. Therefore Chapter 4 will shed light on the PR advisors role. Their perspective on their role and influence will be studied, analyzing their interpretive repertoires. By adding their account to the discussion of news management and political PR, this study will add a new perspective to the analysis of the complex relation between politics and television journalism.

In addition, this theoretical part has shown that politicians often use personal examples in their attempt to create a favorable image of themselves. Chapter 6 will show what happens if private details become the topic of discussion against the politician’s will. It will be discussed how talk show formats, including the host’s interview style, shape this personal story and how the politician in question fails to use it in his favor. This study therefore connects the study of personalization to the field of format research. To be able to make that link, it is necessary to discuss how television talk shows treat the aim for authenticity and how it is influenced by their formats. This discussion will be provided in the next, and last, part of this theoretical framework.

Blurring the boundaries between planning and spontaneity – talk show formats

Whereas the first part of the literature review dealt with the blurring boundaries between information and entertainment, the second part focused on the blurring distinction between the private and the public. This part concentrates on the perceived boundary between structured, strict planning, and authentic and spontaneous appearances, focusing on the specific characteristics of the talk show. This third part of the theoretical framework, therefore, has two functions: First, to discuss and define the notion of format, and to distinguish format elements that are crucial for talk shows. Like the two earlier sections, this part will start with a discussion of the blurry definition of the central concept, in this case the term format. Second, it relates the concepts of infotainment and personalization to that of talk show formats.

The difference between talk show genres and formats

When talking about television, the term ‘format’ seems unavoidable, because it is a decisive factor in television production, reception and, to a growing extent, research. In order to study this phenomenon, a clear-cut understanding of the term is needed, but, despite a growing body of research on specific formats, an overall definition is still missing (Esser 2010).

The definition of the term has become vague due to its wide and imprecise use in different contexts. In these discussions the terms ‘genre’ and ‘format’ are often used as substitutes for each other. The frequent use of the term ‘program type’ in the same context is exemplary of a lack of conceptual clarity. It is used to refer to specific formats *and* general genres at the same time, which makes the distinction even more confusing (Bonner 2003, 9). Before format-specific

elements can be discussed, it is therefore necessary to pay attention to the difference between genres, sub-genres and formats, and how these terms are interpreted for the purposes of this dissertation.

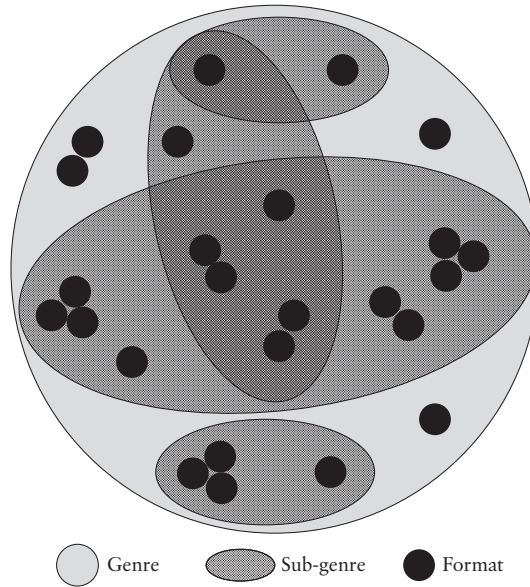


Figure 1: Visualization of the relations between genre, sub-genre and format.

Genre. The concept ‘genre’ generally refers to the type of film or television show and puts it in relatively broad categories, such as entertainment or documentary, but can also be more specific, such as daily soap or, most relevant in this case, talk show. Genres have specific conventions that define the programs’ common identity. This can be content-wise (an action film usually contains a fight or struggle between different parties or actors), but can also involve certain techniques (dark lighting is essential for horror films) or other form elements (studio audience for game shows) (Bordwell and Thompson 2004, 108–11). Television makers can use genre conventions to promote and introduce their programs. Policymakers can schedule

programs according to their genre, and because viewers are acquainted with those conventions, they know what to expect from a specific program or film. As Mittell states, “television genre is best understood as a process of categorization that [...] operates across the cultural realms of media industries, audiences, policy, critics, and historical contexts” (Mittell 2004, xii). However, those conventions are fuzzy and defining the precise boundaries between genres is difficult. The usefulness of genres as a concept has, therefore, been questioned frequently. They would be too broad, clear-cut definitions would be impossible and the introduction of hybrid television forms would have outdated the categorization in pure genres (Mittell 2004). This critique holds especially for the genre in question here, the talk show, which has only two overall binding characteristics, one concerning the form and one concerning the content: all shows 1) consist of some kind of talk with guests, and 2) deal with a mix of emotion and facts, usually in front of an audience (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000). Talk shows resist categorization in established genres such as entertainment or current affairs, since they are too diverse. It could be argued that this diversity is in fact one of the characteristics of talk shows, balancing on the edge between information and entertainment, facts and emotion, which makes them a genre on their own (Livingstone and Lunt 1994; Keller 2009).

Talk shows can be investigative, social or political, as well as informative and entertaining at once. As the short overview of the differences between the US and Dutch talk show traditions in paragraph 2.1.2 has shown, the genre can have a different connotation, due to national traditions and history. Given this diversity, it is hardly surprising that in earlier research the term talk show has been given different interpretations. It has been used to describe specific programs, as well as to elaborate on broader developments such as infotainment (Bonner 2003, 23). These studies of talk shows are an interesting contribution to television research because they do not focus solely

on the content, but also take into account the programs' form. The problem with this kind of research, however, is that it often studies one specific (group of) program(s) and applies the conclusions to the talk show genre in general, which makes it a hollow notion after all. As stated above, this genre is so diverse that general statements about it are almost impossible, or at least not applicable to all shows in this genre. Therefore a more specific approach is needed.

Sub-genre. To clarify the terminology for this research, a subdivision is made. Several researchers have suggested that the talk show genre has a couple of sub-genres, which have criteria and conventions that are more specific and applicable only to programs within this sub-genre (Timberg and Erler 2002; Keller 2009). Timberg and Erler, for example, distinguished three sub-genres: news talk, entertainment talk and socially situated talk (2002). This classification is still very broad and not exclusive, because there are many hybrids and blends, as Timberg and Erler admitted themselves. Nonetheless, those sub-genres have three different aims: to inform, to entertain, and to represent social experiences. They make it easier to distinguish between various talk shows and to analyze their structure and content.

A 'daily talk show', for example, focuses on personal problems and often involves the studio audience to create social talk and, therefore, belongs to the socially situated talk sub-genre. A late-night talk show is scheduled after 10 p.m. and aims to entertain the public. A news talk show, on the other hand, discusses current affairs, often containing interviews and discussions with politicians, to inform the public. Within those sub-genres there are specific formats that determine particular programs. *Oprah* was a daily talk show format, whereas *Late Show with David Letterman* is a specific format within the late-night talk show sub-genre. The Dutch shows analyzed in this dissertation are all focused on current affairs, with a mix of hard news and entertaining topics. Their formats, however, are quite dif-

ferent, resulting in totally different programs. Trying to find a sub-genre that fits them all would require categories broad enough to embrace them all. This would have the effect that a large variety of talk shows could be grouped in this sub-genre, making the sub-genre useless for detailed analyses. Stricter categories, on the other hand, would imply excluding formats that do not share all the characteristics of the sub-genre or which have elements of several sub-genres. The visualization in figure 1 exemplifies these operational difficulties. While some talk show formats can be grouped in a larger sub-genre, others either meet the criteria of several sub-genres or fit none at all. In order to be able to discuss the unique character of the shows and the various elements that shape it, it was therefore chosen to use the more specific concept of format for this research.

Format. Although there is still no theoretical consensus on a detailed definition of what a format is exactly, it is broadly understood that formats can be seen as a smaller unit within a genre that determines the detailed specifics of a show. In contrast to genres, formats not only determine the sort of information the viewer gets, but they also define how every broadcast is structured and which elements are a fixed part of them. The television format is the concept behind the program, determining the ever-repeated elements, and the basic structure of every show (Fictooor et al. 2006; Ellis, Esser, and Lozano 2016). It can be seen as a feature of media logic that determines the ‘rules or ‘codes’ for defining, selecting, organizing, presenting and recognizing information as one thing rather than another (...)’ (Altheide 2004, 294). The format determines when the show is aired, which section of the public it is aimed at, and what kind of character and tone it has. Within this framework each individual broadcast can be fleshed out. Using the metaphor of a pie, one could argue that ‘the ‘crust’ is the same every day the show is aired, but the filling changes (Stasheff and Bretz 1951; Van Manen 1994; Keinonen 2016). Thus formats are characterized by difference within repetition, as Moran

called it. They are processes of systematization in which a rule-bound element and an element of transgression are equally important (Moran and Malbon 2006).

The defining elements of a television format influence the interaction between the journalists and politicians in those programs, because they determine how the politician is approached, the duration of the talk and in which context he has to act. These elements can be concretely defined and empirically analyzed, as I will show later on in this chapter, which makes the specific concept ‘format’ a more fruitful concept for this research than the broad categorization of the talk show genre. Sometimes in the course of this chapter, however, it will be unavoidable to refer to talk shows in general, since the clear-cut division between genres and formats is not always made in scholarship.

Three contexts of studying formats

The confusion about the definition of what a television format is exactly may be caused by its use in different research contexts. To clarify this, I distinguish three perspectives from which formats have been studied.

Economic/ legal perspective – trading formats

Probably the first context in which the term ‘format’ has been used is the economic and legal one of television making. For a long time, literature on television formats has been limited to the realm of television production business and legal matters. Until the late 1990s this concept was mostly used by television industry and producers to invent, claim and sell specific formats (Moran 2005, 295). For television producers the notion of formats has been a useful tool to brand and sell their programs nationally and internationally. Therefore, much research has been done on formats in the global context.

It explores how television shows have been sold to different countries, focusing mainly on entertainment programs (see for example Bignell 2004; Moran and Malbon 2006; Esser 2010; Chalaby 2011; Chalaby 2015).

In this context, tradability has often been emphasized as the characterizing factor of a television format. In this view, a format is ‘a show that can generate a distinctive narrative and is licensed (...) in order to be adapted to local audiences’ (Chalaby 2011, 296). Although this often means a trade between different countries, a format can also be sold within the same country to another television station or producer.

This development started in the US and the UK in as early as the 1950s, when the growing competition between broadcasters led to a search for cheap content. Importing programs was the cheapest option, but did not serve the audience’s demand for local programming. With the trade of formats, broadcasters could combine both aspects, cheap shows with local content (Moran and Malbon 2006; Chalaby 2011). It is this ability to offer local programming with little risk (producers know that the program has been successful elsewhere) that makes formats more appealing to producers than the import of canned programs. Because of the ability to adjust a program to local preferences, formats have been used in television production ever since (Esser 2010, 287). In the late 1990s, the trade in formats got a boost when big television programs, often reality shows, were sold around the world. Among the most successful ones were *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, *Big Brother* and *Idols* (Bazalgette 2005). One of the most recent international successes might be *Farmer wants a Wife* (Van Keulen 2016). Researchers agree that format trade is not just about adjusting a show to a different local setting, but it is seen as an ‘interactive process including negotiation among different television cultures’ (Keinonen 2016).

From this economic and legal perspective there are two factors

that determine the development of a program into a tradable format: it has to be easily adaptable to other contexts and has to have the potential to score high ratings (Chalaby 2012). Formats are seen as economic goods; templates or recipes in which the practices and characteristics of a program are determined, which may sometimes be customized for an audience in a different country (Moran 2009; Esser 2010; Chalaby 2015). “It is a recipe which allows television concepts to travel without being stopped by either geographical or linguistic boundaries. To achieve this, the recipe comes with a whole range of ingredients, making it possible for producers throughout the world to locally produce a television program based on a foreign format, and to present it as a local television show perfectly adapted to their respective countries and cultures” (Buneau 2001; Moran and Malbon 2006, 27). This structure gives the program its specific character and identity and is therefore highly useful for marketing purposes (Lane 1992). The recipe, in which structure and content elements are determined, implies not only a financial success, but also prevents the ill-use of the program, which could give it a bad reputation.

As this short overview shows, tradability is an important characteristic of television formats. Focusing on unique formats in the specific Dutch context, however, this aspect is of little interest for this research. Much more interesting is the idea of a concrete formula. It confirms that a format determines the fixed elements of a show. Which elements these are in the talk shows in question here will be discussed later on.

Discourse perspective – the interview

A perspective that focused more on the content of television shows is the study of discourse. Various television formats have been studied in this context, although they are not always explicitly introduced as such. Because talk is central to those shows, the interview is one

of the most prominent parts analyzed. It is widely accepted that an interview is a form of interaction, which differs tremendously from ordinary conversations, or other forms of interaction (Ekström and Lundell 2011). This is especially true for live television interviews, because they occur in real time and therefore resemble a normal conversation, but are at the same time being constructed.

The political interview has been studied mainly from a linguistic perspective, using conversation or discourse analysis to examine the detailed structure and semantics of the language and talks (Fairclough 2001; Clayman and Heritage 2002). These studies focused mainly on long-form interviews or news conferences in which much interaction between the journalists and politicians takes place in front of an audience. The research of Clayman and Heritage on interviews with US presidents, in which they analyzed the aggressiveness of questioning, is leading in this field (Clayman and Heritage 2002; Clayman et al. 2006; Clayman et al. 2007; Clayman 2010). They provided extensive quantitative results about the kind of questions journalists asked and how they changed over time. They found that ‘the journalistic initiative had expanded considerably over the previous forty years’ and linked this to a growing ‘adversarialness’ (Clayman and Heritage 2002, 236).

How the conversation unfolds and the role interview styles play have therefore been analyzed as a defining part of talk shows. Volmer and Brants (2011), for example, distinguish different communicative strategies in British and Dutch television interviews but they do not link them to the concept of formats. The different characters and settings of the interaction, however, are shaped to a great extent by the program’s format (Altheide 2002). The importance of the incorporation of this part into a broader analysis has been shown by Eriksson (2011), who analyzed the short-form interview as a building block of the television news item. Focusing on communication techniques and the politician’s role in the overall news story, he shows

that the incorporation of those short-form interviews into the overall news story appears to play an essential role in the adversarialness of the news broadcasts. Eriksson acknowledged a decisive aspect of the interviews in television programs: because the talk is planned in advance, it is not only the interviewer, but also the overall set-up of the program that defines the interview, so the discourse is at least partly determined by the format.

The host's or interviewer's role is part of a format, since he chooses a style of questioning that fits the overall format. In a talk show with an emphasis on a fast but pleasant talk, for example, the questions might be less adversarial than in a program with a focus on the unraveling of new facts (Haarman 2001; Kee 2012). The interplay of recurring program-specific elements and the spontaneous questions, reactions and events is what makes talk shows interesting to the public, as well as for research. It is staged and spontaneous at the same time. Both characteristics are essential parts of the program's format (Plake 1999).

The role of the host has often been studied from a linguistic or communication studies point of view. Vraga et. al (2012), for example, distinguished three roles: the correspondent, the comic and the combatant, and argue that this style is part of the program's format. They found that it influenced the program's overall credibility. Their study, however, does not connect the findings on the interviewer's role to other decisive elements of the format. It is therefore a good example of the shortcomings of this discourse perspective for the study of television formats. By focusing on one aspect of the talk shows, the conversation, the research misses the analysis of the connection, interaction and combination with other elements that define a program's format. Conversation analysis can unravel communication styles and techniques that are often a decisive part of a talk show format but, in order to understand how it has been shaped, it is important to incorporate other elements into the study.

Cultural perspective – style, form and media logic

Formats can also be analyzed from a so-called cultural perspective. As Mittell notes: “Genres are cultural products, constituted by media practices and subject to ongoing change and redefinition” (Mittell 2004, 1). The same holds true for formats. Therefore, some talk show formats or sub-genres have been studied extensively as cultural products, often in the context of a broader social or political development such as the personalization of politics or the popularization of news. The talk show has been qualified as being innovative at formal and thematic levels, and it is assumed that ‘it has created widespread debate about the nature of television as a public forum and about the way in which forms of talk relate to the political and to the personal’ (Corner 1999). The concept of media logic has been used frequently to study the combination of form, and media specific and cultural elements. Although it is often used normatively to describe the negative influence and increasing power of the media in public and political discourse (Altheide and Snow 1979; Van Praag and Brants 2014; Brants and Praag 2015), it can also be used in an empirical way. Using the original sense of the word, it can be understood as “with a strong focus on media practices” (Asp 2014, 257). From that perspective, it implies merely that specific media have specific characteristics and therefore an own logic, without any normative undertone. As Altheide (2002) explained: “Media logic refers to the assumptions and processes applied to the construction of messages within particular media” (412). Those processes include style elements such as the rhythm, grammar and format that shape the way content is presented.

The concept is often used to refer to all media, implying that there is one logic for all of them (see for example (Esser 2013; Brants and Praag 2015). Considering the fundamental differences between media, however, this would omit significant differences between media. Therefore, the strand of research that states that every medi-

um has its specific logic is followed here (Lundby 2009; Strömbäck and Esser 2014; Klinger and Svensson 2015). Each medium consists of a set of technical and formal characteristics that not only shape the medium's content, but also its organizational and institutional structure and processes. Together these norms and standards form the medium's logic, which serves "as guidelines for appropriate behavior and thinking within each institutional sphere and based on each sphere's purposes, interests, needs and institutional structures" (Strömbäck and Esser 2014). Thus, media logic contains medium specific characteristics as well as how people use them and adapt to them. As Asp (2005, 258) summarized, "media logic has an interactional meaning; it goes beyond the processes of production and is constituted through continuous patterns of social interaction" (cf. Hjarvard 2008; Lundby 2009)

It is this distinctive television logic that separates its products from that of other media, such as newspapers (Altheide 2002). On television other techniques are used to create a specific impression than in other media. Importance, for instance, is signaled on television using temporal cues, such as the length of an item or where it is situated in the show (instead of spatial cues that are used by newspapers, for example the place and length of an article in the newspaper). Thus, media logic not only determines the content and form, but also influences how organizations operate, their strategies and routines.

This combination of concrete formal elements and their usage is useful for this research, because it connects the interpretation of behavior and choices with the medium itself. As Meyen et. al. (2014, 272) stated, "as an institution, news media logic works as a constraint on action since its values and rules reduce uncertainty and provide an overall structure that shapes the behavior of both the news organizations and individual news journalists." To analyze this interaction, Esser (2013) distinguished three parts that together shape news media, including television, logic: professional aspects (e.g. journalistic

norms), commercial aspects (economic motives) and technological aspects (medium-specific technology) (see also Asp 2014). The same distinction can be used to analyze television talk shows with their specific characteristics and formats. Television logic plays an important role in the construction of a format, since it is at least partly determined by the abilities and restrictions of the medium.

In the case of television journalism, one could argue that the technical possibilities, restrictions and implications have been given little attention in studies on the complex relation between politics and television. With regards to television talk shows, the research focus has been on the content and, to a much lesser extent, on the general production processes. As Altheide and Snow (1979) argued, routines and values based on corporate objectives and their representation in the professional culture of journalism all come together in the format, since it shapes the product according to these previous factors. A combination of technological choices and professional strategic decisions, including organizational objectives and the definition of working routines, together shapes these formats (Domingo 2008). The way in which the technical elements of the format relate to the content and the production process has not been studied yet. In the following section, characteristic elements will be distinguished that can be used to define and to analyze show formats.

The characteristic elements of talk show formats

As stated above, the talk show genre has only a few, relatively vague, common characteristics: they stage a discussion with one or several guests, usually in front of an audience, in which facts, opinions, entertainment and emotions are mixed up to some extent. To analyze how specific talk show formats fill in this mixture, it is necessary to distinguish specific elements that play a role in these programs. A program's format is made up of various form and style elements,

which create the program's 'mechanics': the combination of building blocks that shape the unique character of the show.

Formats work so well because television relies on the viewers 'often unconscious knowledge of codes and their ability to decode signs and their connotations, and assemble them into meaningful scenes, sequences and stories' (Bignell 2004, 91). That is, for example, why a news anchor, sitting in a sober décor behind a desk, speaking in a neutral, unemotional tone conveys the notion of objectivity and seriousness. Camera angles, editing and the use of sound are cues that influence these kinds of impressions and connotations, often very subtly and beyond the consciousness of the viewer (Bignell 2004, 90). Those repetitive elements of style, setting and order are part of television logic and often determine the success of a specific format (Haeck 1998, 136). These elements can be derived from program or television traditions and can be used to create identification and therefore reach a specific audience (Moran 2009). They make a format unique and distinguish it from other programs. "Host, guests, experts, and studio audience in each of the principal talk show types constitute a sort of social microcosm embodying a discernible, particular configuration of personal and institutional expectations within which certain kinds of discourses and interactive patterns are considered appropriate and accessible" (Haarman 2001, 35).

Besides the general similarity mentioned above, the talk shows analyzed in this research have another element in common: they follow and discuss daily topical matters in which politics often plays a role. The way in which they deal with these topics, however, differs from format to format. Nevertheless, they all use some characteristic elements that determine the character of the program and therefore will be discussed here. They can help to analyze specific programs or formats in the next part of this research.

Flow

When talking about television in general, and about talk shows in particular, the notion of ‘flow’ cannot be ignored. In television research it has been used in two ways: between programs and within one program. Williams uses ‘flow’ to describe the way television programs are scheduled to create a good variety in order to keep the viewer watching the same channel or broadcaster. He calls the planned organization of the programs a sequence or flow, which is the result of negotiations and planning behind the scenes (Williams [1975] 1990). This flow is not only aimed at in the overall programming, for example by putting the commercial breaks within programs instead of between different programs to keep the viewer watching, but it also influences specific programs, because program formats are developed in order to fit into a specific flow (Corner 1999). The notion of flow has been discussed extensively in the literature and there is disagreement about how this flow can be created. Fiske, for example, argued, in contrast to Williams, that breaks and clear differences between programs are better for the flow than continuity (Fiske 1994).

What is important here is that a format is not developed in isolation, but has to fit into programming strategies. The ideas of broadcast coordinators and other people who have a voice in programming can influence a specific format. As the flow of programming has become an important means of reaching a large audience, programs have to meet the requirements of the overall programming and are forced to adjust their production to those structures and strategies on the network and broadcast level that are not visible to the viewer (Bourdieu and Ferguson 1998; Van Zoonen 2004b). The classification in genres and formats can help to fit programs into the flow, since viewers know the genre conventions and therefore know what kind of program they can expect when a documentary or game show is scheduled. Therefore, genre or format labels can help to emphasize

the variety and flow of the programming or to address a specific target audience. This can be seen, for example, when a channel tries to frame an evening as 'ladies night'. Here the programming does not influence the programs' production directly, but determines the general frame into which the program should fit (Van Zoonen 2004b). In this regard, the so-called 'bible' of the formats is essential. It is a 'compilation of information about the scheduling, target audience, ratings and audience demographics of the program' (Moran 2004, 259).

This 'bible' also relates to the second way the notion of flow has been described, namely the flow within a program. In the analysis of specific programs, 'flow' refers to the way the show is presented to give an impression of a continuous, direct and natural event. If the flow is created in a convincing way, it makes viewers believe in what they see as the natural evolution of events. Therefore flow can be a very powerful element in talk shows (Bonner 2003; Keller 2009). As will be argued further on, the impression of an immediate and direct experience is an important factor for the success of talk shows, and the element of flow is, among others, used to achieve this feeling.

Notion of immediacy and authenticity

Television's ability to capture and represent events in real time is a decisive factor in talk shows, since their success is based, partly, on the feeling of immediacy. They are presented as real time conversations between a host and one or more guests in front of a studio audience, creating a sense of intimacy and immediacy at once (Timberg and Erler 2002). The viewer witnesses the action unfolding on the screen at the very moment it takes place, which makes it even more intriguing, even though this feeling is a construction. The viewer always sees a representation of the events, be they live or canned, because even the distribution of live footage is structured and planned beforehand and influenced by the journalist's choices (Deming 2005). Talk shows are

often regarded as giving politicians the chance to get into contact with the audience more directly than in news programs, in which they can give only a small quote (Bucy and Newhagen 1999). This direct contact, however, is often an illusion as well and the effect of the smart use of television techniques, combined with a specific format (Livingstone and Lunt 1994; Bucy and Newhagen 1999).

To create this immediacy, various techniques are used, the ‘aesthetics of the moment’, as Stigel has called them, which make things ‘literally accessible at a glance, so that the viewer is given an immediate experience’ (Stigel 2001). Editing is one of the most powerful techniques used to create immediacy. With editing, the viewer’s attention can be directed and links can be made. If a shot of a talking person, for example, is followed by a shot of a different person, it is suggested that this second person’s reaction is important in this case or at least that he has something to do with what has been said. Thus editing is a strong technique to create temporal and spatial relations (Corner 1999; Schohaus 2013). In combination with other elements, editing can be used to create a ‘reality effect’ and enable people to believe what they see (Bourdieu and Ferguson 1998). In contrast to film editing, the editing in live television shows is not a post-production process, but happens in real time. The editor/director can thus immediately react to events on screen (Corner 1999).

To keep the viewers’ attention, talk shows need to have a certain speed. Not only must the talk itself unfold at a certain speed, but the transition between topics and other elements should also keep up the pace (Pauka 1991). Editing techniques can help to keep up the speed, while keeping the talk comprehensible. For example, if the host introduces someone, then usually that person is seen in the next shot. Thus editing is used to support the course of the talk and enhance comprehensibility, directness and immediacy. Moreover, editing speed determines the overall impression of the program. Fast editing creates a dynamic, fast and sometimes hurried impression,

whereas slow editing can give the idea that there is no editing at all and that the action on screen is unfolding rather naturally (Bordwell and Thompson 2004).

Closely related to the creation of immediacy is the striving for authenticity. A talk show needs to come across as real and authentic to be experienced as trustworthy and thus watchable. Not only do the emotions expressed have to appear real and plausible; the overall setting and style also have to match well to create a convincing character for the show. The setting, for example, plays a distinctive role in determining this overall character. In talk shows it is not used to create a 'space of naturalistic action but to access a space of stimulating artifice, a theatre [...] for contrived eventuality and self-conscious performance' (Corner 1999, 31). This performance, however, has to be convincing. Thus the studio setting is used as a subtle device to create the authenticity of a format. In this setting every detail can have a specific function. Lighting, for example, can articulate textures, emphasizing particular details, and give the impression of daytime or nighttime. Colors can be used to emphasize a certain detail or to make a statement about one's political preferences (Bordwell and Thompson 2004).

The arrangement of the guests, the audience and the space between them are also important in terms of creating a sense of authenticity and immediacy. Is the host placed at the same level as the guests? Or is he standing between the guests and the audience, for example? Four people sitting on a row facing the audience give the idea that they will interact mostly with the audience. A group of people arranged around a table creates the impression of a conversation with each other, which the viewer can follow from the outside.

How close the viewer gets is determined by the camera work. The distance between the guests, the host and the audience, or the lack thereof, can create an intimate or, on the other hand, detached impression. This can be reinforced by the use of specific camera angles

and focus. Because directness and immediacy should be created, talk shows are often filmed from a straight-on angle, placing the viewer on the same level as the participants in the talk show. The closer the shot, the more intimate the picture gets. Close-ups are therefore often used to emphasize emotion, whereas long shots are used to emphasize the surroundings (Corner 1999; Bordwell and Thompson 2004).

If the camera focuses on one person while blurring the background, this person is emphasized and removed from his surroundings. If the whole frame is clear and sharp, the background plays a more important role. This technique can be used, for example, to emphasize the presence of the audience and therefore bring the guests into contact with it, or at least create the impression of closeness between the two. The focus can be changed within one shot, emphasizing the person who is talking, for example, and direct the viewers' attention indirectly towards him (Bordwell and Thompson 2004).

Another technique used to subtly direct the viewer's attention is framing. Normally the most important action is framed at the center of the picture; in talk shows this is often the person who is talking. A different choice is to frame the person who is listening. With this framing the reaction becomes more important than what is being said. This is a powerful technique in talk shows, because listeners' faces often show their emotions, consciously or unconsciously, and therefore indicate how the conversation will unfold. A disagreeing look could indicate a forthcoming argument, whereas approval could lead to a friendly conversation. This kind of framing, therefore, can be used to create a specific sphere and to emphasize emotions. The framing can be adjusted by moving the camera. At the beginning of a talk show, for example, a tracking shot can be used to introduce all the guests. By showing them in one tracking take, the viewer gets an impression of the space and can 'take a look around' the studio.

When something important happens, the camera usually follows the action so that the viewer can stay close to the events and not miss any information.

In combination, the form and style elements described above create an impression of direct and live action that unfolds spontaneously in front of the audience. However, there is one element that is obviously artificial and a decisive part of the medium's logic: the use of audiovisual material, television fragments or other pictures. Those elements are often used to illustrate a topic, but can also direct the conversation in a particular direction. These fragments, therefore, constitute a powerful means to create a specific impression or sphere. 'Bloopers' are often used as an entertaining element, whereas more serious parts can be used to confront the interviewee with new or different perspectives. Because the guests often do not know the content of those fragments beforehand, their reaction is spontaneous, enhancing the immediate and authentic character of the show.

Staged spontaneity

Probably the most obvious element of the talk show format is its content, the talk. The style of this talk is determined by the particular format and can differ considerably from one talk show to the other. Talk show talk has some resemblance to everyday conversations, but it is produced in an institutional setting, for an 'overhearing audience' (Tolson 2001). This means that the talk is always performed. It seems spontaneous and close to normal conversations with its appeal to intimacy and immediacy, but it is always 'highly planned and structured within the limits of the talk show format and practice' (Timberg and Erler 2002, 2). It seems paradoxical, but it is this fixed and planned structure that gives the talk its spontaneous character (Plake 1999). It is unscripted, and reactions and follow-up questions are influenced by the unrehearsed interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, and yet it is determined by the structure and

restrictions of the format and by agreements with participants. It is this ambivalence between spontaneity and structured planning that makes those formats intriguing (Bucy and Newhagen 1999).

In creating this spontaneous impression, the host is decisive. As mentioned earlier, the shows are usually anchored by a host who is responsible for the tone of the talk and functions as a kind of label or brand (Timberg and Erler 2002). His style is decisive for the sphere and style of the talk and therefore for the reputation of the program (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000). “The personality of the host is central to the talk show as a television program with entertainment potential. The success of a talk show very much depends on the host’s capabilities of establishing an own persona and to be a (media) celebrity in her/his own right” (Eriksson 2011, 7). Since the audience does not see the producers, but only the host, it gets the impression that he is the one who has the power to guide and control the course of the show on his own. He is responsible for the flow of the show, can create closeness with the public, and functions as a link between the audience and the talk show guests (Haarman 2001; Bonner 2003).

The host, thus, has to act as a representative of the viewers (Pauka 1991). He has to shift between viewers’ expectations and his personal style of interviewing, as well as between different rhetorical strategies. Monologues and one-on-one talk have to be fluently blended into one style of presenting (Timberg and Erler 2002). The host has to choose between the role of the serious interviewer, who confronts the interviewee with hard but objective questions, interrupting and refuting to get the desired answer, and the role of the entertaining presenter, whose personality is an active part of the interview, concerned, interested in feelings, and airily chatting and making jokes (Brants 2005). How these rhetorical modes are structured is part of the format’s pattern. The tone, style and structure of the host’s presentation determines the pace and course of the show to a great extent.

The formal construction of the conversation, the studio setting, the scenography and the position of the host, and how those visual elements and the composition relate to the communication shown, play an important role in the distinction between different talk show formats and the creation of their specific characters (Atifi and Mar-coccia 2006, 255). The strictness of this setup is also part of the format. Some formats strictly structure each broadcast in the same way, whereas other formats are looser and let the events in the show determine the course of the program (Bonner 2003; Keller 2009).

As Van Zoonen (2004) explained, people do not think about what happens behind the scenes, because television is created in such a way that it lets the viewer forget that it is constructed, which is, again, a part of its specific logic. Its artificiality is suddenly revealed only if the well-oiled machine does not work properly. This is why it is not only important to analyze the combination and interaction of the various elements of a talk show, but also to take a look at the production process in which these decisions are made. It is there that the representation of reality is translated into format rules and production conventions (Timberg and Erler 2002; Van Zoonen 2004b).

Together the talk show elements discussed here shape the construction of a format and therefore influence the interaction in those programs. As described, this happens on the level of the content, the talk, as well as on the level of form and style.

Aiming for the audience via authenticity and staged spontaneity

The symbiotic character of the relationship between journalists and politicians manifests itself clearly in talk shows. Talk shows and politicians have in common that they are striving for a large audience. As discussed in the first two parts of this theoretical framework, changes in the realm of PSB, such as increased competition in commercial television and developments in politics, for example the shifts to-

wards an audience democracy, have forced both parties to search for new means to reach the public. Both react with an emphasis on authentic and direct images and experiences. Focusing on personal qualities is a useful means for both sides to present themselves as authentic and keep the audience's attention.

Now that presenting themselves as complex personae with feelings and hobbies has become an important feature of politicians' success, they cannot stick to impersonal and abstract stories anymore, but have to refer to personal experiences and feelings (Coleman 2011). Talk shows with their focus on personal talk, human-interest topics and direct experiences, are seen as a suitable place to show these qualities. As Holtz-Bacha summarized: "The increasing number of TV talk shows and their popularity – both with audiences and politicians – has contributed to the private becoming increasingly public. Politicians regard such programs as a relatively easy opportunity for self-promotion. In addition, such programs have generated more uninterrupted talk-time, involving discussion with less inquisitive and less specialist questioners. Consequently, politicians have been more willing to use this informal format to present themselves to the electorate" (Holtz-Bacha 2004, 50). Not only can the interviewer ask about personal matters, but the politician himself can also answer a political question on a personal note. Through informal language and setting, the conversation can acquire an intimate tone, giving the viewer the feeling of being part of the events or at least witness them from close by (Brants 2005).

Many politicians consider talk shows a good venue to promote their work or cause. The longer interviews in those shows are used to not only spread ideas but also strategically as a 'marketing device' (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Baym 2005, 272). These interviews are often considered to be more relaxed and less formal than interviews in news programs, so the risk of facing critical or even adversarial questions is lower in talk shows (Clayman and Heritage

2002) (Baum 2005). “Successful prime ministers and presidents have increasingly appeared on chat shows, done interviews with entertainment magazines, and made public personal disclosures” (Davis 2013, 121).

Talk shows, on the other hand, want to intrigue their audiences with an immediate and entertaining experience and therefore welcome politicians who want to participate as private persons, telling personal stories and sharing feelings. Those formats try to make information appealing to a rather apolitical audience by emphasizing politicians’ personal stories and focusing on ‘softer’ topics instead of conflictual frames, creating a conversational setting. “Representations of a person’s more ordinary qualities are a product of the cooperation between host and politician in the interview” (Eriksson 2011, 2). In the ideal case, politicians can reach potential voters who do not watch traditional news programs, while talk shows do not lose their viewers’ attention (Plake 1999; Baum 2005). The picture of politics created in talk shows can best be seen as an interplay between the personal characteristics of politicians, their ability to cope with the format and their strategy, and the programs format itself (Eriksson 2011). Each format has a different structure and different approach by the host, and therefore handles topics and guests differently. These features determine the talk and therefore the picture created of the politicians. Different talk show formats, therefore, provide different opportunities for politicians to communicate their message and construct a favorable image of themselves (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000). The politician’s appearance will be successful only if he adjusts to the talk show’s interview style and develops the communicative competences needed to handle those interviews (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Hamo, Kampf, and Shifman 2010; Kee 2012).

Although the blurring of the boundaries between the public and the private and between facts and emotion is characteristic of talk

shows, they do not exclude political content, as critics have argued, but combine it with other topics and tackle it from different perspectives. Ideally, talk shows, especially those of PSB, can fulfill their informative task while also reaching a large audience. If politicians succeed in adjusting their communicative competences to the specific interview formats, they can present politics in a different way than before, enriching their presentation of themselves (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Eriksson 2010; Hamo, Kampf, and Shifman 2010). This could make political information more accessible and increase politicians' 'likeability' at the same time (Schütz 1995; Baum 2005).

As has become clear from this theoretical framework, there are three parts that determine the interaction between journalists and politicians in the specific formats: form, content and backstage events. Form elements such as editing, setting, time and the use of 'entertainment elements' can play a role in creating a sense of immediacy and closeness with the politicians, as well as in disguising the staged character of the show. These elements are often used to support the content, the conversation, which is not only determined by the choice of topics and perspectives, but also by interview style and the overall role the host is playing, and by the politicians' agenda to present themselves and their political programs in a desirable light. Through negotiations and agreements off screen, before the show is actually broadcasted, journalists as well as politicians can influence both parts, form and content. Together these parts determine the interaction within a specific format. A qualitative analysis of how talk shows use elements of infotainment and personalization, and how this is visualized using medium-specific techniques and logic will not only give detailed insights into the various gradations of personalization and how this influences the content, but also in the 'mechanics' of the different formats, which are difficult to find in quantitative

studies (Van Aelst, Sheafer, and Stanyer 2012). As Coleman (2011) stated, the technology and performance should be included in research on the visibility of political communication. Therefore, the choreographed mixture of talk and style will be analyzed in this research, taking into account form as well as content, and on- as well as off-screen interaction. It will provide detailed insights into how the interaction between politicians and journalists is shaped in these shows and how it is influenced by the formats. Before discussing the specific studies, however, a general explanation of how these areas were approached is needed. This will be provided in the next chapter, which deals with the methods used for this research.

Methodology

3

In order to connect the various concepts of the previous chapter to how politics is covered in Dutch talk shows, the studies in this dissertation will relate the interaction between journalists, producers, and politicians and their advisors to the format of the talk shows in which this interaction takes place. As the theoretical framework has shown, this relation takes place on different levels and stages. Therefore a multi-leveled research method is needed to get an in-depth picture of how these different aspects and levels influence each other. For this research, semi-structured interviews with journalists and politicians and/or their spokesmen were combined with ethnographic research of the production processes of the programs and a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of selected talk shows.

As mentioned above, this dissertation consists of four separate research articles. Differing, specific methods have been applied to each of these studies in order to answer the distinct research question. These specific methods of data gathering and analysis will be discussed in the respective chapters in order to avoid repetition. However, despite their different focuses and perspectives, all four chapters use a combination of the methods mentioned above: inter-

views, ethnography and content analysis. Therefore in this chapter the advantages of these methods in general and how they have been operationalized will be discussed.

Grounded Theory

The research question addresses processes, choices and results that require an in-depth look at the field of study, in this case media organizations, as well as their products. Therefore, it cannot be answered by testing hypotheses or quantitative measurements only, but requires a layered and flexible approach. This has been found in Grounded Theory. This approach, in which the data is used as the starting point and the research method is built up out of this data (Glaser 1992), has been used as basis for this qualitative research.

Developed by Strauss and Glaser in 1967, this theory implies that any overall theory or concept is ‘grounded’ in data, and therefore has to be found in the data themselves (Glaser 1992). “One does not begin with preconceived ideas or extant theory and then force them on data for the purpose of verifying them or rearranging them into a corrected grounded theory” (Glaser 1992, 15). There is no pre-formulated hypothesis, but only a certain field to be researched. Researchers move into this area with the open-minded question: what is going on here? The concepts or theories are discovered through the analysis of the data (Glaser 1992). “The logic of grounded theory entails going back to data and forward into analysis, then returning to the field to gather further data and refining the emerging theoretical framework” (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001, 162). In the coding and analyzing process of the various data of this research, such as interviews, talk show broadcasts and observational field notes, the data have been constantly compared to each other. The interviews and the field notes, were transcribed and, for further analysis, uploaded into the data analyzing program atlas.ti. In this program findings from the

different studies and research methods could be easily compared with each other, but also with the raw material. Through this, the original data could be consulted at any stage of the research to compare them with the emerging categories and codes. The coding of all the data started with inductive coding. This allowed me to verify whether any consensus existed in the interviews, but also to find often mentioned or overarching concepts, categories and structures that could lead to new, more general codes in the second round of coding. For this round a coding list was developed, tailored for answering the specific research question of the study. However, also in this second round of coding, the codes and results were constantly compared to new or other data in order to ensure the usefulness of the codes and to establish new ones if necessary. Through this constant comparison, I was able to construct abstract categories and relations between the concepts that were originating from all the data. Grounded Theory was therefore used to gain a complete picture of the whole (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001).

This approach has been criticized, for example, for the supposed impossibility of looking at data or events without any preconceptions, or about its rigid character possibly being too deterministic (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001). However, these risks have been precluded in various ways. Using different forms of techniques, namely interviews, field notes and content analysis, I interpreted a variety of empirical data about the practices and problems of talk shows, and their relation to politicians. Each technique revealed a different part of the observed situation. Interviews, for example, were useful for the personal perception and reflection of the PR advisors, politicians and talk show producers, whereas field notes documented details of daily practices. It is in this triangulation that the risks of bias, subjectivity and determinism can be precluded, because the results from the different methods have been compared to each other. For example, statements about specific formats have been compared to the data

of the content analysis and observations about broadcasts could be discussed with various actors.

In combination, the different methods not only provide insights into different aspects of the talk show format, but also help to validate the partial results. It is a strength of this approach that different sources can be used and that different methods can be combined to get results and answers to the different levels of the research question (Gerring 2007). Together this triangulation of methods provided a complex interpretation and profound understanding of the relationship between politicians and journalists in talk shows (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

Case study research

The close examination of a specific case can yield greatly detailed insights that a focus on general trends cannot (Singer 2008). Case studies are a useful strategy to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions (Yin 1989; Silverman 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; De Haan 2012). According to Yin (1989, 2) “the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena” because “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events,” for example, organizational processes.

According to Gerring (2007), qualitative case studies have often been criticized and identified with ‘loosely framed and non-generalizable theories, biased case selection, informal and undisciplined research designs, weak empirical leverage, subjective conclusions, non-replicability and causal determinism’. Not following a linear process with standardized procedures, however, does not mean that researchers do not work in a systematic and structured way. A detailed plan of every step in each case study chosen for this research has not only provided structure to each case study, but also helped to

triangulate the different methods used in the case study. Moreover, although case studies do not provide general results about a larger population, they can lead to conclusions on a theoretical level by finding structures and overall routines, and by comparing the empirical findings with the theoretical background (Yin 1989; Stake 2005; De Haan 2012). Even single case studies can be exemplary, showing how mechanisms work, as demonstrated in the study in chapter 6, in which the case of a politician's personal story facilitates an understanding of the role that formats play in political personalization.

While the case studies in this dissertation started with a quantitative overview of the number of political items, politicians on the shows and the length of the talks, the results were always combined with a qualitative research method that added context to the analysis of the quantitative data, namely either interviews or a qualitative content analysis. As “the essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result (Schramm 1971, cited in Yin 1989, 5:22–23). Together, the case studies revealed a close understanding of the production process, especially of how the negotiations and agreements between the two sides influenced the interaction on screen and what role the programs' formats played in it. At the same time, they provided insight into the perceptions and motives of the actors. The content analysis of the output, the programs, made it possible to triangulate these results, the motives and processes, with the analysis of the product.

Content analysis

In contrast to other research methods, such as interviews and ethnography, the subject of research in this method is not people, but the product these people have created. Therefore it is an observational

method of what people have produced to communicate. Within (political) communication research, content analysis has often been used for empirical research of media sources in order to answer questions about the influence, role or function of (mass) media in society (Pleijter 2006, 7). The theoretical framework of this research is based largely on studies that are based on this method, because they focus on the content of particular media. These studies provided insight into how the media have covered politics; their structure, approach and framing. The relationship between media and politicians has often been studied using content analysis, for example to scrutinize how the media and politicians try to gain power over a news story. In their work on interviews with US presidents, for example, Clayman and Heritage developed a research scheme to analyze the aggressiveness of questioning (Clayman and Heritage 2002; Clayman et al. 2006; Clayman et al. 2007; Clayman 2010). It provided extensive quantitative results about the kind of questions journalists asked and how they changed throughout time. Brants and Van Praag (Van Praag and Brants 2000; Brants and Van Praag 2005; Brants et al. 2010; Van Praag and Brants 2014) provided a body of studies on political reporting in election time, in which they studied several media and their (power) relation to politicians.

Content analysis has also been used to analyze particular media characteristics and how they are structured. Eriksson (2011), for example, analyzed the short-form interview as a building block of the television news item, focusing on communication techniques and the politicians' role in the overall news story. Moreover, content analysis has often been used in research into the personalization of politics to study how the media use or create personalization in their stories (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009).

Although initially mainly used for systematic quantitative analyses of the media (also called the classical or traditional content

analysis in communication research), content analyses can also be conducted qualitatively. Already in the 1950s, critics argued that the quantitative approach would neglect messages and texts that cannot be measured objectively (Kraucauer 1952; George 1959; both cited in Pleijter 2006). Therefore qualitative interpretive content analysis was introduced and its use increased from the 1980s onwards. Contrary to quantitative content analysis, which focuses on the production of numerical, preferably statistically verifiable results and the testing of hypotheses, the qualitative approach enables in-depth observations and interpretations of events (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Pleijter 2006).

Because each study in this dissertation was focused on a different case, a different content analysis was conducted for each case. However, the general construction and structure of these analyses had the same starting point: so-called interpretive analysis. As Hijmans (1996) describes it, this is a theory-building form of research with a cumulative character, which starts with an open perspective on the research material, comparable to the grounded theory approach.

As Pleijter (2006, 40) sums up, there are two ways of screening the material for useful parts that help to answer the research question: searching all the material for relevant parts or using an item list or questionnaire that focuses only on specific parts of the material. In the latter case an instrument to direct the perception is constructed beforehand. This can limit the amount of material that has to be screened/analysed.

These two approaches were combined in this research. Each study started with an open coding to find relevant structures and criteria that influenced the subject of research, for example the personalization of a politician's story or the difference between politicians' and experts' approaches to a political topic. These criteria were structured and compared to criteria derived from the literature study on the research topic. This resulted in a code book in which the criteria

and how they were to be detected in the sample were described. These criteria were used to structure a second round of coding. This second step provided the opportunity to compare the cases on specific criteria in a structured way. Together, the open and structured coding provided detailed and specific insights into the cases, because they started with observations of the research material itself. At the same time, this approach also facilitated a structured comparison and analysis of the cases, because specific criteria were defined. For the content analysis of the talk shows, the episodes were collected from the websites of the respective shows.

Ethnographic research

Traditionally, ethnography has been used to try to describe all the relevant aspects of a culture's material existence, social system and collective beliefs. Therefore ethnographic studies have been coined as 'thick description' (Geertz 1973). To get this information, the researcher stays close to the research object for a certain period, observing everything that happens. This method has been used since the early nineteenth century in the field of sociology and anthropology to gain insight into foreign tribes and people (Cramer and McDewitt 2004; Tedlock 2005; Paterson 2008). It was "widely believed to produce documentary information that was not only "true" but also reflected the native's own point of view about reality"(Tedlock 2005, 467).

In communication and journalism studies, ethnographic research has often been used in times of change to analyze evolving news practices or paradigms. This method has been used to describe processes and interaction in newsrooms, ideologies and how news is created (Cottle 2000; Cottle 2007; Paterson 2008). As Paterson stated, "it is impossible to comprehend the nature of that manufactures' reality without getting to the heart of the manufacturing process and the

shared culture of the manufacturers” (2008, 2). Ethnographic studies of news production “help to reveal the constraints, contingencies and complexities ‘at work’ and, in so doing, provide the means for a more adequate theorization of the operations of the news media and the production of the discourses ‘at play’ within news media representations” (Cottle 2007, 2).

Early large scale ethnographic research into newsroom processes has proven to be very influential in the fields of journalism and communication studies, because they provided insights into how the newsrooms looked and worked, and which powers and forces played a role (Epstein 1974; Altheide 1976; Schlesinger 1978; Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979). Those studies focused mostly on ‘the sociology of news making’, explaining how working routines could bias the news and revealed how important journalistic routines were for the functional and symbolic needs of the profession, for example to determine what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ journalism. These symbolic criteria stem from the practice of news making and a shared ideology of what news is (Domingo 2003; Cottle 2007; Ryfe 2009). As Schlesinger (1978) stated: “The routines of production have definite consequences in structuring news. The doings of the world are tamed to meet the needs of a production system in many respects.” Those studies have shown that the organization of news plays a crucial role in deciding what news is. They have created a solid framework to analyze rules, processes, techniques and their interrelations (Paterson 2008).

Despite their earlier influence, the relevance of these studies has become marginal for research into current practices, since newsrooms have changed decisively in the last decades (Cottle 2007; Paterson 2008; Tameling 2015). Moreover, because of their aim to identify the organizational structure of news making, those studies did not pay attention to the processes of change in news production routines. They were focusing on constant factors instead of on diver-

sity or developments (Cottle 2000; Schudson 2000; Paterson 2008).

The recent second wave of ethnographic research in communication and journalism studies focused on how the digital revolution and the emergence of technological innovations have changed journalism practices, routines and eventually the news product itself (Boczkowski 2004; Paul 2008; Ryfe 2009; Tameling 2015). In this second cycle of ethnographies of newsrooms the work of Boczkowski was influential. He studied how daily newspapers in the US had developed electronic publishing ventures, using a multi-disciplinary approach. This allowed him to not only focus on technical, editorial and production aspects, but also to discover connections between these aspects. By describing ongoing processes, he was able to lay open different combinations of these aspects and changes in routines and attitudes. A combined focus on practices, technical developments and the resulting news product provided detailed insights into the relation between routines, editorial conventions, new techniques and the product (Boczkowski 2004).

This and other studies have shown that changes of procedures and routines are closely related to changes of ‘material elements’, demonstrating that technological innovations and choices on the one hand and social and professional practices and conventions on the other are mutually influencing each other (Bijker and Bijsterveld 2000; Boczkowski 2004). According to Boczkowski (2004), ethnographic research has two dimensions. On the one hand it provides empirical findings about patterns of innovation and conventions. On the other hands it gives more analytical insight into the construction of products and the use of media. “By locating the analytical gaze at the intersection of the usually separated fields, I show the existence of a deep ecology that links technology, communication and organization” (11).

Instead of deterministic research that uses prevailing theoretical concepts, ethnographic research is done from a constructivist

perspective, observing real events instead of testing an ideal model (Domingo 2008). It therefore remains open to elements that cannot be classified beforehand, an approach that it shares with Grounded Theory (Singer 2008). Ethnographic research puts the researcher in the center of the topic under study. “The researcher goes to the data, rather than the other way around” (Wimmer and Dominick 2011, 145).

For this study, ethnographic research was conducted at the studios of two of the chosen programs (two weeks at *Pauw*, two days at *Jinek*). Such a short period is not ideal to conduct ethnographic research, but was determined by the willingness of the show’s producers to take part in the research. For most of the talk shows a researcher at their editorial office seemed too high a risk. Despite the limited scale, observations of production processes provided inside information about how each episode was shaped, which choices were made and how they influenced the product, the talk show. Although anthropologists regard only long-term research to be real ethnographic research, this short period was adequate to gain insights into routines, structures and developments

Due to the short period of time it was impossible to start the ethnographic research with a period of mere observations, but observations were immediately analyzed, constantly compared, and verified and discussed in interviews with journalists and producers. Access to the computer system of the shows provided insights into the production processes on the long term, which were also discussed with the producers. Therefore processes beyond the ethnographic period could be analyzed and added to the study of the shows.

The limited ethnographical data were compensated for by the triangulation of methods. Ethnography consists of several methods itself. Besides observations with extensive field notes, it contains in-depth interviews and some form of document research and/or content analysis (Domingo 2003). These different parts of the ethno-

graphic research process were used after the end of the actual field work, which increased the amount of research data. It was used to compare and validate the results in order to determine the representativeness of the findings and interpretations, preventing the generalization of the incidents.

The combination of the fieldwork results and the interview data helped to prevent bias or subjective interpretations. Particular answers and observed events were compared to each other and observations were discussed in interviews to compare my interpretation with that of the respondents (De Haan 2012).

Interviews

Interviews used as a technique or method to gain a deeper understanding of processes, relations and meanings are not only a journalistic tool, but have also often been used in the social sciences to study all kinds of social processes in communities and societies, as well as in smaller entities such as business companies or school playgrounds. They are seen as ‘virtual windows’ into someone’s experience, to obtain insights into the perception and motives of someone else. There is a wide range of interview forms, from survey interviews with all the questions written down, directing answers in a particular direction, to unstructured in-depth conversations with no specific outcome in mind, which are often part of ethnographic research (Gubrium and Holstein 2002).

For this study, a method was chosen that lies somewhere in between these two extremes: the semi-structured interview. These interviews are often seen as a guided conversation, in which certain topics that need to be discussed are prepared on a topic list, but in which there is room for spontaneous questions or reactions (Warren 2002). This approach makes room for personal stories, feelings and experiences from which new facts and interpretations can emerge.

The purpose of these interviews is not to derive objective facts, but to obtain perceptions from the respondents' talk (Warren 2002). Answers are therefore seen as interpretations of personal perceptions, instead of objective facts (Charmaz 2002).

This kind of un- or semi-structured interview bares the risk of bias or subjectivity, because qualitative interview data are always the result of an interaction between the interviewer and respondent. To prevent subjective interpretations, triangulation was used in this research, which means that the same topics were discussed and analyzed from different perspectives. If answers appeared to be inconsistent, more follow-up questions were asked (Charmaz 2002; Johnson 2002).

As Warren (2002) stated, researchers often choose qualitative interviews over ethnographic methods when their research interest does not, or does not only, focus on particular settings but also aims at establishing common patterns between particular types of respondents. Results from the interviews can be used to 'fill in' the biographical meanings of the observed (inter-) actions (Warren 2002). Therefore interviews were a useful method for this research, revealing the perspectives of different actors in the fields, such as journalists, experts, politicians and PR advisors. By combining interviews with persons who have different positions and tasks, a layered and multi-perspective image of the relations of talk shows and politicians has been shaped.

In communication research, interviews serve various purposes. On the one hand, they can be used as a basis for further research. Criteria for further research can emerge through talking to actors in the field (Charmaz 2002). On the other hand, interviews can also serve to check earlier results, theories or hypotheses, often via structured interviews or surveys. Van Santen (2012), for example, conducted several content analyses of television programs to obtain insight into the developments of the personalization of politics on television. In

the last stage of her study, she interviewed experts and actors from the field to obtain their view on the developments and on her results. Here interviews are used to validate and deepen results.

In this research, interviews were used for two purposes: to check results and as a basis for further research. First politicians and their spokesmen were interviewed about their approach to and ideas about the talk shows, why they attend them and how they prepare for them. At a later stage, journalists and experts were interviewed about their experiences as guests on talk shows about politics. Moreover, interviews with talk show producers provided insights into their routines and choices.

To create openness about this approach and to obtain the informed consent of the participants, agreements were made with the interviewees about the usage of their data for this study (Silverman 2001; Warren 2002). As explained earlier, the different talk shows are competing for a larger share of the audience and to get the most interesting guests on their shows. Politicians, on the other hand, have their own strategies when taking part in those shows. Both sides were willing to share their thoughts and information about these strategies, but only under the condition of anonymity. If cited, they are described in general terms, such as ‘party leader opposition party’ or ‘political reporter’. In order to ensure the validity of the ethnographic and interview data, a confidential list with the names of all interviewees has been given to the promoters of this research.

The interviewees were sampled purposively, instead of randomly, which means that they ‘illustrate some feature or process in which we are interested’ (Silverman 2001). For this choice, practical constraints played a role too, such as who was available and willing to participate. In order to find enough willing interviewees who could contribute to this research, the snowball sampling method was used. Interviewees were approached due to their appearance on shows or because they were explicitly mentioned by other interviewees (Fau-

gier and Sargeant 1997; Warren 2002; Fontana and Frey 2005). Therefore the sample size changed during the research process, which made it possible to add data at a late stage of the research (Silverman 2001).

To provide a structural basis for the interviews, topic lists were created for each specific case study, based on the theoretical framework (see appendix). They served as a guideline to keep the conversation going and to help to clarify answers. This list contained topics that needed to be discussed in every interview so that a comparison of several interviews was possible. To gather richer data, however, the interviewer remained flexible and open to unexpected developments (Warren 2002; Gubrium and Holstein 2002; De Haan 2012; Van Santen 2012). As Johnson stated: “The interviewer should be prepared to depart from the prepared plan and ‘go with the flow’” (2002, 111). These new topics and leads were recorded in the notes and, if useful, incorporated into later interviews. To account for transparency and liability and to enable verification, all the interviews were recorded and transcribed (De Haan 2012).

Cases

What goes for the chosen method also applies to the selection of shows: for each separate case study, a combination of talk show formats was selected that was best suited to analyzing the research question at stake. They were chosen from the six most prominent Dutch talk shows at the time of conducting the research, with the highest ranking and thus a large range (see table 1).

Table 1: overview time, frequency, broadcaster and ratings (25/08/2014- 30/06/2015)

<i>Program</i>	<i>Time of broadcast</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Broadcast/channel</i>	<i>Rating (market share)</i>
Pauw	11 p.m.	Daily, 5 x per week	VARA/NPO1	641.000 (16.5%)
Jinek	11 p.m. Oct-Dec 2014	Daily, 5 x per week	KRO-NCRV/ NPO1	595.000 (16.1%)
		Weekly, on Sunday	KRO-NCRV/ NPO2	372.000 (7.9%)
De Wereld Draait Door (DWDD)	7 p.m.	Daily, 5 x per week	VARA/NPO1	1.430.000 (26.5%)
RTL Late Night (RTLLN)	10.30 p.m.	Daily, 5 x per week	RTL4	1.049.000 (22.3%)
WNL op Zondag	10.30 a.m.	Weekly, on Sunday	WNL/NPO1	231.000 (14.2%)
Buitenhof	12 p.m. (noon)	Weekly, on Sunday	VPRO, Avro-Tros, VARA/ NPO1	337.000 (18.1%)

Remarkably, only one of those shows is made by a commercial broadcaster, while the other five are produced by the Dutch Public Broadcast (NPO). Both PSB and RTL are aiming at a broad audience. NPO 1 presents itself as the channel for all Dutch people, providing a well-measured and accessible mix of news, current affairs, information, recreation and emotion (Nederlandse Publieke Omroep, Meerjarenbegroting 2013-2017). It is the most watched channel and has

the ambition to be the most important channel for all Dutch people (see table 2). RTL4 is a channel of the RTL Media Group that presents itself as THE channel for the modern family, providing news, lifestyle, drama, coaching, humor and entertainment (<http://www.adverterenbijrtl.nl/pijlers/tv>). It is the second most watched channel after NPO 1 (see table 1) and is therefore its closest competitor (SKO Jaarrapport 2014).

Table 2: market share 2014 and 2015(source SKO Jaarrapport 2014 and 2015)

	<i>Overall market share in %</i>		<i>Market share 6-12 pm in %</i>	
Period	2014	2015	2014	2015
RTL 4	14,6	15,2	17,2	17,7
NPO 1	21,7	19,4	24,2	22,2

The shows analyzed in this dissertation have to fit into these aims and reach for a broad audience. Studying their formats will shed light on how they are trying to achieve this. The respective shows will be introduced in the case studies but, in general, all of them comply with the criteria for talk shows that were discussed in the theoretical framework. In every show a variety of guests and topics is presented, mixing information and entertainment, mostly linked to current events and the news of the day. However, the way in which these programs arrange, treat and present their topics and guests, differed according to their specific formats. The shared characteristics facilitate a comparison of the different programs, since they make it easier to find starting points and criteria for analysis. The elements they do not share also contribute to this comparison though, because they show different ways of dealing with the same topics or guests and therefore emphasize differences in formats and their implications. As Boczkowski explained: “This combination of shared and unshared features enabled me to expect enough commonality across the cases to make sensible comparisons and enough difference to illuminate

various technical, communication, and organizational alternatives.” (2004, 189).

Buitenhof. The weekly *Buitenhof* discusses current affairs via interviews and debates. Its format focuses on deepening knowledge of news, politics, science and society, and is the most fact-driven show of the sample. It has the reputation of being the most serious discussion program about politics and current affairs. It does not describe itself as a talk show, but because the hosts discuss current topics with guests at a round table, sometimes one-on-one, sometimes in the form of a debate, it can be compared with the other programs in this research. In contrast to those programs, though, *Buitenhof* focuses solely on facts and an intellectual discussion, instead of personal or emotional stories. Its pace is slow, the setting sober and no distracting elements, such as music or funny clips, are used. All cinematographic and style elements are used for the benefit of the factual interview or discussion. Even the host is subordinated to the talk, as three hosts take turns presenting. If possible, topics and/or guests are scheduled with the host who fits it the best. In contrast to the daily shows on prime time, *Buitenhof* clearly focuses on a specific target audience, namely higher educated viewers. Because of its focus on hard news and facts, politics plays a major role in the format. One or more politicians are hosted almost every week and often discuss abstract or complicated topics that would not fit into the other formats. It is this focus on political and factual topics that makes for a great diversity of political functions and parties.

WNL op Zondag (WNL on Sunday). The other weekly show in this sample also hosts politicians every week, but its format differs from that of *Buitenhof*. It features discussions about politics, entrepreneurship, media and culture with prominent guests, mixing information with more entertaining topics. The guests sit on a large u-shaped couch next to each other during the whole broadcast. All the shows are structured in the same way, enforced by the strict for-

mat that is aimed at a nice Sunday morning chat with an enjoyable, airy atmosphere. The broadcaster, WNL (Wakker Nederland, which means Alert Netherlands), was introduced in 2009/10 as a counter-balance to the perceived overweigh of leftist programs and broadcasters. It is the only show that clearly stated a political preference, which is reflected by the hosted politicians (Chapter 5).

Pauw. Of the daily talk shows, *Pauw* is the one that hosts politicians most often, with 50% of the broadcasts including active politicians. Besides *Buitenhof*, *Pauw* is the only other show that hosts many politicians other than ministers and party chairmen, such as regional politicians, MPs or members of the EU parliament. Because *Pauw* presents the most political parties and functions, it also overlaps the most with other shows. Politicians who appear on other shows often also appear on *Pauw*. This focus on politics is determined by the format's emphasis on daily news and current affairs. Its aim is to discuss the 'talk of the day', which means topics that were on the news or are being debated publicly. While they also include more entertaining topics, such as movies or sports, this often includes politics. The format of *Pauw* is based on a conversational interview style, which individualizes the politician in an accountability interview. This is actively supported by the setting and cinematography, which create an intimate atmosphere that disguises the potential adversarial character of the talk and creates the opportunity to subtly stress emotions. The setting has been referred to as 'nightclubish', with warm, dark colors, lounge chairs and a bar in the background, emphasizing the late night character of the show and its roundtable talk atmosphere. In the 2014-15 season the format was more adjustably structured than in the succeeding season. While in the former the setting was frequently adjusted, creating the opportunity for one-on-one interviews, in the latter the format was changed to a roundtable discussion, with no exceptional settings.

Jinek. At first glance *Jinek* resembles *Pauw* a great deal. The show

fills the gap *Pauw* leaves in its winter and summer breaks, on the same channel and in the same time slot. Like *Pauw*, *Jinek* is presented by a single host and focuses on current affairs, including politics, sports, and cultural and social issues. However, the show was only broadcasted for a short period of only two months in the 2015-16 season, and the format changed frequently (from weekly to daily, from all the guests on a couch to a roundtable discussion, from one-on-one talks to a group discussion), which altered the format so profoundly that the two seasons cannot be seen as having the same format (see also chapter 5). In the first season (2014-15) the setting and camera work were more traditional and distanced than in *Pauw*. The guests were seated on a couch, which became known as the most uncomfortable couch on Dutch television, while the host sat in an armchair next to it. This setting created distance that could not be bridged by camera angles or editing and which was reinforced by *Jinek*'s more classical, harsher interview style, which created a tense atmosphere. Together these elements created a different format to that of *Pauw*.

De Wereld Draait Door (*The world keeps turning* (DWDD)). This show is known for its fast and opinion-driven format. It focuses on popular culture and engaging stories. With live music performances, remarkable television clips and other fixed elements, the program has a fast pace and strict order, with approximately the same amount of time for every item, regardless of the guest and topic. Politicians have to adjust to this strict format. It discusses topics in an opinion-driven way, with usually up to four guests, and is presented by one host, Matthijs van Nieuwkerk, who is assisted by rotating sidekicks. The seating of the guests changes for each item and the show is known for its fast, positive and energetic character. Due to the fast and opinion-driven character, the politicians play a marginal role in this format. They are invited only if they are able to adjust to the format.

RTL Late Night (RTLLN). RTLLN is the only Dutch talk show

on prime time, produced by a commercial broadcaster, RTL4. The show is highly entertaining, focusing on celebrity news and human interest stories, primarily aiming for a nice chat, and personal feelings and stories. Political topics are discussed only if they fit into that approach. The four to six guests sit at the same table throughout the whole show and are also addressed during interviews with other guests. This setting creates the atmosphere of a relaxed roundtable discussion. This format also includes fixed elements, such as music performances and a compilation of remarkable (internet) news. The guests have to deal with this fixed setting, which is not adjusted for prominent political guests. Even the prime minister has to share the table with all the other guests. With its strong focus on entertainment, *RTLLN* chose the comedian Jan Jaap van der Wal to be its returning, monthly political commentator. This creates the opportunity to integrate politics into the format in an entertaining way. If politicians are on the show, they are often accompanied by experiential experts, citizens who have experienced the problems the politician wants to solve. This fits the format's focus on human interest and personal stories.

Negotiation games

Play metaphors in the
journalist-source relation-
ship between political PR
and talk shows

4

The relationship between politicians and talk show producers is a tense one. Politicians need to cooperate with journalists to reach and hopefully persuade potential voters. Journalists try to get prominent politicians on their show or in their newspaper and complain about the extended public relations (PR) industry that hinders direct contact with such politicians. Although political PR initially was an Anglo-American phenomenon, partly because of the two-party system in the United Kingdom and United States, it recently gained more ground in other political systems, such as the Dutch pluralistic system (Aalberts and Molenbeek 2010; Brown 2011). In fact, it is so much part of the regular news business nowadays that it is not considered news itself (Luyendijk 2010). Recent research has shown, for instance, that PR advisors, spokespersons, and spin doctors far outnumber parliamentarian journalists in the Netherlands, and greatly influence what could become political news and the manner in which this is framed (Prenger et al. 2011).

Although journalists dislike this dependency, they do find these close relationships necessary for their work (Prenger et al. 2011). As a result of cutbacks on news services and the concurrent rise of a

24/7 demand for news, journalists are facing an expansive workload and are incapable of taking on every newsbeat single-handedly. To provide a constant news-stream, they are increasingly dependent on information subsidies provided by PR departments and political figures, who provide news in easily manageable tidbits. Politicians can use this much sought after information to barter for media attention (Jones 1996; Davis 2009; Brants et al. 2010; Davis 2013). This exchange is often initiated or controlled by PR advisors, marketeers, and spin doctors, who try to create a positive image of the party or politician, acting as “parajournalists,” attempting to steer the news in a certain direction (Mancini and Swanson 1996; Savigny 2008; Schudson 2011; Davis 2013).

This illustrates that the journalist–source relationship is under great pressure - and thus news services too (Davis 2007; Broersma, Den Herder, and Schohaus 2013). Recent research on the relationship between journalists and politicians has shown that they are entangled in a power struggle in which the power is constantly shifting (Franklin 2003; Davis 2013; Van Praag and Brants 2014). Studies on PR often discuss negotiations between politicians and journalists in general terms or focus on specific cases, such as election campaigns, in which power struggles and negotiation positions severely differ from regular news (Prenger et al. 2011; De Haan et al. 2013; Bakker et al. 2013). In addition, this general approach leads to a lack of attention for the conventions of specific formats. Types of contact and the negotiations involved in dealing with hybrid formats, such as talk shows, have not yet been scrutinized. This omission is remarkable since talk shows, which provide the opportunity to tell personal stories and reach a broad audience, are of great interest to politicians. They play an increasingly important role in political marketing and strategy. Therefore, the negotiations and perceptions with regard to these shows bear closer scrutiny.

Moreover, the point of view of the PR advisors on this particular

genre has yet to be taken into account. Whereas politicians are the ones who appear on the shows, PR advisors conduct the negotiations for these appearances on their behalf. This study aims to shed light on how PR advisors frame their own role in their contact with talk shows, leading to the following research question:

Which interpretive repertoires do political PR advisors use to describe the preparations for and negotiations with talk shows?

For this study, a qualitative interpretive repertoires analysis has been conducted of 10 semi structured interviews with PR advisors, supplemented with information from 11 interviews with politicians and journalists. Although interview content cannot be taken at face value, the way interviewees respond and describe their actions can provide insight into their own position in the field (Potter and Wetherell 1987; Costera Meijer 2005). Discussing these repertoires, used to frame their own practices and opinions, reveals that PR advisors often use the play metaphor to describe their contacts with talk shows. The analysis of two specific forms of this metaphor, competition game and stage play, will unveil underlying structures in their relations with journalists and therefore add to the field of study of journalist–source relationships.

The Backstage Power Game between Journalists, Politicians, and their PR Departments

The journalist–source relationship lies at the heart of journalism and has therefore been a frequent object of study. In his classic study of newsroom practice, Gans (1979) described this relationship as an ongoing “tug of war,” in which power and control easily shift between the two sides. Nowadays, this “state of flux” of power relations is considered characteristic of this relationship see e.g. (Blumler and

Coleman 2015). Journalist–source relations have therefore frequently been compared to a game (of power) (see e.g. Corner and Pels 2003b; Habermas 2006; Entman 2007). Deriving from Huizinga’s (Huizinga 1955) study on the role of play in culture, the game or play metaphor is commonly used in various fields of journalism research

(Corner and Pels 2003a; De Vreese and Elenbaas 2008; Aalberg, Strömbäck, and De Vreese 2011). According to Huizinga, elements of play are part of and shape numerous aspects of society and culture, for example in law or the arts, but also in politics. This theory implies that “playing is a medium where lived experience is organized as a structured situation” (Rodriguez 2006). Players know the rules of the game and behave accordingly.

Caillois ([1961] 2001), further developing the theory of play and exploring its complexity, distinguished between four forms of play. Two of them are of interest for this study as they are found as repertoires of PR advisors: Agon, or competition, and Mimicry, i.e. mimesis or roleplay.¹ While in Agon the rules and the way the game is played are determined by fighting against each other and using strategies to win, Mimicry focuses on playing together, instead of as opponents. Roleplay can only succeed when all players join in and perform a play together, for instance in theater. Before analyzing how these two forms of the play metaphor are used by political PR advisors reflecting on journalism, their use in different fields of research will be discussed.

Agon: Competition between Talk Shows Producers and PR Advisors

In studies of political news coverage, especially of campaign strategies and election coverage, the strategic game frame, including horse race, game, and strategy frames, is one of the key concepts (Patterson 1993; De Vreese and Elenbaas 2008; Aalberg, Strömbäck, and De Vreese 2011). Predominantly, but not exclusively, in election

campaigns media tend to cover political news as a competition with winners and losers (horse race and game frame) and attempt to reveal the strategies for winning the elections (strategy frame). In these strategies PR departments play a significant role behind the scenes. Whether it is called PR, communications, or consultancy, the aim of these departments is clear: to have strict control on political communication (Barry-Hirst 2005; Yaxley and Theaker 2011).² While highlighting specific aspects, they hide others and try to control journalistic access to newsworthy information and/or restricted areas, and the framing thereof (Brown 2011; Davis 2013; Bakker et al. 2013).

Studies on how politicians and PR advisors attempt to influence power relations with journalists have shown that they use news management and political marketing to influence the communication process. Often analyzed from a political-economy angle, news management has a long tradition in the United States and the United Kingdom, where it was professionalized along similar lines. Both countries largely have a two-party system, which makes it easier to frame election campaigns as a game with a clear winner and loser (Gaber 2000; McNair 2004; Brown 2011). In the Netherlands, media management has increased immensely in politics since the 1990s (Brown 2011; Prenger et al. 2011; Van Weezel 2011). Because the country has a multi-party system which often leads to coalition governments, the hard-hitting and personal campaigns known from the United States and the United Kingdom are not common in Dutch political culture. Parties will very likely have to work together after the elections and too vicious a campaign would prevent this cooperation (Wijffes and Voerman 2009; Brown 2011; Voltmer and Brants 2011).

In studies of news production, increasing attention has been paid to the negotiation processes between PR advisors and journalists. As Prenger et al. (2011) have shown, PR departments try to maintain direct contact with producers and reporters in order to make

agreements about topics and publication dates, and use off-the-record briefings and controlled information leakage to influence the content. “Public relations have emerged as a hidden form of ‘information subsidy’ for news and parts of the entertainment media,” Davis (2013, 92) explained in his analysis of the effect of promotional cultures on information supply. A study on the negotiations between politicians and media during the 2012 Dutch election campaign has shown that in preparation for televised debates, agreements are made about content, logistics, and other guests. The latter are the source of most tension, whereas almost no deals were made on content or form of the debates (De Haan et al. 2013).

Those negotiations become more complex as more broadcasters and programs compete for guests for their shows (Broersma, Den Herder, and Schohaus 2013; De Haan et al. 2013). Therefore, it is not only necessary to analyze the competition at stake, but also how it is framed as such by participants in the game. As Huizinga (1955) already noted, to study a game, players’ experiences must be described, as they reveal structures and norms of the game. Therefore, this study will focus on how PR advisors describe their own role in the strategic game of negotiations with talk show producers.

Mimicry: Performing the Play in an Authentic Way

Besides research on newsroom practices, another strand of research on journalist–source relations focuses on the output, the journalistic texts (Davis 2009; Broersma, Den Herder, and Schohaus 2013). Here, the actual interaction between interviewers and interviewees has been examined, usually on (live) television, or during official and institutionalized settings, like press conferences. The struggle to gain or retain power over the conversation has often been the focal point, frequently studied using a conversation analysis approach (e.g. Clayman and Heritage 2002; 2007), or from a political communication angle (e.g. Van Praag and Brants 2014; Brants and Van Praag 2005).

Despite this struggle, both parties—politicians and journalists—need to cooperate to create a successful media appearance. Here, the other form of the game metaphor, performing a stage play, has frequently been used, especially in research on political style and rhetoric. Viewing politics as a stage play could renew people's interest in politics, since it makes routines easier to understand and debates more interesting to follow, due to the fact that politicians must know the rules of the theater routines and simultaneously come into contact with the audience (Corner and Pels 2003a). On the other hand, this metaphor can have a negative connotation, implying that political style has become more important than content (Pels and Te Velde 2000).

Talk shows are an interesting case in this field, because they combine detailed preparation with seemingly spontaneous talk, resembling the preparations for and performance of a stage play.³ It is the illusion of a spontaneous appearance that needs detailed orchestration behind the scenes. With its appeal to intimacy and immediacy, the talk resembles normal conversations, but it is always “highly planned and structured within the limits of the talk show format and practice” (Timberg and Erler 2002; Davis 2013). The various talk show formats provide different opportunities for politicians to extol their message and construct a favorable image of themselves (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000). The longer interviews in such shows are not only used to spread ideas, but are also harnessed in a strategic sense as “marketing device” (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Baym 2005, 272).

In contrast to current affairs or news programs, talk shows provide ample opportunity to show private interests and emotions, which politicians and their PR advisors consider crucial to reach a broader electorate that decides on the basis of personalities (Corner 2000; Van Zoonen, Coleman, and Kuik 2011). This could be a way to reach voters with a low interest in politics or no party affiliation

(Brown 2011). In order to create a trustworthy impression, politicians have to present a complex image of personal and political qualities (Coleman 2011). They have to show political knowledge and competence, but at the same time share intimate details regarding personal qualities so that they can be judged as authentic personalities (De Beus 2011).

Like in a stage play, an authentic performance is crucial for politicians. Cooperation with other players—as well as thorough preparations—are required to create a convincing, seemingly spontaneous performance that disguises the rehearsal involved. As Goffman already noted in 1959, the interaction between journalists, politicians, and their advisors and assistants behind the scenes determines, at least partly, the performance on stage, visible to the viewer (Goffman [1959] 1984). This study will show how PR advisors describe their own role in these preparations, using two different parts of the play metaphor.

Method

Because interviews provide a constructed reality, influenced by the interviewees' opinions and background, as well as the social setting created through the interviewer's presence, this method has proven very fruitful with regard to studying participants' thoughts and self-perceptions (Silverman 2001; Gubrium and Holstein 2002; Fontana and Frey 2005). Even if participants do not tell the truth or alter versions of events to their advantage, this does not mean that interviews are useless for research purposes. On the contrary, they reveal how interviewees want to be perceived and therefore how they themselves would prefer their role to be (Fontana and Frey 2005). Interviews, therefore, may not reveal information or facts about specific events or situations, but they provide insights into participants' interpretations and their discourse about a specific topic (Warren

2002). As this research focuses on the perception and self-perception of PR advisors, interviews are the most useful method to reveal their thoughts and interpretive repertoires on participation in talk shows and the related negotiations.

For this research, interviewees were purposively selected to reflect the heterogeneity of Dutch political culture. This approach allowed almost the entire political party spectrum to be covered. All major political parties, with a single exception (the populist Party for Freedom—Partij Voor Vrijheid—refused to take part) were included, only a few small splinter parties did not respond to the request. The sample consists of 10 interviews with PR advisors: 6 of them representing opposition party leaders and Members of Parliament (MPs) and 4 were with government members from both governing parties. Additional interviews with journalists and politicians from different parties (11) were not included in the actual analysis, but did inform the interviews and helped interpreting the PR advisors' utterances.

The interviews were conducted between August 2014 and February 2015 by the first author. They lasted between 27 and 90 minutes and were recorded and fully transcribed. The interviews were semi-structured, following a topic list focused on PR advisors' perception of negotiations with talk shows, their own role therein, and their preferences for talk show appearances. This approach ensured that the main topics were discussed, but it also gave respondents the opportunity to bring up their own topics and examples. To stimulate spontaneous and personal responses, the interviewer asked the respondents to describe their perceptions in their own words, only probing when necessary to keep the conversation going. Respondents could thus bring to the fore what they considered important. Although they mentioned specific Dutch shows as examples, they did not make a difference between evening, late night, or morning talk shows in their use of repertoires, therefore the genre talk show is discussed in general in the results.

The interview transcripts were analyzed using the qualitative software Atlas.ti, starting with inductive coding. This allowed the author to establish and verify whether any consensus existed regarding perceptions, and how broadly such notions were agreed upon. Coding was guided by the research aim of gaining better insight into the role of PR advisors in the negotiation process between talk shows and politicians, resulting in broader families which were used to structure this article: the relationship with producers, the message, authenticity, understanding the formats, negotiations and agreements, preparation, training, and, finally, the specific role of PR advisors.

To find underlying structures in the interviews, an “interpretive repertoire analysis” was conducted (Potter and Wetherell 1987). In this method, repeatedly used metaphors, figures of speech, and modes of explanation are examined. They not only reveal the kind of language and terms that are used, but also the way PR advisors interpret their own role and their relationship with journalists: “repertoires do not merely describe a situation, they also produce evaluations, position individuals and groups, and construct, rationalize and naturalize ‘reality’” (Costera Meijer 2005, 28; cf. Potter and Wetherell 1987). This kind of analysis thus reveals the “common sense” of members of a specific group, which they use to manage their position in any interaction with other groups and from which “accusations and justifications can be launched” (Wetherell 1998). In the analysis, two repertoires were found in nearly all interviews: competition game and stage play. These dominant repertoires were further analyzed and consecutively traced down in the literature review. This enabled us to compare the PR advisors’ statements with earlier research. In the results section, representative quotes for the interpretive repertoires that were used in (nearly) all interviews are used to exemplify found patterns.

As stated in the introduction, the relationship between politicians, their PR advisors, and journalists is a tense one, characterized

by hidden strategies, with varying interests on both sides. Therefore, it was agreed that the interviews would be anonymous. No names of persons or parties are mentioned, and political positions or appointments are only mentioned in a general sense. Although there were no major differences between PR advisors of the various parties in how they applied the distinctive repertoires, we refer to them, for a deeper understanding of the provided quotes, as follows: OL1, 2, 3...(large opposition party, 10 seats or more); OS1, 2, 3...(small opposition party, 5 seats or less); G1, 2, 3...(governing party).

Results

A metaphor almost all PR advisors used during the interviews is that of play. Using two different aspects of this metaphor as repertoires—competition game and stage play—the PR advisors managed to combine aspects of competition as well as cooperation without sensing any contradiction. The competition game repertoire enables PR advisors to frame the relations in a positive, sporting way, not allowing them to act harshly or take hard action. There simply are winners and losers, so you have to know the rules to win the game, and in the next round, or the next media appearance, you can start all over again. The interviewees used gaming jargon, such as referring to television programs as different players in the field, calling important politicians main actors and talking about winning and losing when explaining how successful or unsuccessful a talk show appearance had been. The use of this frame reveals that strategies and preparations are also interpreted as simply part of the game, meaning that it is clear to those who know the rules how they should respond. The use of the stage play repertoire, on the other hand, gives PR advisors the opportunity to explain their understanding of an authentic performance. In both repertoires the notion of training or preparations is crucial. Remarkably, PR advisors of all categories, governing or

opposition, large or small parties, have used the same repertoires locating their power position in the field, therefore implicitly confirming statements of PR advisors of other categories. In the following section, the use of these two repertoires will be discussed.

Competition Game Repertoire:

Rules, Negotiations, and Preparations

Rules of the game

For a successful appearance on a show, PR advisors have to know the specific characteristics of a format, the rules of the specific game. The most important reason to appear on a talk show is the ability to purvey one's message to a wide audience, as all PR advisors agree. The success of such an appearance is therefore, at least in part, measured by whether politicians succeed in getting their message across. The message is adjusted to the kind of program and if possible a specific program is purposely chosen for a specific message. For difficult topics, they prefer a serious, fact-driven current affairs program with a one-on-one interview. For plans on societal matters, a talk show with other guests is chosen, because the interaction with others can help to emphasize one's viewpoint.

They are very much aware of the tone, the kind of questions, the host's interview style, and preferred topics and kinds of guest. This allows them to prepare politicians for the specific setting, which not only includes preparations regarding the content, but also elements concerning the form: interview duration, use of pictures and videos, and studio setting. Knowing the rules also makes it easier for PR advisors to prepare topics to fit into a format. They attempt to second-guess the producers and ask themselves what it is they would find good television. They are well aware that the better they adjust to the format, the greater the likelihood that the producers will accept their topic(s).

“You have to know how journalists make their choices, what they find interesting, what they don’t like, that saves you a lot of energy. If you try to sell something to a program although you know that the viewer won’t like it, because it is too technical or too difficult, it will cost you a lot of time and won’t gain you anything.” (G1)

One of the most important rules is fair play. Critical questions, for instance, are considered part of the game, but they have to be fair. The same goes for a live interview that develops spontaneously in a different direction than intended, which is particularly the case on talk shows, because they are perceived as much more unpredictable than news or current affairs shows. It is seen as part of the game as long as no intentional cheating is involved. PR advisors and journalists know that they will need each other again sometime soon and then the cards will be shuffled anew. Only when the rules of the game are really broken, when politicians have been misled, for example, and agreements have been ignored, relations get distorted and sometimes even permanently broken. But this does not happen very often, because both sides know that there are boundaries, be it implicit ones.

“You know how the other works, what the interests are, so you understand why one does what he does, but it has to be played clean. It is not clear where the boundaries are, unconsciously you have to feel them out every time, but both sides know they exist.” (G2)

Strategies how to win

The competition game repertoire not only serves to describe the field, but is also used to legitimize strategies and preparations. A PR advisor compared this process with a football match:

“If you are the coach of a football team, then it is obvious that you tell your team against whom they have to play. It is also obvious to look up the players of the team and what their strengths and weaknesses are. This does not mean that you know in which direction the ball will roll or that you can decide how the play will go. It is a profession and within this profession a talk show with 1 million viewers is top sport. You have to prepare this. You would not take the voter seriously, if you didn’t ... Anyone would find it strange, if the coach of the Dutch national soccer team Louis van Gaal were to have said during the World Cup: “I don’t know against whom we are playing tonight. I’ll see.” (G3)

If they want to “win” they have to know the possible risks of an appearance on a talk show. So the main strategy is to avoid surprises, which are mostly uncomfortable situations created by unpredictable guests, questions, or video fragments. One thing all PR advisors try to avoid, for example, is a confrontation with individual stories of misfortune. They know that their politician can never “win” against, for instance, a single mother with a handicapped child that does not get the required care. For a politician to say “I cannot help you” in public would be a great blunder.

“It is difficult if not impossible to prepare for those individual cases ... We do an extra detailed check on what our party members have done about this topic, because

on a talk show you always will get the question, you are a politician, what can you do for her? And this is a difficult question, as we always talk about general policy and never about individuals. There are always people who end up between a rock and a hard place and those are the most interesting for the media, I even understand that.” (OL3)

Strategies to prevent these kinds of situations involve keeping close contact with producers in the preparation process, demanding to know who the other guests are, and what direction they are planning for the interview. Sometimes politicians are advised not to engage in a topic or activity. The example of former Labour Party leader, Job Cohen, who danced the conga on a morning show, was often mentioned as an example of what to avoid, not only for the act itself, but also because it was shown over and over again in other programs.

Another surprise PR advisors try to avoid is the confrontation with video fragments. Those short clips often contain earlier statements of the politicians themselves, their fellow party members, or their opponents, and are likely to conflict with the politician’s current story. PR advisors know that they cannot force producers to refrain from showing them, but they demand to see them before the show, so that they can prepare an answer with their politicians. When it comes to the other guests, PR advisors always check whether they can contribute to the topic or, instead, could endanger a successful appearance with radical perspectives or unpredictable actions. In the last case, appearances on a show are often canceled. The greater the likelihood of interaction between guests is in a program, the stricter PR advisors are in the negotiations about other guests.

The definite choice to appear on a specific talk show is a combination of all conditions and possible risks. Those are weighed up against the range of the program, the ratings, and the possible target

audience. The bigger the program, the greater the temptation to go regardless of the specific format, but on the other hand, this also increases the impact of a possible blunder. The more time they get for their message and the more exclusive their interview is, the more they are tempted to take the possible risk of an invitation.

Hidden game of power

The players' position in the game determines how much power they have. How much PR advisors can ask depends very much on the position of the politician or party they represent, which was confirmed by all interviewees, PR advisors and journalists alike. PR advisors of small parties admit that they are not the programs' first choice and have to work harder to get media attention. The same goes for opposition parties. The more power a politician represents, the more interesting he or she is for talk shows, since they are the ones who influence decisions and changes. PR advisors are well aware of this.

“A minister is the highest person who makes policy, and we don't go to talk shows every other week. So if you can get the minister you have to give the floor to him.”
(G4)

Only the most desirable politicians and their PR staff are in a position to ask this. Most advisors, especially to MPs, have to be happy with what they can get, as the competition for appearances on talk shows is fierce. The fact that politicians often only get one chance to show their ability to perform on a talk show increases the pressure even more. If their first appearance is unsuccessful, producers tend not to invite them again anytime soon.

So, behind the positive narrative told in the interviews lies a fiercer battle, which is only mentioned implicitly. Most PR advisors have to work hard to get their politicians on a show and have them rep-

resented in a favorable way. The game metaphor helps to frame the contact with journalists in a positive light and to keep the relationship constructive and amicable. Most of them see battle elements in the contact with journalists, but only use words like “battle” or “fight” when they refer to negative experiences, for example if someone cheated and betrayed them, which in most cases means that they violated agreements on what to discuss and how.

PR advisors, however, tend to downplay their own role, claiming that they can only set good conditions, but how the talk actually develops is out of their reach. They describe themselves as a kind of mediator between the politicians and the programs, but their descriptions of their role in the negotiations reveals that they are actually powerful players. They have the power to turn down programs and they do so without asking “their” politician at all, especially when they have been working for them for quite some time and know them well. This observation was confirmed implicitly in the interviews with politicians who referred to their PR advisors for details about the negotiations, they themselves knew little about. Talk show producers even explained explicitly that they cannot deal with most politicians without the interference of PR advisors.

So the competition game repertoire also serves as legitimization of PR advisors’ position in the field. Only players know how to play according to the unwritten rules. It seems as if they like the excitement of the game and seek out the boundaries without violating the rules, which makes it sound more harmless than it may actually be.

Stage Play Repertoire: Performing on Stage

Need of cooperation

The second repertoire found was a variation on the play theme: the stage play metaphor. In contrast to a competitive game, with winners and losers, performing a play consists of close collaboration by the players. Only if all players contribute will the play—the television interview—appear convincing and authentic. PR advisors therefore stress the friendly and cooperative contacts and the positive effects of good agreements. When the conditions are clear, they feel, conversation can unfold in a relaxed manner.

“It’s in no one’s interest if five minutes of a program is, like, come on, tell me, and that the politician says no all the time. Until the moment he has to say, we agreed not to do this. This is the worst thing that can happen in a program, also for the producers.” (OL4)

PR advisors emphasize the mutual interest they share with journalists, namely an interesting appearance on television, so they can both benefit from a good show. Therefore, they would rather not describe the negotiations about talk shows as a struggle, but as cooperation with the producers, as part of the game. They believe that they can add to the shared goal by suggesting topics, guests, images, and anything else concerning the interview.

“We always try to think along with the producers, like, maybe it would be nice to show this video-bite of the prime minister, or this newspaper heading in the background. We think along as far as possible. Producers have to decide themselves what they are going to do with it.” (OL3)

Behind the scenes they also cooperate in sharing background information. This is especially needed in the case of talk shows, because they do not cover every news story, but are looking for stories and opinions behind the news that have not yet been told in news or current affairs shows. All agree that mutual trust is necessary for this kind of off-the record talk. Only if PR advisors and journalists know and trust each other, are they willing to share confidential information. If this is the case, journalists may also ask advice about guests from other parties or for more background information on difficult political topics.

PR advisors like to frame this as a friendly turn and normal part of their job. They do admit, however, that the information is not totally free of charge. They do not ask to be rewarded right away, but would eventually certainly like to get media attention. So the investment is expected to pay back at some point. In return, they also receive information on how the shows are produced. They use these informal meetings to get to know the programs and their interests, which helps them to come up with interesting topics at the right time and to prepare their politicians adequately.

“People sometimes ask whether this is a healthy situation. I think that this is totally normal, because you simply have a mutual dependency. It is just ordinary cooperation. So, of course you listen to each other. I cannot one-sidedly impose my wishes on a producer, and likewise they cannot do this to me. Because if they did so, the collaboration would evaporate and to those programs, as well as to us, long-term collaboration has proven very helpful.” (G4)

So sharing background information not only helps to spread own viewpoints, but is also seen as an investment in long-term relationships and creating a better performance.

Staged authenticity created by well-prepared improvisation

Another aspect that appears in the use of the stage play repertoire is the opportunity of an authentic appearance, which makes a talk show more attractive for this purpose than other news programs. All PR advisors emphasize the need to appear to be a normal person and stress that they are not trying to create this impression on purpose.

“I have a pretty simple idea about it, namely to let the politician be himself. I don’t believe in character make-overs and such things. You have your own life experience, which makes you authentic. You cannot build this based on things you think up.” (OL2)

Talk shows are seen as a good venue to stress such features or at least create an opportunity to show them off. The informal talk allows for jokes, witty remarks, and chatting with other guests, which gives politicians the chance to remark on personal ideas, hobbies, or interests. Although PR advisors attempt to know as exactly as possible how formats work and what shows prefer, they do not always comply with them, as they also have to guard the politician’s reputation. Therefore they have to find an equilibrium between showing politicians to be likeable, witty persons and presenting them as serious politicians with profound knowledge of their topic. An appearance on a talk show is considered successful when this balance is struck and the politician succeeds in adjusting to the format.

“You have to be at a distance, but simultaneously emotion-wise, you have to be close, because you have to communicate about decisions and you want people to understand what you do and why. This is a paradox, which I find very difficult. Perhaps the most difficult task for us. And a talk show is maybe the best way to solve this

paradox. There both things come together.” (G4)

When talking about practical preparations, they admit their attempts to control as many elements of the shows as possible, and to train their politicians to engage accordingly, revealing the real nature of their work. This shows how they interpret authenticity. It is not so much about real spontaneity (then the reaction to an unexpected surprise could be seen as the purest form of authenticity), but a well-orchestrated presentation of the politician.

As in a stage play, only a well-orchestrated performance allows viewers to forget that they are watching a show and lets them believe what they are seeing. PR advisors believe that thorough preparations, training, and experience enable politicians to be relaxed, feel confident, and therefore appear authentic, simply because they do not have to worry about all the possible things that could occur and how they should react to them. The better prepared they are, the more authentic their performance on stage will be, PR advisors argue; like an actor who knows his role so well that he does not have to think about his lines anymore, but is able to improvise. It is this improvisation, based on the total mastery of the role, that makes the performance convincing.

“They have to be trained. Training sometimes has a strange connotation, as if we are spin doctors who change the characteristics of a person. We don’t, but we do make sure that they are well-prepared, like a football player who starts the game well-rested and with a clear goal in mind.” (G4)

On the other hand, they emphasize that too much planning would be counterproductive, as the viewer would recognize it to be a staged play. This means that they are aware of the possible negative conno-

tation of this repertoire. If viewers recognized the rehearsed character of the performance, they would not consider it real anymore.

“We don’t want to know the questions and they won’t give them, which is fine. There are already more preparations than the viewer knows of, but the conversation must not become a stage play.” (OL3)

This is easy for PR advisors to claim, as they do not have any other choice. Journalists would never give away the concrete questions and detailed preparation of the interview. PR advisors seem to use the stage play repertoire to explain their close relations with journalists, and to solve the paradox between extensive preparations and an authentic appearance. In their view, there is no contradiction between them, instead, preparation is needed to show the politician in full, with all his or her personal characteristics and ideas. Only if this image is convincing will the viewer believe and trust the politician’s story. So training techniques, preparing jokes, or personal anecdotes can help to let the politician perform well in the improvisation play with the journalist. Talk shows are the perfect place for this combination. They are strictly directed and planned, but do also allow and even encourage improvisation when conversing.

Conclusion

This study asked which interpretive repertoires political PR advisors use to describe the preparations for and negotiations with talk shows. Questioning PR advisors about how they perceive their own role provided insights into the perception and self-perception of an often hidden group in the process of media relations. Without saying so explicitly, the use of two interpretive repertoires, i.e. competition game and stage play, shows that competition and cooperation are

not necessarily mutually exclusive. Using the play metaphor, Dutch PR advisors frame the relations and negotiations in a more friendly way than found in the brutal and fierce struggle known from US and UK examples (Franklin 2003; Mark 2006). PR advisors navigate between both interpretive repertoires to legitimize their daily performance and to deal with apparent contradictions in their work.

While our findings confirm general assumptions about the PR advisors' main task, controlling the image of their politicians in the media, the intertwining of the two aspects of play - competition game and stage play - offers a fruitful notion to conceptualize journalist-source relations in general. They bridge a seeming contradiction between an antipodal and symbiotic relationship that often remains unexplored in research on sourcing (Broersma, Den Herder, and Schohaus 2013). In line with previous studies on PR and journalism (Jones 1996; Franklin 2003; Ingham 2003; Davis 2013), our study shows that PR advisors are key players in all preparations and negotiations with television talk shows. They are the ones who are well-acquainted with the formats and who try to anticipate their characteristics when preparing "their" politicians, who have to rely on that knowledge. The results also confirm findings of earlier studies regarding major differences in the hierarchy between programs and politicians. Popular programs have better positions for negotiation, as do high-ranking politicians (De Haan et al. 2013). The need for mutual trust, often mentioned by journalists (Prenger et al. 2011; Kee 2012), has also been confirmed by the PR advisors of politicians.

Analyzing the relationship between politics and journalism from their perspective shows how negotiations about politicians' appearances in talk shows are balanced between conflicting and common interests. On the one hand, this could be due to the multiple-party system in the Netherlands, which forces parties to cooperate frequently and therefore to remain on speaking terms with other parties, but also with journalists, whom they will always need for me-

dia attention, whether they happen to be in power or in opposition. On the other hand, the conjunction of both repertoires also offers a means for PR advisors to stress their role as mediators between journalists and politicians, being the ones who help to enhance media appearances, provide information, and therefore play a decisive role in creating a good show. The game metaphor helps them to brush aside or downplay conflicts of interest, as they are part of the game, which is generally played fairly, according to them. Although they frame themselves as serving the politicians (and sometimes even the journalists), they like to emphasize their knowledge about media in general, and in this particular case about talk shows. They claim to know what information is needed and how it should be framed in certain media. Through this, PR advisors disguise their own interest as the objectively best way to inform citizens.

Journalists, PR advisors, and politicians agree that authenticity and an honest story sell best (De Vries 2014). At the same time this authenticity is always staged, because the politician's story is constructed and entirely thought through beforehand. PR advisors use both repertoires to legitimate the extensive preparations as necessary, either as training for a competitive game or as a rehearsal for an authentic performance. Dutch talk shows, which successfully merge information and entertainment, are seen as the perfect place to show this staged authenticity, creating the impression of a spontaneous, trustworthy, and convincing appearance not despite but just thanks to thorough preparation.

In this light, their fear of surprises is logical. They might interfere with and even damage the carefully prepared image of the politician. Therefore, those surprises might be a key for talk shows to limit the power of political PR. Researchers as well as journalists have repeatedly stated their concerns about the independence of journalism, which they think is under pressure through the close contacts and even dependency between journalists and PR advisors (Prenger et al.

2011). However, despite close collaboration and thorough preparations, talk shows always contain a certain amount of improvisation, due to interaction between different guests and the host that cannot be predicted. Talk show producers might use this feature of their formats to catch politicians off guard without violating agreements and regain at least some independence in the creation of these bits of spontaneous action.

Notes

1. The other two are Alea, or chance, i.e. playing a slot machine, and Ilinx, or vertigo, changing perception, i.e. by using drugs.
2. In this article, a single term (PR advisor) has been chosen for the sake of coherence.
3. It should be noted that Dutch talk shows differ from the Anglo-American ones. Whereas Anglo-American daily talk shows, for example, focus on personal stories, social topics, and taboos, with *Oprah* as the most famous example, late-night talk shows in the United States and the United Kingdom are satirical one-man shows, focused on ridiculing daily news and mocking famous guests. Examples of those shows are *David Letterman's Late Night* and *Late Show*, *The Colbert Report* in the United States, or *The Graham Norton Show* in the United Kingdom. Dutch talk shows, be it morning or late-night talk, contain a greater portion of "serious talk." Although they have also been accused of personalization and emotionalization instead of providing hard, critical interviews, especially the public service broadcasting shows try to combine the entertaining character of a talk show with the informative function of public broadcast, discussing daily news topics, and social and cultural matters with a combination of celebrities and more serious guests, like politicians (Van Dijk, Nahuys, and Waagmeester 2005; Wijffjes 2009).

Weighing talkability and political relevance

How television talk show
formats shape the choice
of political guests

5

Television talk shows are challenging traditional assumptions about the primacy of the informational function of journalism, because they mix emotion, entertainment and information. By doing so, they have added a new dimension to the relationship between the media and politics; political talk (Brants 1998; Baum 2005; Van Zoonen 2005). This talk is not aimed purely at the dissemination of information, but contains emotional and personal elements, combining politics with a variety of other topics. Despite this different approach to politics, talk shows need and use sources, just like any other media that want to discuss current events. The journalist-source relationship has been studied widely, often focusing on who has the power over journalistic products and production: the journalist or the source. This kind of research often concentrates on the use of 'elite sources' and journalists' watchdog role (e.g. Cook 1997; Manning 2001; Reich 2008). These studies, however, focused either on a specific events (e.g. elections), or on specific occasions (such as press conferences) and analyzed mostly the content of media outlets, for example newspaper articles or television news items. Moreover, those studies focused largely on the Anglo-American context, not

taking into account different media systems, for example in other European countries (Strömbäck and Nord 2006).

Because each instance of coverage of politics is shaped by the media in which it is represented, media logic in general has also been studied extensively. Here again the power relations have often been the focal point. Based on Altheide and Snow (1979), researchers have examined how media logic shapes and determines (political) news (e.g. Brants and Van Praag 2015; Altheide 2002; Lundby 2009; Strömbäck and Esser 2014). However, these studies mostly treated media logic as a general concept that influences (political) news. The link between television's specific logic, talk show formats and sourcing has not been studied yet. Television has the unique ability to audio-visually present live events. Talk shows use this ability to simultaneously create immediacy and intimacy in the presented talk. Their formats determine exactly how engaging topics, emotional appearances and opinion-driven interpretations of current events are combined, and therefore which political topics and guests are suitable for the shows (Haarman 2001; Timberg and Erler 2002; Schohaus, forthcoming). This study sheds light on how talk show formats determine the choice of political guests by answering the following research question:

In which way do television talk shows' formats, building upon sourcing conventions and the medium's logic, determine the choice of political talk and guests?

In a two-step analysis, the appearance of politicians and the discussion of politics on five Dutch talk shows in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 seasons is examined.¹ First the number of politicians' appearances, their functions, parties and frequency of appearance were analyzed quantitatively to map out the political appearances and discussions on these shows. Secondly, these results were triangulated with inter-

views with producers, journalists, politicians and their PR- staff in order to distinguish their selection criteria for topics and political guests.

This study will show that Dutch television talk shows choose political guests according to a combination of a focus on elite sources and politicians' ability to talk in an attractive way, that is, their talkability. While the first criterion derives from traditional journalistic conventions, the latter is based on television logic, as this study will show. The exact mix of these two criteria shapes the shows' approach to politics and is determined by the different formats.

From traditional powerful sources to changing interpretation of politics

As one of the most defining parts of journalism, the journalist-source relation, has been studied extensively, mostly in the US or UK context. Often based, or building, on Gans' metaphor that 'it takes two to tango', these studies have analyzed the power relations between journalists and news sources (Gans 1979; Strömbäck and Nord 2006; Davis 2009). Political communication research largely assumes that there is a mutual dependence between journalism and politics. They are "driven by a strategic complementarity of interests" (Franklin 2003, 47; Brants et al. 2010). While journalists need politicians as sources of information, politicians need news media to get their message across to the voters. Informing citizens about politics and reporting on those in powerful (political) positions is seen as a central part of modern journalism's ideology of being a watchdog on behalf of the citizens (Clayman et al. 2007; Eriksson and Östman 2013; Broersma, Den Herder, and Schohaus 2013).

This has created a situation in which elite sources, i.e. people in powerful positions such as political leaders, play an essential role in the news-making process (Manning 2001; Strömbäck and Nord

2006). Several studies have shown that these sources are very powerful when it comes to setting the news agenda and giving access to information. However, they have less influence in the news production phase, after the reporter has received the information and decides how to frame and present it (Cook 1997; Reich 2008; Eriksson and Östman 2013). As Reich states, sources “do control ‘more often than not’ the initial invitation to dance with them; after the dance has begun it is the reporters who take command and invite other dancers to follow” (Reich 2006; 509).

Both politicians and reporters continuously improve and advance their strategies in order to get the upper hand in the relation and thus control the news (Broersma, Den Herder, and Schohaus 2013). Politicians increasingly use PR and media management (Jones 1996; Brown 2011; Davis 2013), while journalism shifts towards interpretive reporting (cf. Salgado and Strömbäck 2012; Schohaus 2013; Kroon Lundell and Ekström 2013; Fink and Schudson 2014). Moreover, while elite sources have the power over essential information, it is the journalists who decide which part of the information they want. They are interested only in the kind of information that fits their story or their (news) medium’s approach to politics. In order to reach a broad audience, they are looking for so-called ‘attention-grabbing stories’. “They are quick to identify trends as well as events, stereotypes and aspects of reality that might make up an exciting sensational and powerful story” (Strömbäck and Nord 2006, 159).

That is particularly the case for talk show producers, who are looking for stories that fit their shows’ hybrid mix of information and entertainment. By presenting politics in an entertaining, subjective or emotional way and combining it with other topics, talk shows expand the traditional notion of politics (Costera Meijer 2001; Baum 2005; Van Zoonen 2005; Baym 2005; Cao 2010). Traditionally, journalists, and often also researchers, considered only those topics politics that

were related to party or parliamentary affairs and policy, mostly with politicians as the main actors. Nowadays many journalists, as well as researchers, use a broader, more inclusive interpretation of politics. It not only includes politicians' individual appearances in the media, but also embraces public debate among citizens, who are affected by new policies, for example. The discussion of topics related to political decision making with journalists, experts and/or 'the man on the street' is also included in the current interpretation of politics. Party politics is only one part of this broader definition (Norris 2000; Van Zoonen 2003; Baum 2003; Blumler and Coleman 2015).

This broader definition of politics and *the political* has made room for new voices and opinions that are not necessarily based on political facts, but can also derive from emotions and personal stories (Van Zoonen 2012). As Nieminen and Trappel (2011) have argued, this also broadened journalism's watchdog role, focusing not only on politicians, but covering other participants in the field of politics, such as experts, journalists or citizens.

In this interpretation of politics, the politicians' role has changed. They are no longer seen merely as sources providing facts and opinions related to their political position. They are considered public figures whose personal thoughts and emotions have become part of their public appearances (Corner 2000; Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000). Politicians stress these personal qualities, especially in times of elections, to reach their voters. This fits talk show producers' agendas because these personal approaches link up very well with the mix of entertainment, information and personal stories they are aiming for (Holtz-Bacha 2004; Houtman and Achterberg 2010).

From television logic to talk show format – talkability as form criterion

The concept of media logic has been frequently used to study media, because it focuses on the influence of the media's specific form on its content. It is often used in a normative sense to describe the negative influence and increasing power of the media in public and political discourse (Altheide and Snow 1979; Brants and Van Praag 2005). More recently, it has also been criticised for being too technologically deterministic to discuss the complex relation between politics and the media (Brants and Praag 2015). Moreover, especially in the field of political communication, the term 'media logic' is often used in a generic way, implying that there is one logic for all media (see for example Altheide 2004; Brants and Praag 2015).

Considering the fundamental differences between media, however, it makes more sense to consider media logic in an empirical way, meaning "with a strong focus on media practices" (Asp 2014, 257). In terms of that perspective, it merely implies that all media have specific characteristics and therefore an own logic (Lundby 2009; Strömbäck and Esser 2014; Klinger and Svensson 2015). Each medium consists of a set of technical and formal characteristics that not only shape the medium's content, but also its organizational and institutional structure and processes. Together these norms and standards form the medium's logic, which serves "as guidelines for appropriate behavior and thinking within each institutional sphere" (Strömbäck and Esser 2014).

Television logic is characterized by the ability to simultaneously disseminate facts, emotion and entertainment in audio-visual images, often live, for a broad audience. To keep the viewers' attention, the pace is often quick, and stories are brief and told in an appealing way. Personal stories are often used to create concrete and engaging television. Moreover, the topics to be depicted and the persons should be visually attractive, because television is all about the combina-

tion of image and sound (Schütz 1995; Corner 1999; Timberg and Erler 2002; Wijffes 2004; Bolin 2014). The choices for particular form and style elements are based on a combination of technological choices, professional television strategies and conventions, and journalistic working routines, which mutually influence each other (Domingo 2008). So while technological restrictions and possibilities influence these choices, they are not the only decisive part of television logic (Asp 2014).

Television formats are building on television logic, using a unique combination of form and style elements that are at least partly determined by the abilities and restrictions of the medium (Altheide and Snow 1979). The format is the concept of a show. It determines the ‘rules or ‘codes’ for defining, selecting, organizing, presenting and recognizing information as one thing rather than another (...)’ (Altheide 2004, 294). This means that the format determines all the characteristic elements of the show, as well as its basic structure. This includes broadcasting time and target audience, length of the broadcasts and the overall aim of the show, for example entertaining or informing (Fictooor et al. 2006; Moran 2009). It is the specific combination of repetitive elements of style, setting and order that makes a format unique (Haeck 1998; Chalaby 2011; Ellis, Esser, and Lozano 2016).

In the case of talk shows, this means the setting of the show, the number and kind of topics discussed and with whom. These formats determine the pace and framing of the talk, and therefore also which guests are suited to this particular approach. Talk show talk draws heavily on television’s ability to create a sense of spontaneity by simultaneously disseminating facts, entertainment and emotion. The talk is presented as a real time conversation between a host and one or more guests in front of a studio audience, creating a sense of intimacy and immediacy at once (Stigel 2001; Timberg and Erler 2002). However, this sense of spontaneity can be established successfully

only if the guests are able to adjust to the shows' hybrid character. Because the focus is on engaging talk, guests and, in particular, politicians have to be able to tell their story in a vivid, entertaining way, and to discuss it with the host and other guests. Moreover, they are expected to engage with others' talk as well, because talk shows are often set up as a roundtable discussion (Haarman 2001; Kee 2012).

In this study, the combination of those elements will be referred to as 'talkability'. This term is based on the adjective 'talkable', which refers to both being capable of being talked to or about, and being capable of offering engaging conversation (e.g. Merriam Webster Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/talkable>). It is exactly this combination that talk shows expect of a suitable guest. While speech therapy uses the term to teach children not only to speak, but also to understand the social conventions of talk (Sussman 2007), communication advisors interpret talkability as the 'art of conversing', which can be improved by working on conversation skills (Borg 2016). In the context of this study, 'talkability' and 'talkable' are interpreted as the ability to talk smoothly and engagingly about (political) topics. Politicians should not only be able to clearly explain their message, but also to adjust it to the format and style of a specific talk show and to engage in other discussions. A talkable guest is more than a mere source; he should be an interesting personality (Corner 2000).

Data & Method

To analyze the criteria talk shows use to invite political guests, the five most prominent Dutch talk shows that discuss politics as part of current or popular affairs have been analyzed: *Pauw*, *De Wereld Draait Door*, *RTL Late Night*, *WNLoZ*, *Buitenhof*. Although one of the programs, *Buitenhof*, does not describe itself as a talk show, all shows share the same general characteristics of the talk show genre: they discuss several current topics with different guests in a studio

setting, all but one (WNL) in front of a live audience (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000).

Four of the five programs are broadcasted by public broadcasters on the first national public channel (NPO1). Only one is produced by a commercial broadcaster, RTL. At the moment of research it was the only commercial talk show focused on current affairs in the Netherlands.

Table 1: market share 2014 and 2015(source SKO Jaarrapport 2015)

	<i>Overall market share in %</i>		<i>Market share 6-12 pm in %</i>	
Period	2014	2015	2014	2015
RTL Nederland	24,1	25,0	28,7	29,2
RTL4	14,6	15,2	17,2	17,7
NPO (Dutch PSB)	33,2	30,6	36,4	34,1
NPO 1	21,7	19,4	24,2	22,2

Both NPO and RTL are aiming for a broad audience. NPO 1 has the largest market share and presents itself as the channel for all Dutch people (table 1). It aims to provide a well-measured and accessible mix of news, current affairs, information, entertainment and emotion (Nederlandse Publieke Omroep, Meerjarenbegroting 2013-2017). RTL4 is a channel of the RTL Media Group, and presents itself as “THE channel” for the modern family, providing news, lifestyle, drama, coaching, humor and entertainment (<http://www.adverterenbijrtl.nl/pijlers/tv>). It has the second largest market share after NPO 1 (table 1) and is therefore its closest competitor (SKO Jaarrapport 2014).

The analysis conducted for this study consisted of two steps. First, all the broadcasts were coded quantitatively for the number of items with politicians, the politician’s function and party, as well as the combination of guests in each item. These results were analyzed for the number of appearances of politicians per show, as well as for

the most apparent parties and positions. The results were analyzed through a network analysis, using the visualization software Gephi, which showed how frequently which politicians appeared on which shows, in combination with their functions and party affiliations.

Secondly, the results were triangulated with information obtained from 35 interviews with the producers of the shows, political reporters, politicians and their PR advisors (some of which were conducted during short-term ethnographic research at the shows as part of the larger research project). The interviewees were purposively selected to reflect the heterogeneity of the Dutch political and talk show landscape. The interviews were conducted between August 2014 and August 2016 by the first author. They lasted between 27 and 90 minutes and were recorded and fully transcribed. The interviews were semi-structured, following different topic lists that focused on their function in or relation to the talk shows. In the case of journalists, the list focused on the choices of political topics and guests, how these were made and what role the format played in that process. In the case of politicians and PR advisors, the topic list tackled their considerations and preferences to appear on talk shows, their relationship with the shows and their preparations for these appearances. This approach ensured that the same topics were discussed with all the interviewees, taking into account the different perspectives of both fields, journalism and politics. Spontaneous responses and individual input were stimulated by probing only when necessary and letting the respondents elaborate in their own words. When the politicians mentioned specific shows, their answers were compared to those of the journalists (formerly) working for those shows.

The interview transcripts were analyzed using the qualitative software Atlas.ti, starting with open coding that focused on the reasons for which politicians appear on the shows. From this open coding, two criteria of talk show formats emerged that were mentioned by almost all the interviewees concerning the choices of political guests

on the shows: One concerned the political relevance and influence of the guests. The other concerned the politicians' abilities, the need for them to talk fluently and attractively. In a second round of coding, the interviews were coded for these two aspects, which crystallized out of the following criteria: political significance and talkability. These two concepts were used to analyze the network analysis, conducted in the first step, by comparing the politicians on the network, their party affiliation and function, to both criteria, considering their political relevance and talkability. Moreover, the relations in the network were compared to the answers of interviewees about the particular shows and/or politicians. Through this layered approach, the quantitative data could be complemented with underlying motives and structures.

The cases

Table 2: overview time, frequency, broadcaster, and ratings (25/08/2014- 30/06/2015)

<i>Program</i>	<i>Time of broadcast</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Broadcast/channel</i>	<i>Rating (market share)</i>
Pauw	11 p.m.	Daily, 5 x per week	VARA/NPO1	641.000 (16.5%)
De Wereld Draait Door (DWDD)	7 p.m.	Daily, 5 x per week	VARA/NPO1	1.430.000 (26.5%)
RTL Late Night (RTLNL)	10.30 p.m.	Daily, 5 x per week	RTL4	1.049.000 (22.3%)
WNL op Zondag	10.30 a.m.	Weekly, on Sunday	WNL/NPO1	231.000 (14.2%)
Buitenhof	12 p.m. (noon)	Weekly, on Sunday	VPRO, Avro-Tros, VARA/NPO1	337.000 (18.1%)

Pauw is presented by former news anchor and experienced talk show host, Jeroen Pauw. It is the successor of the late night talk show

Pauw & Witteman, which had been the late night talk show with the highest ratings for 7 years (2006-2013), until the introduction of RTL Late Night. *Pauw* is a late night talk show, discussing news, politics, culture and other topics. The focus is on the ‘talk of the day’, which means topics that were on the news or debated publicly. This often includes politics. For each topic one or more guests take a seat at the round table. In season 2014-15 this setting was frequently adjusted, creating the opportunity for one-on-one interviews. In the following season, the format was changed to a round table discussion, with no exceptional settings. The setting has been referred to as ‘night club’ish’, with warm, dark colors, lounge chairs and a bar at the background, emphasizing the late night character of the show.

De Wereld Draait Door (*The world keeps turning* (DWDD)) calls itself a ‘live program from Amsterdam with guests from politics, science, sport, culture and media’. It focuses on popular culture and engaging stories. With live music performances, remarkable television clips and other fixed elements, the program has a fast pace and strict order, with approximately the same amount of time for every item, regardless the guest and topic. Also politicians have to adjust to this strict format. It discusses topics in an opinionating way, with usually up to 4 guests, presented by one host, Matthijs van Nieuwkerk, who is assisted by rotating sidekicks. For each item the seating of guests changes and the show is known for its fast, positive and energetic character. The NPO categorizes it as ‘entertainment and informative’.

RTL Late Night (*RTLNL*) is produced by the commercial broadcaster RTL4. It is also aired weekdays, at 10.30 p.m. and describes itself as a ‘Late night talk show’ in which the host, Humberto Tan, talks to guest from the worlds of entertainment, sport and politics who are at the center of the news. The program focuses on celebrity news and human interest stories, primarily aiming for a nice chat, and personal feelings and stories. Political topics are only discussed

if they fit into that approach. Four to six guests are sitting at the same table throughout the whole show and are also addressed in the interviews of other guests. This program also uses fixed elements, like music performances and a compilation of remarkable (internet) news. Guests have to deal with this fixed setting that is not adjusted for prominent political guests. Even the prime minister has to share the table with all other guests.

WNL op Zondag (WNL on Sunday) is broadcasted every Sunday morning and discusses politics, entrepreneurship, media and culture with prominent guests sitting on a large u-shaped couch next to each other during the whole broadcast. All shows are structured in the same way, enforced by the strict format that is aimed at a nice Sunday morning chat with an enjoyable, airy atmosphere. The broadcaster WNL (Wakker Nederland, which means Alert Netherlands) has been introduced in 2009/10 as a counterbalance of the perceived overweigh of leftist programs and broadcasters. In the season 2014/15 had two permanent hosts, Charles Groenhuijzen and Margreet Spijker, taking turns every other week. In 2015/16 the show was hosted by former news anchor Rick Nieman.

Buitenhof discusses current affairs via interview and debates. It is presented in turns by three different hosts (Paul Witteman, Marcia Luyten, Pieter Jan Hagens), and focuses on deepening of knowledge about news, politics, science and society, beyond the issues of the day. It is presented every Sunday at noon and has the reputation to be the most serious discussion program about politics and current affairs. It does not describe itself as a talk show, but as the hosts discuss current topics with guests at a round table, sometimes one-on-one, sometimes in the form of a debate, it can be compared to the other programs in this research. In contrast to those programs, though, *Buitenhof* focuses solely on facts and an intellectual discussion, instead of personal or emotional stories.

Results

Political proportions – focus on significance

The quantitative analysis shows that politics was not equally important in the five shows (chart 1).

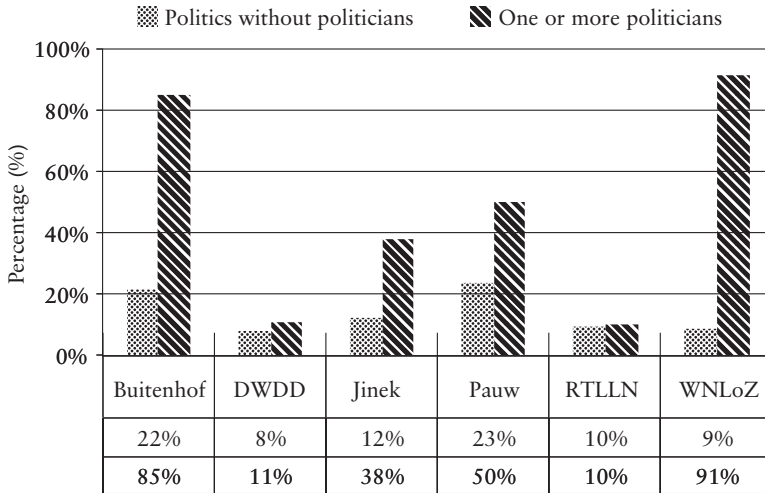


Chart 1: percentage of political topics in total amount of broadcasts

Unsurprisingly, the daily talk shows with an accent on entertainment and soft news, *DWDD* and *RTLLN*, hosted fewer political guests than the shows with a strong focus on current affairs and hard news, *Pauw* and *Buitenhof*. Talk with politicians was a decisive part of the weekly shows. With some exceptions, *WNLoZ* and *Buitenhof* usually invited politicians every week. Of the daily shows, *Pauw* was the show that hosted politicians most often; 50% of the broadcasts featured active politicians. In *DWDD* and *RTLLN* politicians play a marginal role. They appeared in only 11% and 10% of the broadcasts respectively.

The network analysis (chart 2) shows that all the talk shows that were analyzed focused on political significance, meaning they inter-

viewed politicians who could influence policy and decision making, the so-called elite sources. Because of their position they are considered central to political news. They have background information about the government's plans, are either involved in them or try to influence the process. Ministers, parliamentary party chairmen of the large parties and the mayor of Rotterdam are clustered at the center, meaning that they not only frequent the shows most often, but also that they appear in almost all the programs. The same goes for secretaries of states, only less frequently, and for some former politicians, who appeared on several shows (table 3).

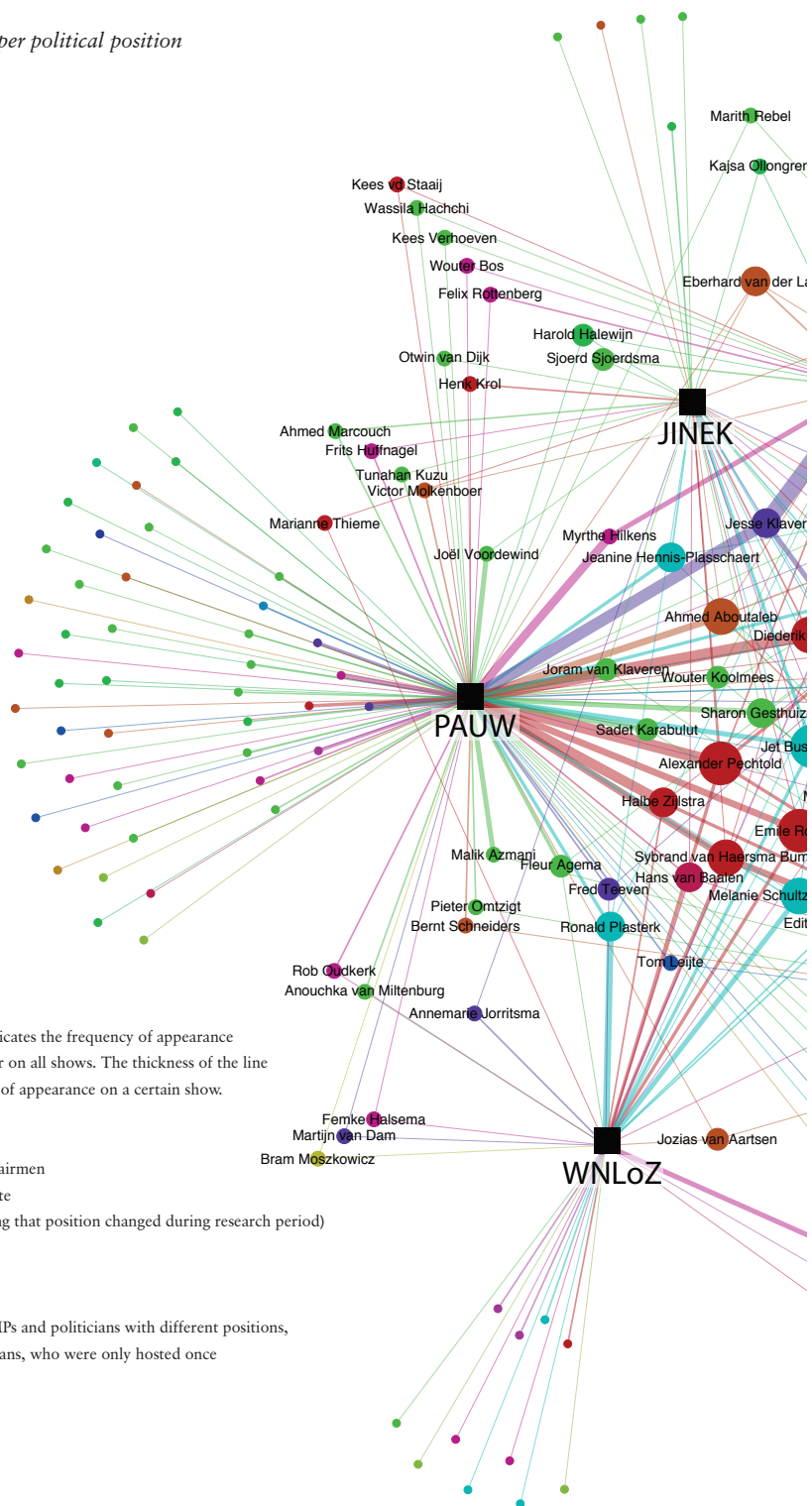
Chart 2: appearance per political position

Legend:

The size of the dots indicates the frequency of appearance of the politicians appear on all shows. The thickness of the line indicates the frequency of appearance on a certain show.

Blue - minister
Red – parliamentary chairmen
Pink – secretaries of state
Purple – mixed (meaning that position changed during research period)
Green - MP
Brown – Mayor
Dark pink – former

Dots without name – MPs and politicians with different positions, such as regional politicians, who were only hosted once



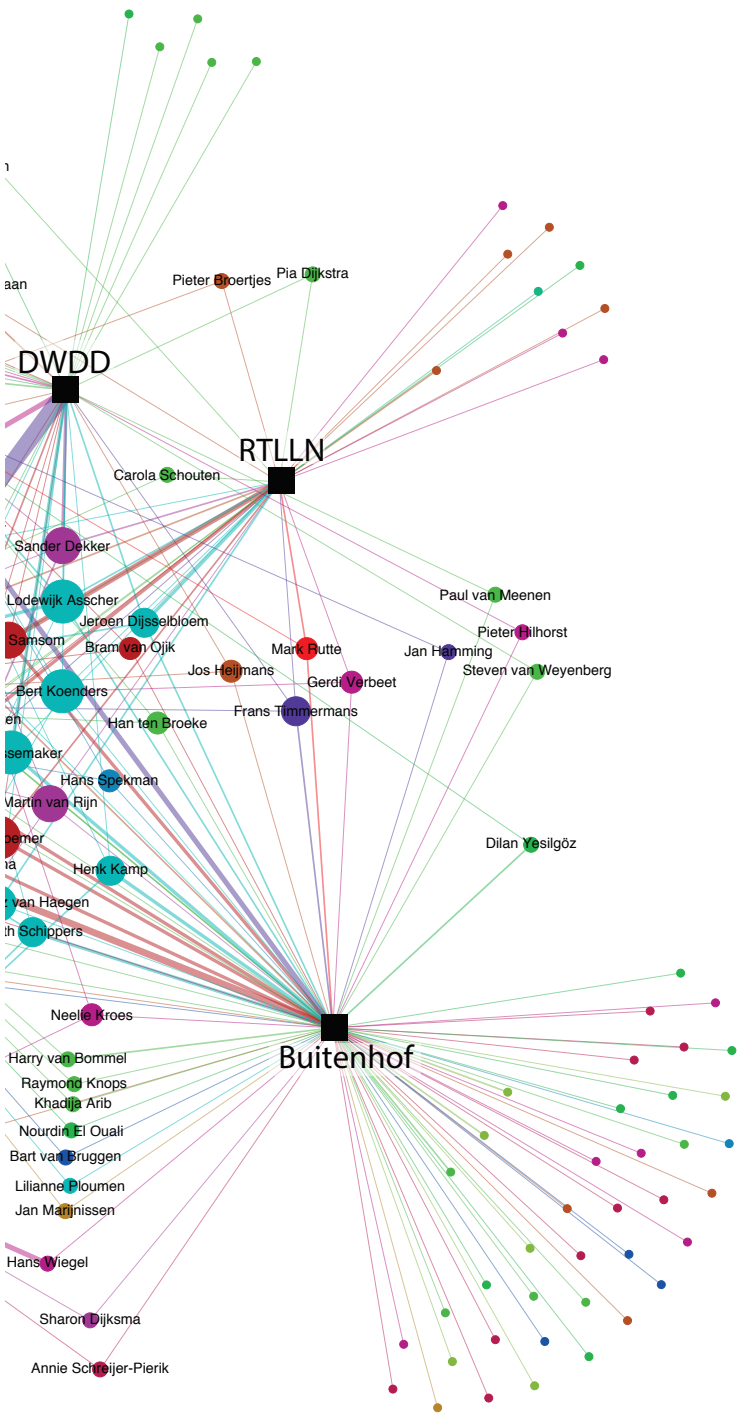


Table 3: total appearances and unique politicians (per position)

<i>political position</i>	<i>Buitenhof</i>	<i>DWDD</i>	<i>Jinek</i>	<i>Pauw</i>	<i>RTLN</i>	<i>WNLoZ</i>
Minister	9(17 19.5%)	7(11 3.1%)	7(11 9.6%)	10(22 7.7%)	6(10 2.4%)	10(22 33.3%)
State secretary	2(2 2.3%)	1(3 0.9%)	2(2 1.8%)	4(6 2.1%)	3(4 1.0%)	7(10 15.2%)
Parliamentary chairman	7(19 21.8%)	6(12 3.4%)	8(11 9.6%)	11(41 14.3%)	4(9 2.1%)	6(14 21.2%)
Party leader/ chairman	4(4 4.6%)	-	1(1 0.9%)	5(6 2.0%)	-	-
Mayor	7(7 8.0%)	4(4 1.1%)	6(5 4.4%)	10(16 5.6%)	7(9 2.1%)	2(2 3.0%)
MP	18(16 18.4%)	12(7 2.0%)	11(12 10.5%)	39(58 20.3%)	6(6 1.4%)	3(3 4.5%)
Prime Minister	1(2 2.3%)	-	1(1 0.9%)	-	1(2 0.5%)	-
Former	10(10 11.5%)	4(8 2.3%)	2(2 1.8%)	13(23 8.0%)	4(4 1.0%)	6(9 13.6%)
regio/EU/differ.	31(31 35.6%)	4(4 1.1%)	5(5 4.4%)	20(20 7.0%)	2(2 0.5%)	6(7 10.6%)

Legenda: Total unique politicians (total observations on the show | percentage (%) of total broadcasts)

Thus, the center of the political talk show network reflects the center of political power in The Netherlands. Despite this shared focus on political relevance, the network clearly shows that only *Pauw* and *Buitenhof* host many politicians with other functions, such as regional politicians or members of the EU parliament (see also table 3). They were invited because of their specific knowledge about a topic or closeness to specific news events, for example being involved in the establishment of a new law, which put them in an incidental politically significant position, enhancing their news value for that topic. But while *Buitenhof* generally hosted them only once, *Pauw* was the only show that hosted several MPs more than once.

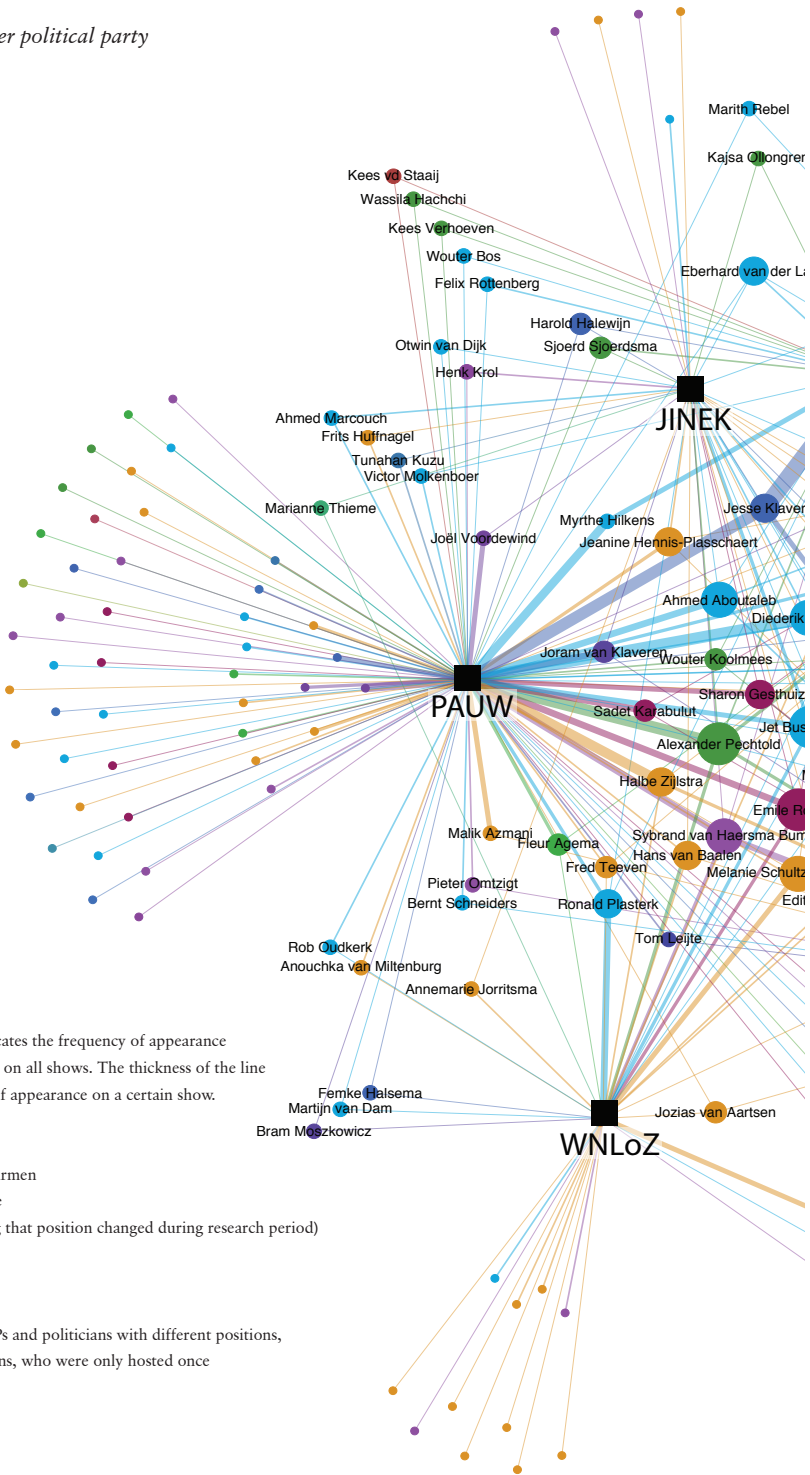
Regarding the representation of political parties, the network analysis shows that the social-democratic PVDA was the most covered political party (chart 3). The PVDA not only had the most appearances, but also the greatest variety of politicians on the shows, followed by VVD (see also table 4).

Chart 3: appearance per political party

Legend:

The size of the dots indicates the frequency of appearance of the politicians appear on all shows. The thickness of the line indicates the frequency of appearance on a certain show.

- Blue - minister
- Red – parliamentary chairmen
- Pink – secretaries of state
- Purple – mixed (meaning that position changed during research period)
- Green - MP
- Brown – Mayor
- Dark pink – former
- Dots without name – MPs and politicians with different positions, such as regional politicians, who were only hosted once



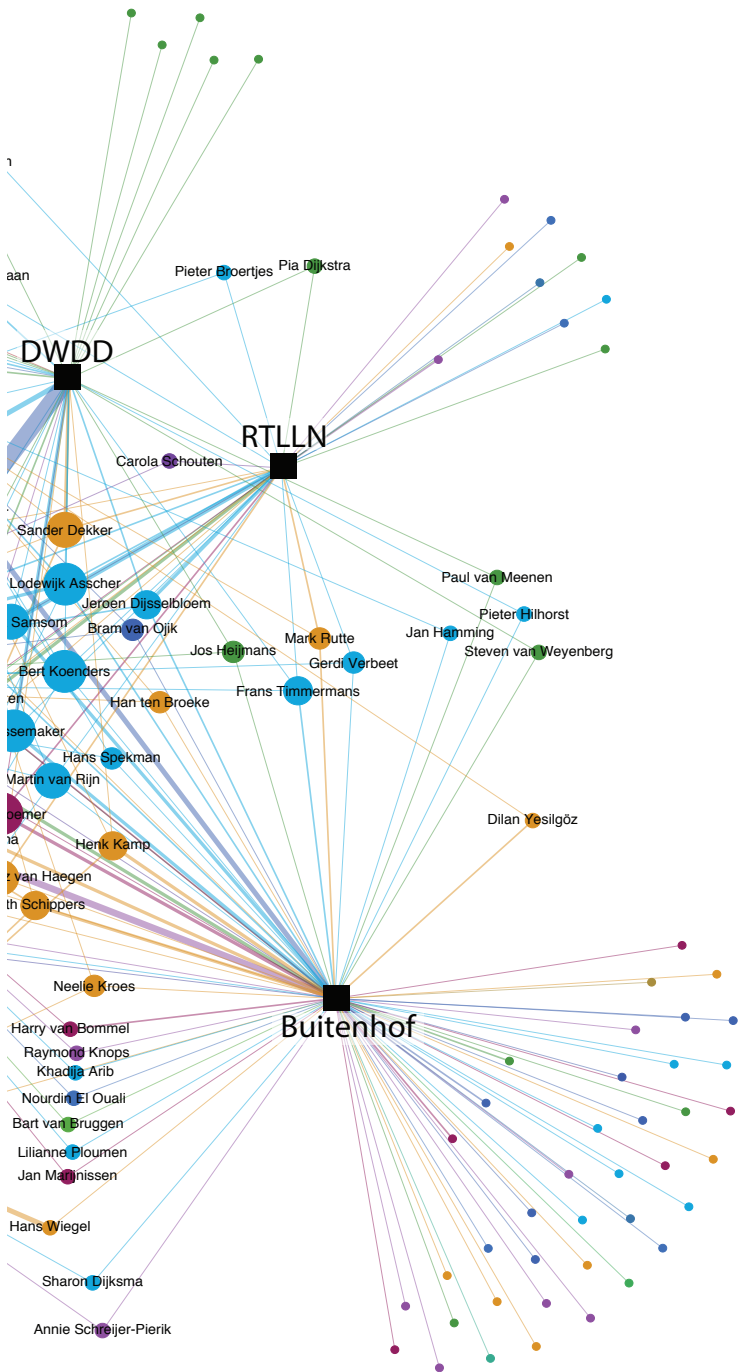


Table 4: total appearances and unique politicians (per party)

Political party	Buitenhof	DWDD	Jinek	Pauw	RTLNL	WNLoZ
PvdA	22(30 34.5%)	14(23 6.6%)	14(18 15.8%)	31(59 20.6%)	13(20 4.8%)	9(16 24.2%)
VVD	19(24 27.6%)	3(5 1.4%)	13(14 12.3%)	21(41 14.3%)	7(10 2.4%)	20(32 48.5%)
SP	10(15 17.2%)	1(1 0.3%)	2(2 1.8%)	9(20 7.0%)	3(4 1.0%)	1(3 4.5%)
D66	8(11 12.6%)	15(6 1.7%)	3(4 3.5%)	8(15 5.2%)	4(6 1.4%)	1(3 4.5%)
CDA	10(14 16.1%)	1(1 0.3%)	3(3 2.6%)	9(15 5.2%)	2(3 0.7%)	4(7 10.6%)
CU	-	-	1(1 0.9%)	4(14 4.9%)	1(1 0.2%)	-
GroenLinks	8(11 12.6%)	2(12 3.4%)	3(3 2.6%)	6(16 5.6%)	-	1(1 1.5%)
PVV	-	-	-	5(9 3.1%)	1(1 0.2%)	1(1 1.5%)
different	11(11 12.6%)	1(1 0.3%)	4(5 4.4%)	17(19 6.6%)	3(3 0.7%)	2(2 3.0%)

Legenda: Total unique politicians (total observations on the show | percentage (%) of total broadcasts)

WNLoZ was the only program that hosted the liberal VVD more often, which was probably a result of its aim to focus on rightwing politics (it is the only show that clearly stated a political preference). These results are not surprising, given the fact that both shows focus on politicians in significant positions and PVDA and VVD were the two governing parties at the time. This also explains why these two parties were the only ones from which several members were hosted frequently on several shows. The opposition parties usually had only one or two members who were frequent guests. This corresponds with the analysis of the political position: the most politically significant politicians of the opposition are the parliamentary party chairmen, because they determine the political position of that party. Therefore they were invited more than once by several shows.

Again, *Pauw* and *Buitenhof* show the most diversity in terms of political parties (shown in the small dots of several colors that surround both shows). These politicians were often members of smaller opposition parties or regional parties, involved in a particular regional topic. Because *Pauw* presented the most political parties and functions, it also overlapped the most with other shows. Politicians who appeared on other shows often also appeared on *Pauw*. Thus, while all the shows focused on the same significant politicians, the diversity of the shows is seen in how they combined these guests with other, less frequently appearing politicians.

This variance in political guests corresponds with the flexibility of the formats. The shows with a format that can adjust the length and setting of an item according to a topic or guest (*Pauw* and *Buitenhof*) have more flexibility to create a suitable setting for a subject. This has resulted in a greater variety of politicians and combinations of politicians. They not only used this flexibility to broaden up a (political) topic by combining different guests, but also in order to convince the politicians to appear on the show. They created special conditions, granting them exclusive one-on-one interviews and/or extra time.

This can be of use in the fierce struggle among television programs for the most wanted guests. As an editor-in-chief stated:

“There are too many current affairs programs and talk shows, which results in too much competition for guests. This gives politicians too much power, because they can choose where to appear and in what kind of setting.”²

MPs and other lower-ranking politicians are not offered the same privileges, but often have to debate the topic with other invited guests. In *Pauw* they are sometimes not even the most prominent guests, but are seated in the audience, only answering some specific questions on political angles. In these items the political component can be combined with personal stories, opinions or background information, which creates a combination of concrete information and engaging talk, fitting into the broader definition of politics.

The more entertaining formats, *DWDD*, *RTL LN* and *WNLoZ*, did not adjust their formats to get high-ranking politicians onto the show. As *DWDD* and *RTL LN* are the shows with the highest rankings, they know that they do not have to put extra effort into getting politicians onto the show, because they are attractive anyway.

However, it should be noted that not appearing on a show does not necessarily mean that politicians were not invited. Especially members of the government frequently refuse to come. They do not feel the need to appear on a show, as do, for example, MPs who still want to establish a political and public image. Moreover, the former have more to lose. Especially in political crises, ministers frequently refuse to discuss them on a talk show. This might be a reason for which parliamentary chairmen are hosted relatively more often than governing politicians. They are close to the current events, but can speak more freely.

Talkable guests more likely to be invited

Taking a closer look at the results, the function of a politician is not the sole reason for an appearance. Some ministers and parliamentary chairmen were clearly hosted more often than others (chart 2). Alexander Pechtold (D66) and Emile Roemer (SP), for example, appeared more often than Sybrand van Haersma Buma (CDA), although all three were parliamentary chairmen of large opposition parties. Similarly, ministers Bert Koenders and Jet Bussemaker (both PVDA) appeared more often than, for example, Jeanine Hennis Plasschaert (VVD) or Melanie Schultz van Haegen (VVD). At first glance, this might evoke the conclusion that talk shows have a preference for social-democratic ministers. But again, not all PVDA ministers were hosted as often. Jeroen Dijsselbloem (PVDA), for example, was a less frequent guest.

The analysis of the interviews shows that there is another criterion that influences the choice of and by guests: talkability. All the producers and journalists interviewed agreed that guests needed to be able to discuss political issues in a clear way, without abstract policy talk. They should simultaneously trigger the viewer's imagination with lively examples and convey authority by being knowledgeable and thus providing crucial information and details. Even the most serious and content-driven talk show, *Buitenhof*, uses talkability as a decisive selection criterion.

“It is all about being an authority who is able to tell and explain something in a couple of minutes and also dares to make a statement about it.”³

As talk shows thrive on engaging talk, their formats are constructed in a way that combines information and entertainment, because even the most serious shows want to reach the audience with thought-provoking talk. Talkable politicians make it possible to discuss politics as

an important part of daily news while also reaching a large audience. This is also the reason for which mayors of big cities frequently appear. They are well known and have a powerful position in which they are relatively close to the public. They can talk about their roles in concrete events in their towns that often entail personal contact with citizens.

Politicians are very aware of this requirement, as the following quotes demonstrate:

“How animated you tell your story, with which examples, is at least half of your message (...) You have to find something small and personal that represents the bigger picture of your topic.”⁴

“They really choose people who can join the talk easily in the way they want them to: a bit fast and not too difficult.”⁵

This also means that ministers of departments dealing with mostly abstract topics, such as economics or financial affairs, are less likely to be invited. Moreover, all the journalists and producers agreed that VVD ministers and secretaries of state were more reluctant to appear than PVDA members of government. Thus, even if both parties are invited, it is more likely that PVDA will accept the invitation. This might be due to stricter party discipline at the VVD, but also due to the personal preferences of PVDA politicians. People who enjoy small talk are more at ease on the shows, so they also accept invitations more easily.

When talk show producers found a politician who could talk engagingly about various topics, he was invited recurrently. *DWDD*, for example, invited a young MP, Jesse Klaver, of a small left-wing opposition party (GroenLinks) frequently during the 2014/15 season to

discuss varying topics that were sometimes only slightly connected to politics. He was the only politician invited more than once (six times) throughout the year (see also table 4). Klaver was embraced by the show, because he met the requirements of television logic and fitted exactly what *DWDD* wanted to radiate: young, positive and enthusiastic. He was an easy talker who was not afraid to talk about all kinds of topics, personal preferences and emotions. He spoke engagingly and energetically, and was young and handsome, which made him visually attractive as well. Klaver even succeeded in meeting the first requirement within the season, namely becoming the leader of his party at the age of 29. In the following season he was also the only party leader invited onto the show more than once, while he was also a regular guest on other shows. So here the personal qualities of a politician were more important for an invitation than the wish to represent different political voices and perspectives.

While the producers of all the shows found talkability important, they interpreted it differently, according to their specific formats. The most basic definition, being able to discuss politics in an attractive way, was used as a criterion by all the shows, but what was considered attractive was determined by the format. A show that focused mainly on information, such as *Buitenhof*, found a comprehensive explanation attractive, while a fast and opinion-driven format such as *DWDD* interpreted this criterion as being able to make clear statements. Moreover, the formats with a higher entertainment character (*DWDD*, *RTLNL*) asked more of politicians, wanting them to be considered talkable guests. On those shows an easy talk was not sufficient. Their topics also had to be talkable, meaning being concrete, easy to understand and preferably inviting for other guests in order to involve them in the discussion. Moreover, those shows requested more strongly that politicians interacted easily with other guests.

“They must not be afraid to join the talk about other topics. That is something we find very important. We want the people who sit at the same table the whole night to engage with each other’s talk.”⁶

Because politics is not their core business, these shows can also choose other topics that are more attractive to a broad audience. Politicians thus compete not only with other topics, but also with other (non-political) guests who are likely to be more talkable. Because these shows are characterized by a strict format, elements such as pace, fast engaging talk and the interaction with other guests are more emphasized. While formats with an adjustable setting and number of topics can create conditions that are better suited to specific guests, the strict formats need guests that fit their approach to politics exactly. Thus, the stricter the format, the more important talkability becomes as a criterion for politicians to be invited.

Conclusion

This study has shown that politicians need to meet two criteria to be invited to participate in a talk show. They have to be in a politically relevant position and they need talkability, that is, being able to discuss politics in an attractive way. These two criteria show how television logic and journalistic conventions interact with talk show formats, resulting in very different programs, with varying approaches towards politics. Talk shows are looking for guests who meet the demands of television logic, but shows with a more flexible character and a focus on news and current events are more likely to choose guests according to their affiliation with and importance to a specific topic than purely on the basis of their talkability. Talk shows in which entertainment is more important require guests that can fit into their strict character. Because these were the shows with the highest rankings, they did not need to make concession to get particular politi-

cians onto their shows.

Critics might argue that the talkability criterion signals a shift from facts towards style and appearance, or even towards ‘fact-free’ politics (Brants 1998; Schudson 1998b; Van Zoonen 2012), but this would pass over the specific form and logic of television. Because talk on television thrives due to people who are able to talk engagingly, talk shows need to find guests who fit into that logic and are able to deal with it. This might even mean that they prefer nonpolitical guests, such as journalists, above politicians, if these are more suited to talking about politics in a way that fits into the particular format.

Finding ways to discuss politics in an interesting and comprehensible way not only forces politicians to work on their talkability, but it might also open up the talk show space to politicians from the lower ranks who have an engaging way of talking. The mix of political and non-political topics and guests could result in discussions with people from different social and political groups, could show the diversity of politics and simultaneously reach the public with a touching story better than a traditional interview with only one politician might do.

For politicians this means that they have to work on their television skills to get a spot on these shows, because this criterion is even more important than their political rank. Although critics have argued that this focus on entertainment will divert attention from political content (Patterson 1993; Schudson 1998b), one could also argue that it opens up the political debate to easy-talking politicians, making politics easier to comprehend (Baum 2005, Baym 2005, Van Zoonen). As the example of former MP, now parliamentary chairman of the small opposition party GroenLinks, Jesse Klaver, has shown, being talkable does not necessarily mean that the political message is not told anymore. On the contrary, based on the results of this research one could argue that being able to perform in television talk shows heightens one’s chances of getting one’s message across to a wide audience, an aim shared by producers and politicians alike.

Notes

1. The talk show *Jinek* has initially been included in the analysis, as it is the substitute for *Pauw* in its summer and winter break, aired on the same channel and time slot, and is therefore incidentally a prominent player. However, the show was only broadcasted for a short period, in the season 2015-16 even only for two months, and the format changed frequently (from weekly to daily, from all guests on a coach to a round table discussion, from one-on-one talks to a group discussion), which makes it impossible to determine an underlying structure. The changes were due to the lack of continuity, and the consequential changes of the production team, with different backgrounds and preferences for topics. In one period, for example, all politicians invited were only hosted once. This period was too short to rate this as a structural decision or a lack of time. Moreover, politicians are eager to appear on a new show, so their appearance could be due to the mere fact that the show was new, instead of a more structural choice for that particular format.

For the sake of completeness and coherence of the research in this dissertation, it is chosen to include the show in the network analysis, but it will not be further discussed in this chapter. Differences between *Pauw* and *Jinek* will extensively be discussed in chapter 7.

2. Editor-in-chief, personal interview, May 19, 2015
3. MP opposition party, personal interview, September 19, 2014.
4. PR advisor opposition party, personal interview, August 19, 2014.
5. Journalist, personal interview, March 31, 2016.
6. Producer, personal interview, June 18, 2015

Formatting personal talk

How talk show formats
impact political
personalization

6

For many politicians a contentious story about their private life, openly discussed in the media, is their worst nightmare. Although politicians use personal anecdotes about their education, upbringing or family to create a favorable picture of themselves, they try to avoid being confronted with personal affairs that could harm their image or reputation. Only personal aspects that fit their political strategy are emphasized. Journalists, though, are often primarily interested in the information that politicians are not willing to share because this reveals details beyond their carefully orchestrated public images. Moreover, reporters are well aware that emotion and personal stories sell, especially on television (Van Zoonen 2000).

Talk shows offer the ideal stage for such a balancing act, at the same time revealing the benefits and dangers of personalized politics. Talk show talk is often perceived as more intimate, informal and spontaneous than news interviews and is therefore suitable for politicians who want to give their policy a personal touch (Bucy and Neuhagen 1999; Thornborrow 2001; Eriksson 2010). However, it also bears risks. The talk is highly planned and, moreover, determined by the overall format of the program, including the involvement of

other guests and a fast interview style. Politicians' appearances will be successful only if they are able to deal with the demands of the formats (Van Zoonen 2000).

While the personalization of politics and the role media play in this process have been studied intensively, less attention has been paid to the impact of talk show formats on this phenomenon. Studies focus either on the way politicians try to present themselves (Van Zoonen 2000; Eriksson 2010; Davis 2013) or on the interview style of the interviewer, often in news interviews, but more recently also in talk shows (Voltmer and Brants 2011; Vraga et al. 2012). In addition, the potential for entertainment programs to influence politics and, on the other hand, for politicians to use these programs to get their message across, has been discussed, especially in a US context (Baum 2005).

Given the impact television talk shows have on the public debate, this study asks how talk show formats impact the host's and the politician's personalization strategies. These strategies have been studied via a two-step analysis. First, in order to map out the specific elements of two Dutch talk show formats, *Pauw* and *Jinek* (both are daily late night talk shows with a mix of hard news and entertaining topics), a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of 20 political interviews was conducted. The various format elements were scrutinized, including interview style, setting, editing and cinematographic elements. Secondly, the impact of those elements on personalization strategies was analyzed in a quantitative and qualitative case study. The close examination of a specific case can yield detailed insights, omitted when the focus is on general trends (Singer 2008). Although case studies do not provide general findings by themselves, they can lead to conclusions on a theoretical level by finding structures and overall routines, and through comparing the empirical findings to theoretical concepts (Yin 1989; Stake 2005; De Haan 2012).

A personal story of the Dutch state secretary for health, welfare

and sport, Martin van Rijn, provides an interesting case for this study. He was confronted with a nightmare scenario when the late night talk show *Pauw* discovered that his father was complaining in a newspaper about the lack of care for his wife in a nursing home. Strikingly, Van Rijn had mentioned his parents in his inauguration speech as his motivation to create good and affordable care for the elderly. In 2014 he was in charge of a profound reorganization and budget cuts of the healthcare system for the elderly. This reorganization was criticized heavily from the start. Stories of overworked and/or unpaid healthcare workers, a too small budget and a lack of proper care were covered regularly by the media for months.

On November 14, the national newspaper *AD* published a story about two elderly friends, Ben Oude Nijehuis and Joop van Rijn, who complained about the lack of care for their demented wives in a particular nursing home. The women were often abandoned, with no or unqualified nurses around. Intrigued by the story, the talk show *Pauw* dug into it, eventually discovering that Joop van Rijn was the state secretary's father. Now that his own mother was the victim of Van Rijn's policy changes, experiencing the opposite of what Van Rijn had promised when he was installed, the case became even more explosive. In order to protect his father's privacy, the state secretary felt forced to discuss this story on the show with Oude Nijehuis that same night, as the show had already announced to talk about the complaints with Van Rijn senior himself otherwise. This appearance was a painful moment for Van Rijn because not only was his much criticized policy now closely associated with the fate of his own mother, but also because he was forced to discuss his private life in public and his father's friend openly criticized him on the show. Three months later, Van Rijn again appeared on national television on a different talk show, *Jinek*, to explain his healthcare plans for the elderly. After twelve minutes, however, the talk switched to the topic of Van Rijn's mother and his appearance in *Pauw*. Although he

had known this would be discussed, Van Rijn reacted in an annoyed manner and the talk resulted in a quarrel about whether he should talk about his mother as an example of how healthcare could be improved or not.

This extraordinary case of a politician's personal story going public is an interesting example of how political and journalistic strategies can collide. Therefore it will be used in this study to examine both shows' personalization. By embedding this case study in a broader qualitative and quantitative content analysis, the case will be related to the shows' general approach to politics. This layered method will distinguish the characteristic format elements and reveal their role in the personalization of a politician's story.

Different forms of personalization

Personal stories of politicians on television are almost as old as the medium itself. From the 1950s onwards television has paid attention to personal qualities of politicians, especially during election time. With the introduction of commercial television channels this focus on personal details and emotion increased in the Netherlands from the 1980s. Competition between commercial and public channels increasingly resulted in a mix of information, entertainment, and emotion, of which personal stories were a substantial part. Politicians responded to this trend with focusing on their personality in their self-presentation in media (Wijfjes and Voerman 2009; Santen 2012).

Trying to create an identity as 'person of qualities', which goes beyond pure political skills, the personal becomes part of their representation as public figure (Houtman and Achterberg 2010; Corner 2000). Because politicians nowadays have to deal with floating voters and rather profile themselves as managers than as 'ideological crusaders', they have to present the right mix of personal and political qualities to establish a reliable and authentic image. Their

reputation is mostly based on trust in their managerial capacities and integrity. With the US as frontrunner, this combination has become crucial in elections to win the voters' trust and vote (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Coleman 2011).

In research, personalization has been used as an umbrella term for strategies used by journalists and politicians that use politicians' personal abilities, emotions and private life for political stories and purposes (Santen 2012; Van Aelst, Sheaffer, and Stanyer 2012). It often has a normative and negative connotation, critics have argued, implying that the focus on personal qualities and private stories distracts attention from political information that is needed for the well-functioning of democracy (Schudson 1998a; Dahlgren 2003). However, there is little consensus among scholars about a clear-cut definition of this concept, which makes it difficult to find evidence of a shift towards personalization and its possibly negative effects (Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009; Santen 2012; Van Aelst, Sheaffer, and Stanyer 2012).

This prompted researchers to develop more specific definitions of personalization. Within the broader concept one can distinguish between a focus on individual politicians instead of political parties (individualization) and on the politician as private individual instead of a public figure (privatization) (Holtz-Bacha 2004; Van Aelst, Sheaffer, and Stanyer 2012; Van Santen 2012). Privatization can be further divided into a focus on either a politician's personal characteristics or his personal life, such as family or upbringing (Van Aelst Sheaffer, and Stanyer 2012).

Van Santen (2012) added a third level: emotionalization. Here, the politicians' emotions about personal or political matters are highlighted. A politician can, for example, talk about his work in an emotional way, emphasizing his fears or doubts, but he can also use private facts in a serious debate in a non-emotional way. Whereas the first situation is an example of emotionalization, the second one can

be categorized as privatization. Based on the research of Van Aelst, Sheaffer, and Stanyer (2012) and Van Santen (2012) the following concepts will be used in this research:

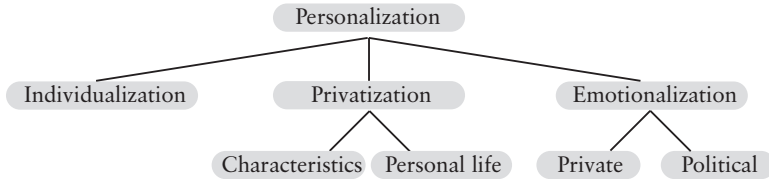


Figure 1: types of personalization, based on Van Aelst et. al (2012) and Van Santen (2012)

Personalization cannot be limited to a tactic solely applied by media, nor as a strategy used by politicians only. It is the result of interaction between both. Journalists use politicians' personal stories to make appealing television, and politicians take advantage of this possibility to present themselves as a capable, yet complex person. To construct their public image, politicians consider appearances on television to be crucial. A study on politicians' appearances in comedy found, for instance, that politicians' most important reason to attend was the ability to frame themselves as ordinary people, with feelings and a private life like everyone else (Van Zoonen, Coleman and Kuik 2011). To get this image across, politicians have to adjust their message to the format they are presenting it in (Van Zoonen 2000). Therefore the interaction between politicians and the formats they appear in is at the centre of this study.

Talk show formats

Each talk show is structured by a specific format that determines its appearance, structure and fixed elements (Fictoor et al. 2006). A 'daily talk show' about intimate problems and juicy details, such

as *Oprah*, can hardly be compared to a humoristic and satirical ‘late night talk’ such as *The Daily Show*. Although they were both talk shows, their formats were dissimilar (Timberg and Erler 2002; Keller 2009). The format of a show consists of various elements that together shape its distinctive character (Atifi and Marcoccia 2006, 255). Talk show formats can be roughly divided into content and form elements. The content consists of the selection of guests, the chosen topics and the style of the talk. In contrast to, for example, a news interview, talk show talk is generally more informal and playful, with an emphasis on personal narratives (Tolson 2001; Eriksson 2010; Montgomery 2010). With its appeal to intimacy and immediacy, the talk seems spontaneous and close to normal conversations, but it is always ‘highly planned and structured within the limits of the talk-show format and practice’ (Timberg and Erler 2002).

The host¹ and his interview style are an essential part of the overall format, mainly determining the tone of the talk, as well as the reputation of the show. He often functions as a kind of trademark, because the format is usually modelled around his personality (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Timberg and Erler 2002; Vraga et al. 2012). In some shows he functions as a serious interviewer, who confronts the interviewee with critical questions, interrupting and refuting to get the desired answer. In others he is an entertaining presenter, who uses his personality to create a loose atmosphere in which he can chat airily about feelings and concerns. Sometimes switching between the two roles within the same item or show is part of the format (Brants 2005).

The second aspect of the format, the form, consists of the mise-en-scène (setting, lighting, staging, props etc.), cinematography (framing, focus, perspective, angle and other camera work), editing (in the case of talk shows this is done live) and the use of other elements such as clips and television footage (Allen and Hill 2004; Bignell 2004; Bordwell and Thompson 2004). These form elements

influence the interview style by creating a particular atmosphere and determining the pace of the talk (Haarman 2001; Kee 2012). Lighting and color, for example, can give the impression of day- or night-time, emphasize certain details or create a specific mood (Bordwell and Thompson 2004). Moreover, the arrangement of the guests, the audience and the space in between are used to evoke a certain effect on both the viewers and the guests. The distance, or lack thereof, between the guests, host and audience can create a detached or, on the contrary, intimate impression.

Live editing not only directs the viewer's gaze and supports the pace of the show, but it can also connect different scenes, footage or moments with each other, for example linking a guest's reaction to a clip he just saw (Corner 1999; Schohaus 2013). In combination with cinematographic elements such as close-ups it can emphasize emotion and an intimate situation (Corner 1999; Bordwell and Thompson 2004). Moreover, framing is used to create connections between guests who are talking and those who are listening. Because listeners' faces often show their feelings, framing can also emphasize emotion.

Television footage or other clips can serve as illustrations for a topic, but can also direct the conversation in a particular direction. These clips, therefore, are a powerful tool to create a particular atmosphere. 'Bloopers' are often used to entertain, whereas more serious clips can confront the interviewee with controversial views. Together, the content and form elements of the format create the character of the show and shape its talk. This study will examine the role of these elements in the personalization of a politician's story.

Data & method

To explore the complex relation between talk show formats and personalization two prominent Dutch late night talk shows, *Pauw* and *Jinek*, have been studied. These are both broadcasted daily at 11 p.m. on the Dutch Public Network NPO 1, the first national public channel, with *Jinek* filling the gap *Pauw* leaves in its winter and summer breaks. Both are presented by a single host and focus on current affairs, including politics, sports, cultural and social issues (in contrast to American late night talk shows that are predominantly entertaining). In both shows, political topics are prominently discussed and politicians are often among the guests, frequently in a one-on-one talk². However, both programs are produced by different broadcasters and have different sets and editors.

The design of the study was based on a two-step analysis. Firstly, in order to map out the particular formats, the interview style of both hosts was analyzed quantitatively and combined with a qualitative analysis of the form elements of the two shows. For this purpose, 10 interviews with high-ranking politicians (four ministers, one state secretary, one mayor, four party leaders) were studied per show. To be able to make a clear comparison we selected interviews with politicians who appeared on both shows during the 2014-2015 season. In a second step the formats' impact on the process of personalization was analyzed via a study of the Van Rijn case in the two selected talk shows, applying the same method that was used to analyze the programs at large. This was complemented by a close reading of the broadcasts in which the case was discussed. Because the same topic was discussed with the same politician on two different shows, the impact of the differences in interview styles, as well as in format, elements could be compared.

Table 1: sample quantitative analysis

<i>Politician</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Setting Pauw</i>	<i>Setting Jinek</i>
Sander Dekker	State secretary	VVD (liberal)	one-on-one*	one-on-one
Edith Schippers	Minister	VVD	with journalist	one-on-one
Lodewijk Asscher	Minister	PvdA (labor)	with young adults	with teacher
Jeanine Hennis Plaschaert	Minister	VVD	one-on-one	one-on-one
Jet Bussemaker	Minister	PvdA	with 3 teachers	with students
Alexander Pechtold	Party leader (opposition)	D66 (social-liberal)	with comedian	one-on-one
Ahmed Aboutaleb	Mayor	PvdA	one-on-one	one-on-one
Emile Roemer	Party leader (opposition)	SP (socialist)	one-on-one	one-on-one
Sybrand Buma	Party leader (opposition)	CDA (christian)	one-on-one	one-on-one
Diederik Samsom	Party leader (governing)	PvdA	one-on-one	one-on-one

**one-on-one: interview with one guest, other guests could get involved, but are not invited on the same topic*

For the analysis of the interview style, a coding scheme was developed, building on the studies of Voltmer and Brants (2011), Huls and Varwijk (2011) and Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha (2000). Whereas Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha (2000) focused on the interviewee and analyzed the personal or public discourse of politicians in Dutch and German talk shows, Huls and Varwijk (2011) zoomed in on the interviewer. They based their analyses on the question analysis system of Clayman and Heritage (2002) to analyze political bias in television interviews. Voltmer and Brants (2011) included both the interviewer and interviewee in their study of the power relations in interviews in the Netherlands and the UK.

Based on these studies, the following quantitative research criteria were selected to analyze the interview style of both shows. Apart from the duration of the interview items in general, the speaking time of the interviewee was measured, as well as the number of questions and *successful and unsuccessful interruptions*. Together, they determine the pace of the interview, while interruptions can also steer the interview and politicians' answers in a certain direction. To scrutinize the host's grip on the interview, the questions were coded as three mutually exclusive types: *open*, *closed* or *proposition* (an indirect question in the form of a statement). Open questions provide more freedom to answer than closed 'yes/no' questions, while prepositions can be used to elicit a preferred answer.

In the category style of question, questions were coded for the presence or absence of *assertiveness* (implying a specific expected answer), *opposition* (expressing negative evaluation or critique, or confronting the politician with an opposing view), *joking* remarks (making fun of or teasing politicians, or joking about an event they are talking about), and *persistence* (not taking the answer for granted, but either repeating the same question or addressing the interviewee's refusal to answer).

Based on the categorization of Van Santen (2012), the level of personalization in the questions was coded according to the following mutually exclusive categories: *political facts* (policy decisions, plans, party activities, facts about the topic of the talk), *individualization* (focusing on the personal role of the politician, his opinion, decisions), *emotionalization* (concerning the politician's emotions on political or private decisions or events), *privatization* (private life, upbringing, family, hobbies), *other* (short questions for general understanding, or which cannot be ascribed to any of the other categories)

Specific rules and procedures were indicated for all the variables in a code book. After a first round of coding by the first author, an

intracoder reliability test was performed, after which the variables were adjusted to further clarify the categories and their indicators. All the interviews were then coded a second time. To guarantee the reliability of this coding, a sample of 16% of all the questions (125 out of 798) was re-coded by another researcher (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico 2005). This intercoder reliability test (Freelon 2010) indicated sufficient consistency for each category. The percentage agreement and the values for Krippendorff alpha for the different categories ranged between respectively 85% and 100%, and 0,67 and 1.³

In the second step of this study (the case study), the same method was applied as that of the first step, in order to be able to compare the specific case to the general formats. Subsequently, a close reading of the two shows was conducted, with a particular focus on the effect of the format elements on the personalization of the story. By also taking the non-verbal interaction of both actors into account, as well as the form elements described above, the function of these elements in the creation of a personalized talk was revealed. As Eriksson (2010) noted, the personal and/or political discourse in a talk show interview is created through an interplay between the interviewer and interviewee; therefore not only the host's questions, but also the interviewee's answers were analyzed, in order to distinguish the forms of personalization used by interviewer and interviewee and which elements evoke personal or political answers (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000). Information gathered during short-term ethnographic research at the studios of both programs was used in both steps to include the motivations and choices of editors and journalists.

One could argue that the Van Rijn interviews, like any case study, are too specific to derive general conclusions from them. However, as Lauerbach (2010) stated in her research on an interview with Dick Cheney, the then upcoming vice-president of the United States, extraordinary cases can reveal underlying structures and practices that

otherwise go unnoticed, because they are taken for granted as part of the format. Talk shows use form elements to create an illusion of a natural, spontaneous discussion, such as smooth camera movement and changes of perspective that support the line of the conversation, but also a particular style of questioning. These elements are designed to go unnoticed to keep the viewer's attention on the talk. These elements and their function can be clearly distinguished only when similar cases are compared or unexpected events happen. This case, therefore, can reveal not only how much attention the hosts paid to emotion and personal aspects of a story, but also how this interview style affects the politician's discourse and whether he is able to use his personal story to make political statements (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000).

Results

The formats of Pauw and Jinek

Before discussing the formats' impact on personalization, the results of the combined quantitative and qualitative analysis of the two shows will be presented. Despite their similarities in terms of time of broadcast and the selection of topics and guests, significant differences were found between the two formats.

The quantitative analysis showed that Pauw's interview style created a smooth and conversational atmosphere. Only about one fifth of the questions was stated as an interruption (see chart 1), and most of them were not formulated as a question at all, but as a statement or remark (59%, see chart 2).

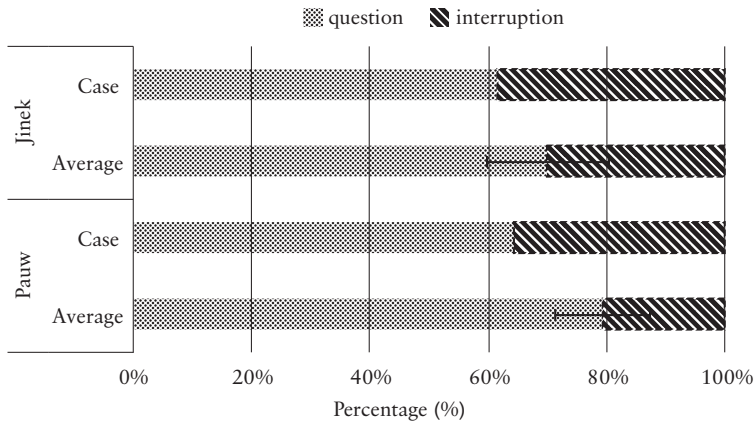


Chart 1: Questions/Interruptions

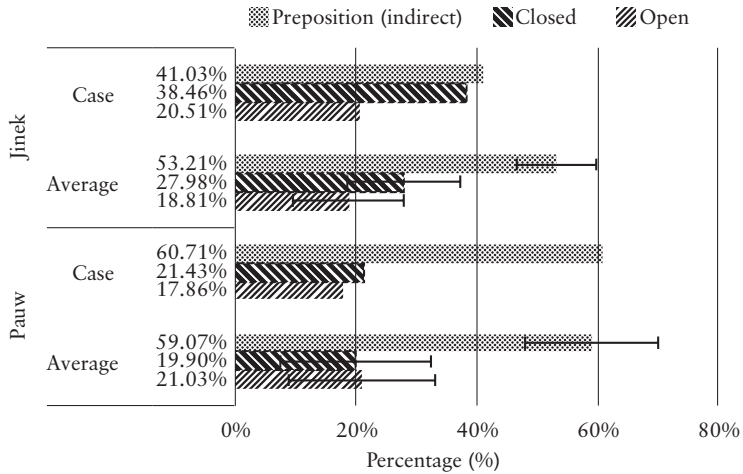


Chart 2: Type of question

Pauw confronted the interviewee with facts or (sometimes opposing) observations, but also left the interviewee room to react in any possible way, because no clear-cut question was formulated. Pauw varied the sort and style of the questions according to the particular interviews (see standard deviation chart 2). In items in which details of political plans were discussed, for example, Pauw asked more questions to come to a full understanding of the facts.

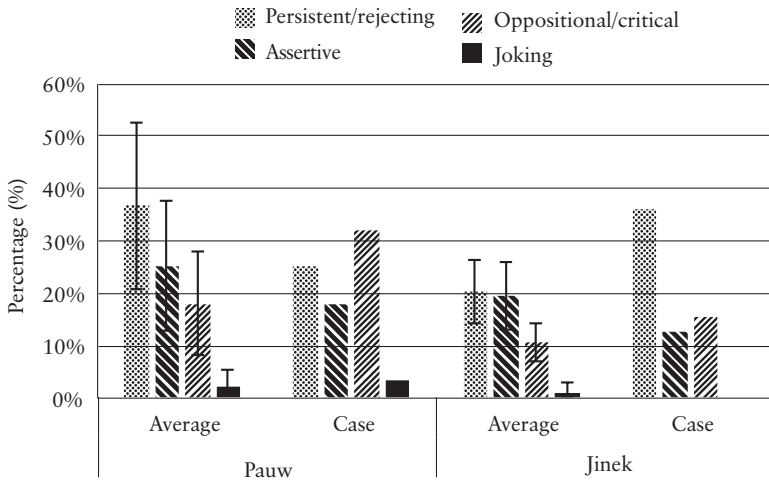


Chart 3: Style of questions

On average, about a third of the questions were assertive, opposing/critical or persistent (see chart 3). Taking into account all three categories, roughly half of the questions steered the conversation in a certain way, be it persistent, oppositional or assertive. Moreover, the qualitative analysis showed that Pauw did not allow politicians to elaborate endlessly, but cleverly used interviewees' breathing pauses to pose the next question. These questions did not come across as interruptions, but still cut short the politicians' explanations while simultaneously supporting the character of a fluent conversation. The

critical aspect of the interviews thus lay in the combination of assertive, opposing and persisting questions that enabled Pauw to lead the interview in a certain direction, partly disguised by the smooth conversational character of the talk. To relax the atmosphere even more, Pauw usually asked at least one joking question.

The qualitative analysis of *Pauw*'s form elements revealed that they supported the interview style, aiming to establish an intimate and conversational talk. The setting created a casual, intimate atmosphere with its warm low light, dark colors, lounge chairs and a bar in the background. The cameras circled freely around the relatively small round table, which allowed filming the conversation closely from every angle, emphasizing the intimate character (see picture 1). The camerawork supported the talk by showing parts of a shoulder or head in a reverse shot, catching both participants in the conversation and their facial and physical reactions in the same shot. The studio audience sat close to the guests and was clearly visible in the background in close-up shots. This showed their facial reactions and engaged them in the talk. News clips or other footage were used to show the news value of items, or to implicitly introduce critique by showing opposing facts and opinions.



Picture 1: Setting Pauw



Picture 2: Setting Jinek

Table 2: time and duration

	<i>Pauw</i>		<i>Jinek</i>	
	<i>Average</i>	<i>Case</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Case</i>
time item in min.	16:37	23:04	20:29	23:11
speaking time politician in min.	09:34	09:41	13:04	14:29
Perc. speaking time of whole item	59%	41.98%	64%	62.47%
amount of used footage/clips	2.10	0	1.44	2
Questions/interruptions per min.	2.90	2.89	2.08	1.68

Jinek used a more classical interview style that creates a tenser atmosphere than *Pauw*. The interviews were generally longer, with the politicians getting more speaking time, but there were also more questions and interruptions per minute (see table 2), which was partly due to less use of footage and fewer interruptions by other guests. Less distraction leaves more time for questions and answers. Although she asked fewer assertive (19%), opposing (10%) and persistent (20%) questions (see chart 3), her style did not appear less critical or imperative, which was due to the higher number of closed questions (28%) and more interruptions (30%, compared to 21% in *Pauw*, see chart 1). Together they gave the interviews a stricter, less conversational character. The qualitative analysis shows that this was intensified by her way of not clearly accepting an answer with at least an ‘ok’, or ‘yes’, or often not replying at all. She simply continued with the next question, which gave the impression of an interrogation instead of a conversation. She also varied the sort and style of question less often than *Pauw* (see standard deviation in chart 2 and 3). This made her interview style rigid, without adjustments to specific topics or guests.

The analysis of the form elements showed that they supported the traditional set-up and created a more distanced setting than in the case of *Pauw*. Although *Jinek* used the same studio, the setting and

camera work were more traditional and distanced. The guests were seated on the famously uncomfortable couch, while she sat in an armchair next to it (see picture 2). The studio audience was seated in a wider circle around a large empty space in front of the couch. This distance appeared in the camera work too. Because Jinek and her guest were sitting next to each other, the camera could catch them in one shot, but had to switch from one close-up to the other, which created a detached impression. The facial expressions and reactions were shown together only in the establishing shots, but only from a distance, missing the opportunity to focus closely on the non-verbal reactions of both participants in one shot.

Personalization in the case Van Rijn

Having analyzed the format elements above, we will now analyze their impact on personalization in the Van Rijn case. For the sake of clarity, only the elements with a clear role in each of the three forms of personalization are discussed. I will show that while individualization and privatization are influenced mainly by the host's interview style, form elements play an important role in establishing emotionalization.

Individualization

In both shows, individualization was influenced mostly by a particular format element: the hosts' interview style. Pauw used individualization to emphasize the politicians' accountability. Although most of his questions were about factual political information (see chart 4), he frequently focused on a politician's individual opinions or plans. Even questions about factual information were often individualized, such as: Do you think that this will happen? What are you going to do about it? This concretized abstract topics, stressing that it was an actual person who was responsible for these policies. Pauw some-

times even mentioned this explicitly. He repeatedly stressed Van Rijn's responsibility for the health reform and the lack of nursing staff ("You are very much responsible for this"). Moreover, he acted as Oude Nijehuis' advocate, sharpening and repeating his questions, for example, when Oude Nijehuis said, "I get the impression that you keep defending the management of the nursing home". When Van Rijn denied this, Pauw persisted: "He is saying that you are trivializing the situation."

Although the presence of Oude Nijehuis prevented Pauw from asking as many persistent and assertive questions as usual, the number of opposing questions was higher than average (see chart 3). Together with the higher number of interruptions, this created an atmosphere that was more pressing than in the other interviews. This tension was caused mainly by Van Rijn's strategy to emphasize his public function. He wanted to be held responsible for his political choices and to explain his plans to improve healthcare for everyone, not just for his mother. This attempt to avoid the concrete situation at stake prompted Pauw to insist on it.

Despite its obvious failure, Van Rijn used this strategy again on *Jinek*, resulting in similar tension. Especially in the second part of the talk, about his appearance on *Pauw* and his mother's care, Van Rijn tried to avoid direct questions. Jinek explicitly indicated her annoyance, stating that he was again doing what he had been criticized for: presenting himself too much as a policymaker and too little as his father's son. This tense atmosphere was reflected in the high number of closed questions and interruptions (see chart 1 and 2) and Jinek's stoic reactions. Moreover, it was intensified by the high number of opposing and persisting questions (see chart 3). Thus, on both shows the politician's strategy of emphasizing his public function only encouraged the hosts to persist on the personal aspects of the topic.

The qualitative analysis shows that visual elements were used in

both shows to emphasize the news value and urgency of the topic and to support individualization. Both programs repeatedly showed the newspaper article, which was the immediate reason for the talk, on background screens, showing Van Rijn and the picture of his father in the same shot. On *Pauw* it was also shown full screen so that the viewer could examine it up close and read the distressing headline: “Sometimes the urine runs down her ankles”. Moreover, Pauw frequently held up the physical newspaper in the studio to remind Van Rijn that it was not about abstract policy but his own parents. Apart from the picture, *Jinek* also used footage of Van Rijn’s appearance on *Pauw*. Her critique was implicitly made tangible by a clip of Rijn’s uttered wish to be the state secretary who improved healthcare for everyone, while Oude Nijehuis accused him of ignoring the poignant situation at the old age home.

Thus, although *Pauw* emphasized responsibility more clearly, both formats used the interview style and visual elements to emphasize the individual role of Van Rijn. The politician’s strategy of hiding behind an abstract policy picture did not work in the context of *Pauw*’s conversational style or in relation to *Jinek*’s traditional interview approach.

Privatization

While individualization appeared to be part of both hosts’ interview style, privatization was only rarely used in both shows. However, given the topic of the Van Rijn case, questions about his private life were asked more often than usual in *Pauw* and *Jinek* (see chart 4).

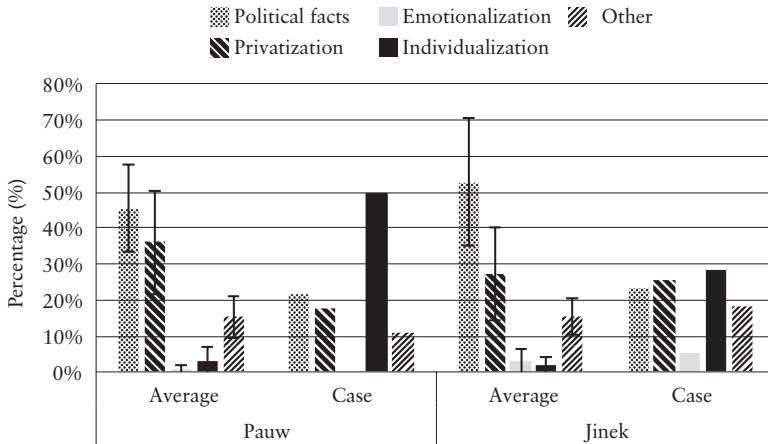


Chart 4: Personalization

Van Rijn used a similar avoidance strategy on both shows, abstracting from his private situation by speaking about ‘one’ instead of ‘I’, and ‘his wife’ instead of ‘my mother’. He tried to stick to general terms when talking about his private situation (‘everyone knows the feeling of sorrow when relatives have to go to a nursing home’) and provided further details about his private life only if he felt forced to do so, for example on *Pauw*, where he stated that he visited his mother more often than Oude Nijehuis was suggesting. But Van Rijn refused to talk about his experiences at that home. Apparently, he found it difficult to talk about his private life, because he carefully searched for the right words when it was addressed in order to protect his parents’ privacy, which he mentioned once explicitly. He used privatization only in well-prepared examples to confirm his political aspirations and motives. For example, he explained how the care for his parents and the need to reform the healthcare system had been his motivation to become a politician.

Pauw responded to this strategy by emphasizing the personal link

frequently, stressing that it was about ‘your mother’ (referring to Van Rijn) and ‘your wife’ (referring to Oude Nijehuis). He did so every time Van Rijn tried to broaden and abstract from the story. Referring to private information made it concrete and more interesting for viewers who could hardly connect to abstract policy talk. Pauw used this kind of question not only for Van Rijn, but also for Oude Nijehuis (for example, by asking how long he had been married) to create an intimate picture that made the story even more personal and lively.

While Pauw could rely on Oude Nijehuis to relate the private details and therefore did not have to ask about them explicitly, Jinek responded more directly to Van Rijn’s strategy. When he refused to give details about his mother’s current situation, Jinek kept repeating that question, showing her lack of understanding as to why he would not answer it. Here the clash between the interviewer’s and interviewee’s interests was explicitly apparent. Jinek considered questions about Van Rijn’s mother to be an inherent part of the story. She referred to his plans about individualized care and stressed that this also impacted his mother. Van Rijn, on the other hand, wanted to protect his mother’s privacy and found the question irrelevant. To him the bigger picture was much more important. Therefore, the discussion became a quarrel in which the interviewer and interviewee were speaking on different levels, without finding common ground. On both shows, the use of the newspaper as a visual element helped to establish the private link, because it explicitly showed Van Rijn’s father.

The two hosts emphasized the private aspect of the story in different ways. While Pauw stressed the private situation and relied on Oude Nijehuis for details, Jinek used her harsher interview style to directly address concrete details. While the former strategy subtly emphasized Van Rijn’s inability to talk about his parents openly, the latter resulted in a clash between the interviewee and interviewer,

which made the politician retreat even more. Both approaches confirmed the general differences between interview styles. While *Pauw* was conversational, *Jinek* used an interrogational style.

Emotionalization

In contrast to the former two categories, the establishment of emotionalization was largely impacted by the form elements of the formats. Van Rijn did not address his feelings during the talk; only his body language revealed his discomfort. On *Pauw* he maintained a factual voice tone, getting annoyed only towards the end, because he felt that his message was not coming across. Instead, he emphasized his father's emotions several times ('he does it with love', 'he is sad that his wife isn't at home anymore'). By referring to these universal emotions, he simultaneously avoided discussing his father's specific feelings and stressed the commonality of this situation. On *Jinek* Van Rijn equally distracted from his personal emotions by talking about others' feelings in general terms without making a link to himself. Only when Jinek interrupted that her question was geared towards his own emotions, he admitted, but still in an indirect way: "People who know me and saw the show said: 'You were angry and sad'. They were right."

The two hosts' interests in the politicians' emotions were quite dissimilar. While questions concerning emotions about political or personal affairs were not part of Pauw's interview style, Jinek was generally interested in politicians' feelings. In an interview with Labour Party leader Diederik Samsom, she explained why. According to her, people voted with their hearts and should therefore know politicians' feelings and personal ambitions.⁴ She often addressed politicians' reluctance to discuss those issues and her own frustration about it (e.g. "Is it so difficult to be vulnerable?"). In the case of Van Rijn, his evasiveness motivated Jinek to ask whether the viewer should not have seen his emotion more clearly. Van Rijn was annoyed

(‘I don’t have to illustrate that, do I?’). Jinek’s body language emphasized her interest in that personal story. When Van Rijn was talking about policy in general, she leaned back, not very excited, waiting for Van Rijn to finish. Only when she wanted him to say something personal she leaned forward, emphasizing her interest and stressing her question.

In the case of Pauw, his body language also expressed his emotions. Pauw approached Van Rijn clearly differently from the way he approached Oude Nijehuis. Not only was his tone more serious and detached when he spoke to Van Rijn, showing disbelief and impatience, but his gestures and body language also showed that he sympathized with him. For instance, he leaned towards Oude Nijehuis, let him finish his sentences, smiled at him and even sent him unbelieving looks while Van Rijn was talking, which seemingly made them allies against the politician. Moreover, Oude Nijehuis’ appearance, dressed in his best clothes and wearing a warm, disarming smile, was in sharp contrast with Van Rijn’s stony face, which showed his discomfort about the situation.

These emotional expressions were emphasized by the cinematography and editing. The closeness of the setting allowed the cameras to emphasize Pauw’s interaction with his guests in single shots, stressing their emotional reactions and his bond with one of his guests. The contrast between Van Rijn and Oude Nijehuis was emphasized by their spatial closeness. Their interaction was shown closely in one shot. Moreover, the intimate setting allowed for showing the sympathizing facial expressions of the other guests surrounding the table, stressing the delicacy of the talk.

By contrast, the form and setting of *Jinek* were not suited to convey closeness and emotions. There was a spatial distance between the host and the interviewee, and the audience was seated at a distance too. Therefore the cameras were unable to create a close connection between the participants in the discussion. The artificiality of the in-

terview setting could not be disguised by the cinematography. Jinek's emotional approach was therefore not supported by the form and seemed inappropriate. Although she tried to convince Van Rijn and the viewers of her empathy, her sometimes harsh and cool reactions created an unemotional atmosphere that was emphasized by the distanced setting.

Conclusion

This study has shown how talk show formats influence different forms and processes of personalization of politics through both the talk itself (i.e. the interviews) and formal features. The format of *Pauw* is based on a conversational interview style, which individualizes the politician in an accountability interview. This is actively supported by the setting and cinematography, which create an intimate atmosphere that disguises the potential adversarial character of the talk and creates the opportunity to subtly stress emotions. The straighter format of *Jinek*, on the other hand, creates a stricter interview situation in which the host emphasizes the emotional aspects of the topic. This interrogative and detached style contradicts the emotional approach to the interview, which makes the questions about feelings and personal issues appear inappropriate.

Even seemingly similar television shows within the same genre thus have distinct formats that result in varying approaches to politicians' personal stories. We have therefore argued that one needs to deconstruct both the format and personalization as a concept in order to analyse how the various building blocks that constitute a format influence the various kinds of personalization. Our analysis shows that individualization and privatization were created mostly through the interview style in both shows, and was supported by visual elements. Formal features such as setting and cinematography, on the other hand, influenced the emotionalization of the politician's

story. However a “personal” interview feels authentic only if both the talk and the formal features clearly support each other, as became clear in the analysis of the Van Rijn case in *Jinek*.

Finally, the analysis of privatization in both formats shows that this form of personalization is clearly dependent on how the format of a talk show plays out in its approach to certain topics in the discussion. Both *Pauw* and *Jinek* usually show only a limited interest in private details. It was the topic of the talk that caused privatized questions in this specific case. This confirms the necessity to not only clearly distinguish between the three forms of personalization, but also to take the concept of format into account when analyzing talk shows to avoid lapsing into prejudices and generalization about the genre.

Moreover, our results confirm that politicians have difficulty getting their message across if they do not adjust it to the format. “They necessarily need to cooperate with the host, but also need an awareness of the specific interview format”, as Eriksson (2011, 22) has argued. A talk show is a hybrid form of television, combining elements of entertainment and information, as well as facts and emotions. The case of Van Rijn illustrates how a politician’s detached policy strategy collides with the different personalization strategies of both shows. Because the state secretary refused to comply with the demands of both formats, he missed the chance to use this personal story to his advantage, a strategy often used in politics (Houtman and Achterberg 2010). The way in which politicians and talk show practitioners interpret personalization differs considerably, as becomes clear from the Van Rijn case. While politicians use only carefully prepared personal anecdotes to create a well-orchestrated image of themselves, talk shows aim to trigger spontaneous reactions that reveal personal feelings or thoughts (Schohaus, Broersma, and Wijffes 2016). Researchers need to consider these different interpretations of personalization in order to understand the relation and tension between journalists and politicians in talk shows.

Notes

1. For the sake of comprehensiveness, the host is referred to as 'he', which implies male and female hosts.
2. Both programs changed parts of their setting in the summer of 2015. These changes are not part of this analysis, as the case took place earlier.
3. Amount of questions: Percentage Agreement (PA) 88,9%, Krippendorff's alpha (Ka) .70; Type of questions: PA 96%, Ka .94; Style of Question: Assertiveness: PA 88,1%, Ka .67; Opposition: PA 92,9%, Ka .74; Joking: PA 100%, Ka 1; Persistence: PA 90,2%, Ka .78; Personalization: PA 85,7%, Ka .77.
4. *Jinek*, NPO1, January 12, 2015.

Politics without politicians

How experts shape political
talk show interviews

7

Journalists increasingly struggle to provide an informative yet authentic and interesting picture of politicians. The *real* and *honest* story seems hidden behind a wall of political PR, spin doctors and media management, which presents journalists with well-orchestrated images and stories about politics and its main players. In order to report details politicians do not want to share, or to avoid evasive or abstract policy talk, journalists therefore increasingly turn to political experts, interpreters and journalists. They can describe what is going on behind the political scenes, why politicians made certain decisions and what their implications are. Experts are not used only to replace politicians who are unwilling to appear on a show, but are often also considered more interesting than some presumably boring politicians who are more than willing to come. Talk shows, which thrive on a combination of facts, entertainment and emotion, are looking for more lively and intriguing perspectives when discussing politics and often find them in chats with non-political guests. Free of political obligations, they can spice up their stories with juicy details that politicians would never provide. Moreover, the conversations with experiential experts can add emotion to the discussion, providing the

authenticity that is ascribed to personal stories (Van Zoonen 2012). But how do these discussions differ from those with politicians? And are political topics framed differently in talks with experts than in interviews with politicians? This study addresses these questions in a comparative content analysis of political expert talk in three Dutch talk shows.

In recent years, expert interviews have increasingly become a focus of research. These studies focused mainly on the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee in news interviews and its influence on the information provided (Ekström and Lundell 2011). In order to compare the framing, focus and style of interviews with different types of guests, a typology of interview types has been developed that distinguishes between expert, experiential and accountability interviews with politicians (Montgomery 2008; Thornborrow 2010). However, these studies examined interviews in news programs focused on the dissemination of factual information. Because these are often accompanied by audiovisual footage filmed on location, the actual interviews are only a small part of the news items. Although video footage is also sometimes used in talk shows, the shows almost exclusively consist of hybrid talk, combining factual, personal and entertaining elements (Timberg and Erler 2002). The interviewee is thus not just a part of the story, but often the source and topic of the story itself. Therefore the choice of interviewees has a high impact on how the topic is framed and even on which topic is discussed in the first place.

The choice of experts depends on the talk shows' formats (Tolson 2001). A show focused on entertainment and show-business would probably preferably discuss current events with a celebrity, while a show with a strong emphasis on hard news and political events would prefer a journalistic or academic expert to talk about the same events. In order to determine the impact of the different types of experts on political talk this study asks how the use of different types

of experts shapes the talk on political topics in comparison with interviews with politicians about the same topic.

A three-step analysis was conducted to answer this question. Firstly, a quantitative analysis of all the guests who spoke on political topics in three Dutch talk shows in the 2015/16 season provided an overview of the most frequently invited experts. Together with the theoretical framework of this study, this analysis was used to create a typology of these experts. Secondly, a qualitative case study of three items from each show, dealing with the current refugee crisis in Europe, provided insight into how these choices of experts and/or politicians shaped the talk about a particular topic. Thirdly, semi-structured interviews with experienced talk show experts added the experts' perspectives and their perception of their role to both parts of the content analysis.¹ This layered approach yielded new insights into how the replacement of politicians by experts in talk shows impacts political discussions in these shows.

Different types of interviews

Political talk and interviews are traditionally studied from a linguistic perspective, using conversation or discourse analysis to examine the detailed structure and semantics of talks (Fairclough 2001; Clayman and Heritage 2002). Studies have focused mainly on long-form interviews in current affairs programs or on news conferences, analyzing the structure of the argumentative interrogation about political facts and motives. The focus is often the power relations between the interviewer and interviewee (Veltmer and Brants 2011; Boukes and Boomgaarden 2016). Because current affairs are also discussed with other guests, besides politicians, Montgomery (2008) developed a typology of news interviews, differentiating between four sub-genres: (1) the accountability interview, (2) the experiential interview, (3) the expert interview, and (4) the affiliated interview. As interviews with

politicians are only one possible scenario among others to talk about politics, this categorisation is useful to understand the interview situation in talk shows.

In the accountability interview (1) politicians and other policy-makers are interrogated about their or their institution's responsibility for events. Generally the interviewee tries to explain or even justify his actions and decisions, while the interviewer acts as the viewers' spokesman. Experiential interviews (2) are conducted with eyewitnesses, victims or their relatives, who provide first-hand information about personal experiences. Here the interview style is usually non-adversarial, focused on clarification. The interviewee is framed as 'one of us', positioning the audience on the side of the interviewee (Thornborrow 2010). The expert interview (3) is used to inform and explain, giving background and/or insider information about the events at stake. Experts, for example lawyers or researchers, provide interpretations, sometimes clearly showing sympathy with one position in the debate.

Journalists function increasingly as experts in television news, but because of their professional connection with programs, Montgomery assigns them to a separate sub-genre: the affiliated interview (4). An interview with a foreign correspondent on location by the anchor, for example, emphasizes the immediate character of the program, as well as the journalist's knowledge (Lundell 2010). When it comes to politics, political reporters are used as interpreters of current events, giving background information and the latest news on the spot. Given their occupation and closeness to political affairs, they are perceived as authoritative and confident news sources. This fits into the broader development of interpretive journalism, in which (sometimes personal) interpretations of events are perceived as more truthful and authentic than the mere reporting of factual information (Eriksson 2011; Van Zoonen 2012; Kroon Lundell and Ekström 2013).

As Montgomery (2008) states, the boundaries of these generic types are often not as clear-cut as described in this typology. The role of the interviewee can be determined by his social function or occupation and can show characteristics of more than one category. Moreover, it can also evolve in the course of the interview, depending on the kind of questions the interviewer asks. An expert can therefore simultaneously be a witness of certain events and an expert on a specific topic. This is certainly the case in talk shows, where guests talk about different topics on the same show and where the boundaries between facts, emotion, interpretation and opinion are blurred (Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha 2000; Holtz-Bacha 2004).

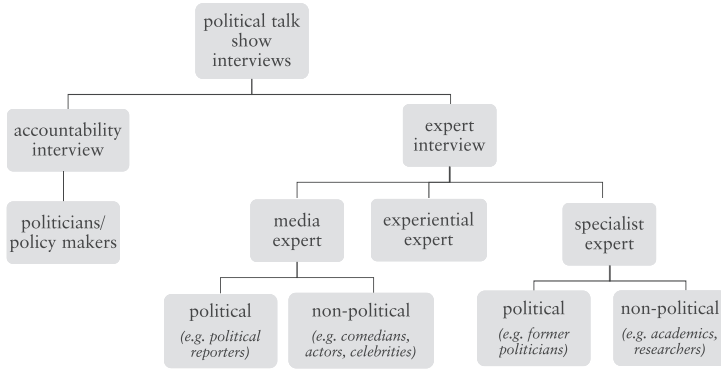
Expert types in talk shows

Despite the blurring of different functions and types, a typology of talk show experts can be developed. However, to talk about *the* talk show would generalize a diverse genre, resulting in superficial remarks that are not applicable to all the different formats in that genre. The type of expert used is at least partly determined by the talk show format and the angle chosen to frame a story. Talk shows can be investigative, social or political, as well as informative and entertaining at the same time. A ‘daily talk show’ about intimate problems and juicy details can hardly be compared to a news talk show in which politicians are seriously cross-questioned, or to a humorous and satirical ‘late night talk’ (Timberg and Erler 2002; Keller 2009). Talk show formats determine the specific characteristics of a show, namely its content, form and setting, but also its specific mix of elements of popular culture (such as music and film) and more serious topics. These result in a unique blend of facts, personal opinions and the feelings of the guests. As Haarman states: “Host, guests, experts, and studio audience in each of the principal talk show types constitute a sort of social microcosm embodying a discernible, partic-

ular configuration of personal and institutional expectations within which certain kinds of discourses and interactive patterns are considered appropriate and accessible” (Haarman 2001, 35; Tolson 2001). Therefore the role of politics in these shows depends on the format as well and on the choice of guests.

With this variety of talk shows formats in mind, and building on Montgomery’s categorisation, the following taxonomy of experts has been found in political talk in the shows chosen for this study (see method section for how they were determined):

Figure 1: typology of experts in talk shows



Media experts (1) might be the most typical category for talk shows and the most diverse one. Their shared characteristic is that they are known because of their appearances and work in the media. They are invited out of the wish for more comprehensible, but sometimes also sensational, television, created by strong opinions and sometimes gossip, which is a core value of the talk show genre. As a frequently invited Dutch media expert explained:

“I am much freer to say what I think about something (...). I am able to fulminate about something and talk shows love fulminating people.” (E1)¹

They can have various professions, depending on the character of the talk show in which they appear. Therefore a subdivision of this category is applied, distinguishing media experts who work in the field of politics and those who do not (abbreviated as political/non-political media experts). A serious current affairs talk show rather invites political reporters (political media experts) from other news outlets to provide background information and well-informed but politically independent insider information about parliamentary affairs. A humorous late night talk show, on the other hand, would probably prefer a comedian (non-political media expert), who provides funny interpretations of news events too big to ignore, such as elections or political crises, to match their entertaining character. Often television hosts, comedians or other opinion makers are chosen to loosen up, or, on the contrary, spice up political topics

This category of non-political media experts is still a broad one, ranging from journalists who are well-informed but not specialized in politics to celebrities. However, dividing this category further might imply judging the (news) value and profundity of the chosen experts, which is likely to be normatively charged, i.e. assessing which experts have more knowledge or are better suited to talk about the topic at hand. Moreover, this definition would be complicated by the often hybrid character of these guests. Commentators in particular can be journalists and celebrities at once, and their function may vary according to the particular topic or show. It is in fact this hybrid character that makes them so well-suited to talk shows, because they can provide information as well as entertaining talk.

Although the interviews with journalists often resemble the affiliated interviews in news programs (Lundell 2010), they are not defined as affiliated here. Talk shows usually invite journalists from other media, so they are independent of the shows, as another expert described:

“I like to come to talk about a topic I believe I have something to say about, without strings attached. My only obligations are to my employer [a news broadcaster].” (E2)

The experiential expert (2) has the same function as in news interviews, providing personal first-hand experiences. In political items, they talk about the personal impact of political choices or about experiences that require a political response. These guests add a personal, often emotional note, making it easier for the viewer to connect to the talk, especially when topics about the impact or failure of health and crime policy are under discussion. Although Montgomery does not describe them as experts, they do fulfill expert roles. Their personal, first-hand experiences give them the authority to talk about ‘their’ topic they are invited. Therefore they are often referred to as experience or hands-on experts (in Dutch ‘ervaringsdeskundige’) (Van Zoonen 2012).

The specialist expert (3) is what Montgomery simply calls ‘the expert’. He has specialized knowledge about a certain field and can give factual background information. Here the same subdivision is added as in the first category, distinguishing between non-political, e.g. academics, and political specialist experts, e.g. former politicians. One could argue that the latter are also experiential experts, and in some cases their function is indeed a mixture, but they are mostly invited to give insider information about political parties or processes. With their background in politics, the former politicians can provide this specialist information. Talk shows fancy them because they don’t have to adhere to party discipline anymore and can give their personal opinions more freely, as the following quotation exemplifies:

“I am a kind of skipper ashore. I don’t have the responsibilities anymore, but I still know the background and I still follow what is happening. I am unattached to party disci-

pline, although I still have my preferences and opinions. I am still a member of my party.” (E8)

Choosing guests from these different categories enables talk shows to frame political topics as they wish. With their different functions, explaining (specialist expert), opinionating (media expert) and adding personal experience and emotion (experiential expert), they can stress different aspects of political topics, making them easier to comprehend and/or more exciting to watch.

Case and method

The ongoing refugee crisis in Europe offers an excellent case for this research. It was one of the most discussed topics in the talk show season of 2015-16. It has political implications (how to cope with large groups of refugees in the Netherlands?), but also a strong emotional aspect (people in need, people who want to help them or, on the contrary, do not want them to come). It was therefore an important issue for policymakers as well as citizens, who faced the consequences of the refugee crisis in their daily lives. The perceptions of these groups not only seemed to be disparate, but the gap between them seemed too wide to bridge. Politicians’ abstract policy plans and citizens’ direct confrontation with refugees did not match. A talk show’s primary aim is not reporting on political affairs, but discussing the ‘talk of the day’, which means issues that are widely debated in society. Therefore, the refugee crisis was a well-suited topic. It combined facts, emotion and personal stories.

The treatment of the refugee crisis will be studied in three prominent Dutch talk shows: *Pauw*, *De Wereld Draait Door* (DWDD), and *RTL Late Night* (RTLLN). *Pauw* is a late night talk show, focusing on a serious but entertaining discussion of current events, including news, politics, cultural and other topics. These topics are discussed at

a round table with several guests. It is presented by former news anchor and experienced talk show host, Jeroen Pauw. *De Wereld Draait Door* (DWDD) discusses current affairs, with a strong focus on (pop-) culture and art, but it also covers the fields of politics, sports and human interest. It usually has one up to four guests and is presented by host Matthijs van Nieuwkerk, who is assisted by rotating sidekicks. With live music performances, remarkable television fragments and other fixed elements, the program is known for its fast, positive and energetic character. *RTL Late Night* is a late night talk show in which the host, Humberto Tan, talks about current events with guest from the worlds of entertainment, sport and politics. The interviews are primarily aimed at a nice chat and the discussion of personal stories and celebrity news. Four to six guests are sitting around a large table and are occasionally addressed in the interviews with other guests, creating a roundtable conversation.

This research combines three research methods: a quantitative analysis (1) of all the guests invited to speak about political topics during the 2015/16 season², including those about the refugee crisis, in the three talk shows; a qualitative content analysis of a case study (2) of six broadcasts of the three shows; and semi-structured interviews (3) with frequently invited experts in Dutch talk shows.

Firstly, the quantitative analysis shows how often and with whom political topics are discussed. The guests were categorized according to their political affiliation and/or the different types of experts. A first round of open coding provided a list of the kind of guests invited. Compared to Montgomery's typology of the news interview, this led to the typology of experts discussed in the previous section: experiential expert, specialist expert, media expert. In a second round of coding the guests were coded according to those categories. Appearances were coded only for topics concerning Dutch politics – policy changes, party or politicians' activities, or events affected by these changes and/or activities. Other topics, such as the economy or

foreign affairs, were not taken into account.

The guests were coded according to their main function, defined by their profession and/or how they were introduced. To guarantee the reliability of this coding, a sample of 45% of all items with experts (55 out of 122) was re-coded by another researcher (Riffe, Lacy, and Fico 2005). This intercoder reliability test (Freelon 2010) indicated a high consistency with a percentage agreement of 96% and Krippendorff alpha of 0,959. This analysis resulted in an overview of the most frequent types of experts and politicians who spoke on political topics in general, and the refugee crisis in particular.

Secondly, a qualitative content analysis was conducted on a sample of six broadcasts (two of each of the three shows) in which aspects of the refugee crisis were discussed with various guests. The sample was chosen purposively to reflect the kind of guest or combination of guests that was invited most frequently, which was determined in the first step of the research.³ This resulted in the following sample:

Table 1: Sample for case study

<i>Item</i>	<i>Show</i>	<i>Type of guest(s)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Guests</i>
1	<i>Pauw</i>	Politician alone	21-03-2016	Klaas Dijkhoff, state secretary
2	<i>Pauw</i>	Politician with non-political media experts	26-10-2015	Malik Asmani, MP, Jeroen Akkermans, journalist
3	<i>DWDD</i>	Politician alone	15-10-2015	Kajsa Ollongren, deputy mayor of Amsterdam
4	<i>DWDD</i>	Specialist expert and non-political media expert	13-01-2016	Leo Lucassen, researcher, Sywert van Lienden, commentator
5	<i>RTLNL</i>	Politician with experiential experts	14-03-2016	Luc Winants, mayor of Brunssum, citizens of this town
6	<i>RTLNL</i>	Political media expert and experiential expert	07-10-2015	Wouke van Scherrenburg, former political journalist, inhabitants of Hilversum

The same variables were used to structure the analysis of each item. Based on the typology of news interviews, these variables include the *topic of the talk* and how it is framed, the *aim of the talk* (are the questions aimed at accountability, information, sensation or any other kind of talk), *closeness and urgency* (how close are the guests to the events?; do they provide inside or eyewitness information?; how is closeness, actuality, urgency established?), *relation interviewer and interviewee* (opposing or working together), and the use of *experts* (what kind of experts have been invited?; how is their role established?).

This structured qualitative approach guarantees a thorough comparison. Moreover, it enables us to take aspects into account that go unnoticed in a quantitative approach, for example the tone and atmosphere of the talk, therefore providing an in-depth analysis of the role of the different experts in talk shows. The use of a particular case helps to exemplify the different roles experts and politicians can play in a discussion about a certain topic by adding concrete examples of the conceptual types (Yin 1989; Stake 2005; Singer 2008). Interviews with current and former producers of the shows were used as background information for this analysis.

Thirdly, eight experts were interviewed. In order to capture as wide a range as possible of their background (journalist, former politician, other), they were chosen purposively based on the frequency of their appearances on Dutch talk shows. By coincidence, one of these experts appeared in an item of the case study. The selection was also influenced by and dependent on the willingness of experts to participate, resulting in a sample of two non-political, four political media experts, and two political specialist experts. The interviews were conducted via phone, Skype and email, and were semi-structured, using a topic list that was not focused on the case, but on the interviewees' experiences as experts in general, their ideas about their own roles, differences between shows and their contribution

to political discussions. This approach guaranteed the coverage of certain key questions in every interview, while leaving room for the interviewees to describe their experiences in their own words and add subjects. Given the fierce competition between talk shows for guests, it was agreed that the interviews with the experts would be treated anonymously, so that they could speak freely without potentially hurting their relationships with the shows. Their answers were compared to the qualitative content analysis and used for the development of a typology of experts, as well as to validate the results of the content analysis.

Results

Quantitative comparison of the three shows

On all the shows the experts were as important as or even more prominent than the politicians in items about politics. In general, there are two reasons for which the choice is made to discuss political topics without politicians. The foremost reason is their availability. High-ranking government politicians, such as ministers or state secretaries, are not as eager to appear on a show as, for example, MPs who still have to work on their political reputation and visibility. Especially during political crises, ministers frequently refuse to attend. Because these are the topics that are considered newsworthy, shows have to find other means to discuss political news.

“They often call only when politicians are not available. In the ideal case they try to get them, but if they don’t want [to come] they have already asked us in the meantime, as a back-up plan.” (E2)

The second reason is that talk shows strive to discuss politics in an attractive way. They want to avoid hollow political phrases and jargon, and discuss information and opinions without political restraints.

“The added value of a journalist is that he can show the broader context. Politicians don’t want to show you more than they find relevant at that moment. Here a political commentator or interpreter can be of good use.” (E3)

“They are always looking for someone who is able to tell something in a couple of minutes and dares to make a statement about it. A politician often needs more time to explain the complex situation. That is not possible with one-liners. (...) So they prefer an outspoken person above a cautious politician.” (E4)

Non-political media experts especially, on all shows the largest group of experts, are not only invited to add extra information, but also to stir up the talk or to serve as a link between abstract politics and the viewer, as they explained:

“I can ask the dirty questions that the host can’t ask. I am not always proud to do this, but I think it is necessary, that is my role as a media expert, saying what everyone thinks but no-one dares to say out loud.” (E5)

“If they (the viewers) hear a journalist say that something wasn’t right or a strange plan, that is something they themselves had felt too, asking themselves if this is alright. So I can articulate what the viewers think or feel.” (E1)

The frequency of talks with politicians and/or experts, however, differs between the formats. The quantitative analysis shows that the selection of guests with whom the shows discussed the refugee crisis resembled their general approach to politics (see table 2 and 3).

Table 2: overview politicians and experts on political topics 2015/16
(total amounts (n) in parentheses)

	<i>Pauw</i>	<i>DWDD</i>	<i>RTLN</i>
Total amount of items concerning politics 2015/16	109	33	35
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
1 or more politicians alone	34,8 (38)	29,4 (10)	14,3 (5)
Politicians with political media experts	1,8 (2)	-	2,9 (1)
- with non-political media experts	9,2 (10)	11,8 (4)	14,2 (5)
- with mixed media experts	2,8 (3)	-	-
- with experiential experts	6,4 (7)	2,9 (1)	11,4 (4)
- with political specialist experts	0,9 (1)	-	-
- with non-political specialist experts	0,9 (1)	-	5,7 (2)
- with mixed experts	10,1 (11)	5,9 (2)	2,9 (1)
Political media experts	5,5 (6)	2,9 (1)	11,4 (4)
Non-political media experts	8,2 (9)	23,5 (8)	31,4 (11)
Mixed media experts	2,8 (3)	2,9 (1)	2,9 (1)
Experiential experts	0,9 (1)	-	2,9 (1)
Political specialist experts	3,7 (4)	8,8 (3)	-
Non-political specialist experts	2,8 (3)	-	-
Mixed experts	9,2 (10)	11,8 (4)	-

Table 3: overview politicians and specialists on refugee crisis
w(total amounts (n) in parentheses)

	<i>Pauw</i>	<i>DWDD</i>	<i>RTLN</i>
Total amount of items about refugee crisis 2015/2016	34	8	6
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Politicians alone	38,2 (13)	50 (4)	-
Politicians with political media experts	2,9 (1)	-	-
- with non-political media experts	11,7 (4)	-	-
- with mixed media experts	5,9 (2)	-	-
- with experiential experts	5,9 (2)	12,5 (1)	33,3 (2)
- with political specialist experts	-	-	-
- with non-political specialist experts	-	-	-
- with mixed experts	14,7 (5)	-	16,7 (1)
Political media experts	-	-	-
Non-political media experts	8,8 (3)	25 (2)	33,3 (2)
Mixed media experts	-	-	-
Experiential experts	2,9 (1)	-	-
Political specialist experts	2,9 (1)	-	-
Non-political specialist experts	-	-	-
Mixed experts	5,9 (2)	12,5 (1)	16,7 (1)

Pauw covered politics more often than the other two programs. It had the most items about politics, with and without politicians, as well as the most items about the refugee crisis. Politicians were as often invited on their own as accompanied by various experts. Considering the total number of guests invited to speak on political topics, politicians were the largest group (41,28%) (table 3). They were more often accompanied by journalists with other specializations than by political media experts. One-third of the non-political media experts and one-third of the mixed experts group consisted of talk with journalists. They could provide factual background information about topics within their specialization that were affected by political

events, e.g. economics (table 2 and 3).

In the discussions without politicians, political media experts were the most common guests, either on their own or with other experts (five out of nine mixed items contained political media experts). So while politicians were mostly accompanied by experts who could add factual or experiential information about the consequences and implications of politics, in items without politicians they were replaced by political media experts, who could add the political perspective. This explains why no political media experts were invited alone about the refugee crisis. *Pauw* either discussed its political aspects with the politicians themselves, or examined other aspects, e.g. the implications for Dutch society, with non-political actors.

Table 4: percentage of appearances per category of guests of total amount of guests (total observations in parentheses)

	<i>Pauw</i>		<i>DWDD</i>		<i>RTLN</i>	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
politicians	41.3	(71)	36.9	(17)	36.0	(18)
political media experts	12.2	(21)	4.4	(2)	12.0	(6)
non-political media experts	20.9	(36)	39.1	(18)	36.0	(18)
experiential experts	9.9	(17)	2.2	(1)	12.0	(6)
political specialist experts	5.2	(9)	10.8	(5)	0	
non-political specialist experts	10.5	(18)	6.5	(3)	4.0	(2)

By contrast, *De Wereld Draait Door* chose either politicians on their own or experts among other experts, and these groups were only rarely mixed (table 1). Political topics were preferably discussed with frequently invited opinion makers, the largest group within the category of non-political media experts, which is the largest group among the total of guests (table 4). They often had a hybrid character: they were simultaneously journalists, writers, columnists and/or another kind of commentator. They were invited because of their strong,

sometimes controversial opinions and ability to explain events in an entertaining way. Some of them had earned their credibility as experts through their frequent appearances on the show; an example of this will be shown in the case study.

Former politicians also belong to this group of frequently invited guests, although they are coded as political specialist experts. Of the three shows, *DWDD* had the highest percentage in this category, 10.87% (table 4). Even if they were no longer working close to politicians and their insider knowledge was not first-hand anymore, they remained in this pool because they had strong opinions that facilitated a vivid discussion. Therefore former politicians' function shifted from specialist experts to media experts, mostly known for their function as commentators on television programs. One of these frequently invited opinion makers was on the show in three out of eight items about the refugee crisis (table 3).

While the former two shows invited politicians approximately as often on their own as combined with experts, *RTL Late Night (RTLLN)* mixed politicians more than twice as often with experts (table 1). The show hosted as many politicians as non-political media experts, both 36% of the total amount of guests (table 4). With its strong focus on entertainment, *RTLLN* has chosen the comedian Jan Jaap van der Wal as its returning, monthly political commentator. Six out of 10 appearances of non-political media experts were his. This created the opportunity to integrate politics into the format in an entertaining way. If politicians were on the show, they were often accompanied by experiential experts, citizens who had experienced the problems the politician wanted to solve. The show contained the highest percentage of experiential experts in this sample (12 %, vs. 9.88% (*Pauw*) and 2.17% (*DWDD*)) (table 4). In the case of the refugee crisis, three of the six items contained eyewitness reports and/or personal experiences with refugees. They not only made the crisis concrete, but also stressed its emotional aspect and its impact

on Dutch people, bringing the story closer and addressing concerns widely felt in society. This approach fitted the topic into the format, which is equally focused on emotion and entertainment.

Despite their different approaches to politics and their differing choices of non-political media experts, a couple of political media experts appeared on all three shows. This was due to their function as political reporters for major television news stations. They combine inside knowledge about political affairs with the ability to talk engagingly on television. Their frequent appearances give them power to frame the political news and simultaneously enhance their reputations as credible sources.

The case study

In the following, the impact of specific expert types on the discussion of political events is examined in a case study. This shows why a particular expert type fits into a particular format. It will prove that while *DWDD* is interested in fast interpretations and opinion and is therefore not suited to specialist experts and politicians talking in political phrases, *Pauw* uses political and non-political media experts to add personal experiences and interpretations to the accountability interviews with politicians. *RTLNL* stresses emotions by using experiential experts to address the concerns of common people.

Pauw

Item 1. In this item a new refugee policy was discussed with the state secretary, Klaas Dijkhoff, whose role as the politician responsible for the refugee question was stressed in the introduction. It serves as an example of how the interruption of another guest adds emotion to an interview with a politician and heightens its accountability approach. The interview was aimed at testing the feasibility of the European plan to redistribute refugees stranded in Greece and Turkey to vari-

ous EU countries. It started as a classic accountability interview, with Pauw's questions focusing mainly on concrete factual details, such as when the refugees would be relocated, how many of them, and when they would arrive in the Netherlands. With these detailed questions Pauw highlighted both the problems and the vagueness of the plan.

Dijkhoff gave distant, abstract answers, avoiding specific data. His aim was to emphasize the benefits of this plan. Eventually, the well-known television host of travel programs, Floortje Dessing, invited on a different topic, interrupted. She explicitly addressed this abstract level and stated her concerns and anger that the politicians never spoke about real people who had left everything behind to flee from a terrible war. Her positive personal story of visits to Syria eight years ago gave credibility to her emotional interruption. Dijkhoff was forced to admit his lack of attention to specific people and their misery, but repeated the advantages of his new plan instead of reacting to the emotional question.

By linking the abstract political plans to real events, Dessing simultaneously emphasized Dijkhoff's detached attitude and the compassion people felt for the refugees. The politician was now not only judged for his policies but also for his lack of compassion. This interruption was a clear example of the hybrid character of the show. It wants its protagonists to discuss current affairs in a factual way, preferably with spontaneous and unpredictable interferences, which makes the show more entertaining to watch. Therefore other guests are encouraged to intervene and create this kind of spontaneous interruption that forces politicians to depart from their planned messages.

Item 2. This focus is also seen in item 2, which shows even more interaction with other guests. Set up as a combination of an accountability interview with first-hand information from two media experts, the situation of refugees at the boundaries of Europe was

discussed with the MP Malik Asmani, the of the governing liberal party's spokesman for refugee policy, the journalist Jeroen Akkermans, who had traveled to report on the refugees at the border of the EU, and comedian Sanne Wallis de Vries. The latter acted as an experiential expert here, describing her recent trip to help refugees on a Greek island. Her vivid account of the situation there immediately made the talk concrete. By asking Akkermans about his experiences, Pauw verified the information and stressed the credibility of their stories, making them trustworthy experts. This was supported by video footage of Akkermans' trip. Their eyewitness reports were considered more important than the perspective of the politician, who was addressed only after these detailed stories.

The journalist was also approached differently than the politician. While the interaction between Pauw and Akkermans, who was addressed by his first name, was fact-driven and friendly, Pauw approached Asmani in a more critical way. By repeating his function, he implicitly stressed his responsibility for the government policy on this matter. The new plan for solving the crisis was called a 'magic spell' ('toverformule'); it seemed unrealistic with uncertain outcomes. Moreover, he frequently interrupted Asmani and criticized his plans or policies that had not worked so far.

Interrupting Asmani and criticizing his statements, media expert Akkermans used his experience and knowledge to hold the politician accountable and to prove that the politician's plans were unfeasible. Asmani's attempt to stress his authority on this matter, as the author of the plan to keep refugees in the countries surrounding Syria, backfired when the other media expert, De Vries, confronted him with the question of why the refugees' situation had not improved, while politicians apparently knew what to do. She herewith simultaneously emphasized the politician's responsibility and failure to act accordingly. So, in this item, again, the media experts sharpened and concretized the accountability interview, stressing the problems refugees

were encountering. This was enabled by the format's setting, seating all guests together at one table and encouraging them to interact.

De Wereld Draait Door (DWDD)

Item 3. This item shows a clash between the talk show's format and the type of expert invited. It consisted of a discussion with a non-political specialist expert Leo Lucassen, the professor of Global Labor and Migration History at Leiden University, and one of the frequently invited opinionating media experts, Sywert van Lienden. Although he is usually invited about political topics and has started an initiative to engage young people in politics, he is coded as a non-political media expert because, despite his interest in politics, he does not work in the field and therefore does not have any inside information. The fact that *DWDD* uses him as a political commentator nonetheless confirms the shows preference for opinions instead of fact-checked information.

Following up on an earlier item with Van Lienden, in which he had incorrectly stated that one out of 20 refugees coming to the Netherlands was a potential sexual offender, this item concerned the confusion about crime rates among refugees. With his first question, 'Can the relative peace of academics help? Can you help?', the host simultaneously explained what he wanted from the specialist expert, and showed his idea of academics: slow and calm. The aim of the item, therefore, was to use the calm of academic research to get things straight.

The host was much closer to the media expert than to the specialist expert. He apparently knew the former well, mentioning only his first name in the introduction without any further explanation, assuming that he was known to the audience. He mentioned that he would keep inviting him, despite his mistake about the refugees. This was in contrast with how he treated the specialist expert, creating distance by addressing him formally. He placed himself on the view-

ers' side as a mere observer of the events by talking about 'we' and emphasizing the researcher's special role as an authority who knew how to interpret the events much better ('this is your field of study', 'you have value free data', 'I ask you as a researcher, you know much more about it than we do.')

With his call for immediate help, Van Nieuwkerk emphasized the format of the show; namely fast and focused on the interpretation of concrete events. While Lucassen did not use much jargon (he was very much aware of the format, talking fast, trying to omit theoretical explanations), Van Nieuwkerk got impatient and asked about solutions to the current situation ("We would love to hear something more recent, topical from you."). He even asked: "Of what use are you for us?" He wanted explanations and predictions about the current practical crisis, and could not see the advantage of academic research for this, which has certainty only about analyses of earlier events.

At the end of the talk this clash between the nuanced, fact-based researcher and the talk show's format became even more apparent when Van Lienden joined the discussion. He questioned the objectivity of academic research, implicitly accusing Lucassen of bias, and degraded the usefulness of academic research for that discussion. The fact that Van Nieuwkerk let him do this without reacting stressed Van Lienden's authority in the program. The message that research indicates that refugees might be less threatening than was stated earlier was drowned out by the claim that academic research was not useful for a discussion about practical problems such as this one. The media expert with his firm statements not based on any proof or research, addressing how people feel, was apparently better suited to the show than the academic expert who stuck to research results and facts, even though the latter proved the former wrong.

Item 4. In this item an accountability interview exemplifies the

program's aversion to inviting politicians. Kajsa Ollongren, the deputy mayor of Amsterdam, was interviewed about her initiative for a job program for refugees. The discussion focused on checking the feasibility of this plan, which fitted into the show's focus on actual events and concrete examples instead of theoretical policy. By concentrating on one city, Amsterdam, the refugee crisis was reduced to a particular concrete case.

Most of the talk was focused on journalistic questions such as what, how and why, giving Ollongren the opportunity to explain her idea and its importance. The host repeatedly asked for examples, simultaneously forcing her to prove her statements and make the story more concrete and lively. By asking whether refugees were supposed to get the jobs that Dutch people are waiting for, Van Nieuwkerk voiced the fear of many people.

As in item 3, the host created distance by addressing the politician formally. He even asked permission to ask a critical question ("why does Amsterdam give shelter to such a relatively small number of refugees?"), artificially putting her in a more powerful position, although he could ask whatever he wanted to, being the host of the show. Despite this artificial courtesy, Van Nieuwkerk kept stressing that her plan was in conflict with federal policy and asked if she would eventually break the law to realize her plan. This conflict frame tested the feasibility of this plan and, in addition, added urgency and sensation to the conversation. To emphasize this conflict, a short clip of the minister of economic affairs was shown, stating that refugees were bad for economics. Ollongren, however, did not follow that conflict frame and instead repeatedly emphasized the (economic) advantages of her plan. Van Nieuwkerk seemed disappointed by her refusal to either take on the fight or admit the flaws in her plan. Her answers exemplify why Van Nieuwkerk prefers to avoid interviewing politicians; he finds their politically correct answers predictable and boring (Meesterwerken, 2014).

Thus neither the politician nor the specialist expert fitted into the format. Only the media expert, with his strong opinion, fitted into the fast and opinion-driven character of the show, providing a controversial interpretation by stressing emotion instead of facts, often referred to as ‘fact-free politics’ (Van Zoonen 2012).

RTL Late Night (RTLLN)

Item 5. Personal experiences played a major role in both items of this show. Item 5 concerns the visit that a mayor of a small town, Luc Winants, and two of its inhabitants paid to a refugee camp in Lebanon. They had been on the show a week earlier to discuss their concerns about the housing for refugees in their town. The aim of the item was to show how common people, like the average viewer, react to the miserable situation of refugees and to touch viewers with these stories. By linking their earlier concerns to their experiences in Lebanon, *RTLLN* wanted to show how the visit to the camp had changed their view.

Right from the start the host, Humberto Tan, created a difference between the guests by explicitly naming the mayor’s function and addressing him formally, while calling the inhabitants only by their first names, even in the introduction. This made them citizens whose story could be anyone’s story, stressing the universality of their concerns. The eyewitness reports of their experiences in Lebanon were accompanied by short clips of that visit, either on a split screen or with their stories in a voiceover. These images increased the impact and created closeness to the miserable situation they described, and simultaneously verified their stories. Starting from their experiences, the whole item was taken up with a discussion of specific examples of refugees, without talking about the bigger picture of the cause of the conflict or political consequences. Another guest, a talent show judge, also told the story of a refugee he had met, invalidating the stereotypical image of poor people who come to Europe only for economic reasons.

The host's questions were aimed mostly at eliciting emotions, how the experiences had touched and changed the guests, making no distinction between the inhabitants and the mayor, who played only the marginal role of confirming the eyewitnesses' story. His status was used to heighten the credibility of the citizens' stories. While this approach fitted into the format's human interest character, it also bridged the gap between abstract, foreign events and the viewer. Political consequences were addressed only in the mayor's final plea for more help for the refugees in those camps, but this was not the topic of the talk.

Item 6. In this item a political media expert was used to bridge the gap between citizens and politics. The frequently invited former political reporter Wouke van Scherrenburg discussed the prime minister's position on the refugee crisis, while two inhabitants of the town of Hilversum explained their Facebook group's objection to having more refugees in their town. The item was a plea for better information and more small-scale shelters for refugees, something the citizens and Van Scherrenburg agreed upon.

In the beginning an overview was shown of the commotion in several Dutch municipalities about planned refugee shelters in their neighborhoods. Tan then asked Van Scherrenburg where the prime minister was in all this. He called her by her first name, which created a sense of closeness and did not put her on a pedestal as an expert. As a regular guest of the show, the viewers were supposed to know her. She did not answer the question directly, but interpreted and judged the prime minister's behavior in general, criticizing him for being too cautious and lacking vision. Using vigorous language, she made her point clear and also interpreted criticisms that many viewers might have had themselves.

When Tan turned to the experiential experts to let them speak about their concerns about refugees in their town, as in item 5, he did

not judge their opinions but gave them space to talk about the commotion in their towns. They got the chance to build a more nuanced picture, emphasizing that they were not racist or against refugees, but against the way they were forced upon them by politicians.

In contrast to Tan, Van Scherrenburg interrupted them several times, on the one hand accusing them of stirring up the commotion with their Facebook group, but on the other hand using it as an example of how politicians failed to inform the public in a correct way, which would prevent this kind of commotion and resistance. By making these critical remarks, she gave Tan the opportunity to be a neutral host who did not have to criticize these guests. The media expert here functioned as an interpreter between the personal stories and fears of the inhabitants and the bigger picture of federal politics. As in the first item, the show focused on personal stories to voice concerns that were widely felt in society, instead of the bigger political picture.

Conclusion

Talk shows choose experts not primarily in order to provide the best information, but to create interesting talk. To do so, they choose experts that fit into their formats. Talk show and television producers in general have their own definition of the term ‘expert’. It is not the person with the most factual knowledge, but the one who can describe it in an attractive way that suits the format who is considered the right expert for the show. This study has not only offered a typology of these various experts, but also an analysis of how they influence the discussion about politics. The results show that a talk show with a strong focus on entertaining and the ‘common people’s’ feelings, such as *RTLNL*, frequently uses experiential experts to add human interest to the story and to give the viewer the opportunity to identify with it. Therefore a topic like the refugee crisis is dis-

cussed mostly from the perspective of its impact on Dutch people, i.e. the viewer, stressing emotion and personal stories. Shows that focus on fast, energetic and especially opinion-driven talk, such as *DWDD*, prefer media experts who are not afraid to speculate and make strong statements, which are considered more interesting than political facts. A show in which politics is prominent, *Pauw*, uses media experts to sharpen the accountability approach of politicians.

Despite these different perspectives, this study shows that politicians on talk shows are often only one of several guests and are not given special treatment. They have to deal with other guests' personal stories and/or critical questions about their responsibility, address emotions and, especially on a topic like the refugee crisis, their conscience. Giving experts a prominent role, talk shows frame political topics as concrete events instead of abstract policy.

This analysis has further shown that the group of media experts is not only the most frequently invited, but also the most diverse one. It contains serious journalists, who appear on those shows well prepared to add extra factual information, as well as celebrities, who are invited mostly for their controversial opinions. The choice of the kind of media expert is determined by the aim of the format of the shows, be it accountability, information, emotion, entertainment, or a combination thereof. A talk show that focuses on news facts and current events uses journalists as media experts to get the background information that politicians would not relate, or to add facts about the topics discussed. The case of the refugee crisis has shown that this approach leads to detailed first-hand information about the situation of refugees that can be used to force politicians to discuss concrete situations and confront them with what is going wrong with their abstract plans. While politicians in accountability interviews stick to their prepared message and often talk about abstract policy, the media experts can add juicy details and emotion.

That last group especially can influence the talk about a topic

tremendously, when their opinions become more important than a discussion of the actual facts, as became clear in the case of *DWDD*, in which the fact that refugees were potentially less dangerous than assumed was drowned out by a media expert's opinion that academic research was useless for a discussion of concrete problems. Some media experts, such as journalists, who see their role as making a serious contribution to political information, are very aware of and even annoyed by this effect of some of their colleagues. They are hesitant to attend, because they know that facts are less important than a strong statement.

“Emotion often plays too big a role. They just say all kinds of things. It's less and less about facts, but always about what people think and feel. I find that irrelevant.” (E5)

“You have to be careful with these things. The shows often want to make it a little more juicy or sensational than it is. It is a challenge to show political facts that can't be shown on the news in a nice and interesting way, but at the same time that is the pitfall.” (E2)

So whereas media experts can bridge the gap between viewers and politics, and present a topic in an attractive way they otherwise would not have noticed (Norris 2000; Baum 2003; Van Zoonen 2005), they can also subordinate facts to opinion and emotion, steering public opinion in a direction that is not based on facts (Van Zoonen 2012). This study has therefore shown that experts, who are invited at least as often as politicians and often have a closer connection to the shows, are often considered more credible and capable of discussing politics in an interesting way. Therefore they influence the direction the political discussion takes enormously, shifting it from information about policies towards stories the viewer can connect to more easily.

Notes

1. The interviews were conducted under the condition of anonymity (see method section), therefore the different experts are referred to as E1, E2 etc.
2. 31 August 2015-20 May 2016 (*Pauw* and *DWDD* went on summer break after that date. Although *RTL Late Night* did not stop, later items in the season are not taken into consideration, because there was no competition anymore between the shows.)
3. *Pauw* and *RTLLN* both had special broadcasts wholly dedicated to the refugee crisis, in which politicians and other guests discussed the topic and money was raised for the refugees. These two shows are excluded from this research, because their formats and purposes were different.

Entertaining politics, seriously?!

Conclusion

8

The study of talk shows combines and draws upon various fields of research, as this dissertation has shown. Combining factual information with entertaining elements and topics, talk shows create a form of infotainment that draws heavily on television logic in order to show emotions, engagement and spontaneity. Defining the specific rules and conventions of the medium, television logic determines its technological, aesthetic, organizational and institutional structures. Although all talk shows are based on the same television logic, there is a large variety of talk shows, some of them with a heavy focus on political topics, others only barely touching on politics. This variety is due to their different formats. This research has shown that it is the format that determines how big a role politics plays in a show, how it is discussed and with whom. To create engaging talk, all of the studied formats use a particular combination of cinematographic elements, settings and interview styles that are used as building blocks to create talk about current topics. How serious, critical or fact-driven this talk is, is determined by the combination of these building blocks that together shape the format. That format has an impact on all parts of the interaction between politicians and journalists.

As was argued in the theoretical framework (chapter 2), talk shows are at the center of blurred boundaries within different disciplines. The blurring boundary between information and entertainment is at the core of the concept of infotainment that has been studied in journalism studies and television studies as well (Corner 1999; Van Zoonen 2004; Jones 2005; Cushion 2012). By blurring the boundary between the private and the public they touch upon the concept of personalization that plays a central role in the field of political communication (Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009; Driessen et al. 2010; Achterberg and Houtman 2013; Van Aelst et al. 2017). The combination of planning and spontaneity is facilitated by the medium of television and is therefore part of television logic, a prominent concept in television studies that is also addressed in political communication studies (Altheide 2004; Asp 2014; Ström-bäck and Esser 2014). While various aspects of these fields have been studied separately before, this dissertation combined them all and therewith showed the complex hybrid character of talk shows and their approach to politics. The studies in this dissertation have aimed to shed light on the structures that determine the relations between talk shows and politics. Taken together, they have answered the research question:

In which way is the on- and off-screen interaction between actors in the field of politics and that of television journalism in Dutch talk shows affected by the programs' formats?

To provide insights into these relations, this multi-layered research constituted an examination of different aspects of the relationship between journalists and politicians in Dutch talk shows in four separate cases. It not only provided insights into the role of the talk show format, but also established useful conceptualizations to study the relation between politicians and journalists in talk shows.

In this final chapter the conclusions of these studies will be brought together in a discussion of key concepts that emerged during the research and that can be seen as binding factors of the studies. This combination will show the relations between the specific cases and their implications for the research topic in general.

Talk show formats

The talk show format is the connecting thread in the four studies presented here. These have shown that format is *the* central concept that influences and even determines the structure and appearance of the show and therefore also its approach to politics. It determines the proportion of information and entertainment and therefore the choice of guests (chapter 5), the way politicians have to act to appear on the shows (chapter 4 and 5), the form and amount of personalization in a show (chapter 6) and the way politics is discussed, with or without politicians (chapter 7). Therefore, answering the research question, this dissertation proves that talk show formats and their various elements have an impact on all parts of the interaction between actors in the field of politics and that of television journalism. In the following these parts will be discussed more closely.

In many studies, talk shows have been discussed and described in universal terms. Considering them as one genre without taking the format into account led to generalizations about talk shows that could not differ more. Sub-categories used to refer to a group of shows that share certain characteristics, such as ‘entertainment talk shows’ (see e.g. Boukes & Boomgaarden, 2016), have also been proven to be unfruitful, as was argued in chapter 2 (paragraph 2.3.1). They often lack a concrete definition of what the respective sub-genres entail. Therefore they lead to generalizing claims about a variety of shows that are either too broad to draw conclusions about specific shows, or are not applicable to all talk shows, which might feed prejudices

about shows that do not meet these claims. If this research has shown one thing, it is the fact that *the* talk show does not exist.

Therefore this study argues that it is necessary to take the specificity of formats into account. Only then can differences in their approach to politics be distinguished and remarks made about how politics is treated in the field of Dutch talk shows. As this dissertation has shown, each format consists of several characteristic elements concerning form and content, including interview style, setting, cinematography, length and strictness or order. Together, these building blocks shape its unique character. While these elements are part of every talk show, the way in which they are used and combined differs per format. Because all of these elements have an impact on the way politics is (not) represented, each format has its own approach to political guests and topics. While the impact on the viewer and the discussion about whether he is sufficiently informed about political events by the shows is beyond the scope of this research, it has clearly shown that the attention paid to politics differs per format.

In the studies combined in this dissertation, a total of six talk show formats were analyzed, all of them with a distinct relation to politics. The example of *Buitenhof* shows how all the elements are used to facilitate the informative discussion. Guests are invited according to their newsworthiness for a specific topic and only secondly for their talkability. Form, setting and interview style support this informative approach by creating the context for a profound discussion. Politicians get the opportunity to explain abstract policy changes or ideas. The show is clearly aimed at viewers who are interested in politics. While *WNLopZondag* is aired on the same day and also frequently invites politicians, the format creates a different atmosphere and is focused on lighter topics. Informative and entertaining topics and guests are combined to create a chatty morning talk.

In spite of the different broadcasters and time slots, *DWDD* and *RTLNL* have a similar approach to politics. Because politics is not

their core business, the producers of these shows can also choose other topics that are more attractive to a broad audience. Politicians thus compete, not only with other topics, but also with other (non-political) guests who are likely to be more talkable. From this point of view, experts are often preferred to talk about politics. Due to the fact that these shows are characterized by a strict format, elements such as pace, fast engaging talk and the interaction with other guests are more emphasized. Discussing political topics is not an aim as such, but if newsworthy events take place and suitable politicians or experts can discuss them in a way that fits the show, they are taken into consideration. The viewer is provided with entertaining topics, strong opinions (*DWDD*) and human interest stories (*RTLNL*).

The comparison of *Pauw* and *Jinek* has shown that the same formal parameters, such as broadcasting time, channel and studio, do not necessarily result in the same formats. *Pauw* is more interested in discussions about political topics and even adjusts its setting in order to create a situation that fits the conversational atmosphere in which politicians can be held accountable, but other guests are also invited to generate interesting conversation. This creates more diversity in (the combination of) guests than on *Jinek* and therefore more different approaches to several aspects of politics.

Television logic and talkability

The studies in this dissertation have shown the usefulness of taking the concept of television logic into account when trying to understand the dynamics of talk shows, because it impacts the character of these formats immensely. Television's logic is formed by technical restrictions and abilities, in combination with organizational and institutional structures and processes (Asp 2014; Strömbäck and Esser 2014). This logic determines the specific character of television, for example its ability to disseminate audiovisual footage, to create a no-

tion of immediacy and to show facts, emotions and entertainment at the same time. This television logic also plays a role in the selection of talk show guests, as the study in chapter 5 demonstrated. While all shows stick to the traditional journalistic focus on elite sources, their choice of politicians is also informed by another criterion derived from television logic, namely talkability: the ability to talk easily about one's political role, as well as about other topics, and being an interesting personality with an engaging, newsworthy story. Because television programs, talk shows in particular, thrive on audio-visually storytelling, they need guests who can keep the viewers' attention with what they say. The study shows how television logic and journalistic conventions interact with talk show formats, resulting in very different programs, with varying approaches to politics. All the shows are looking for guests who meet the demands of television logic, but shows with a more flexible character and a focus on news and current events are more likely to host guests according to their affiliation with and importance for a specific topic than purely based on their talkability. Talk shows in which entertainment is more important require guests that can fit into their character.

With the notion of talkability, this research combines the concepts of infotainment and television logic, because it is the guests' talkability that makes it possible to discuss information in an entertaining way. Studies of infotainment and television logic have in common that they were often normatively charged or even negatively connoted. By following the recent call for a less normative use of the concept (Asp 2014; Strömbäck and Esser 2014), the studies in this research have contributed to the field of study by identifying format elements that derive from television logic. These elements played a significant role in the cases discussed, but can also be used in further research to analyze different talk shows, not necessarily in connection with politics.

While it discusses a specific and extraordinary case of personal-

ization, Chapter 6 also reveals two universal elements of talk show formats that, in this case, influence the establishing of different forms of personalization: the interview style of the host and the form of the show. It therefore adds an empirical study to the discussion of personalization, which often lacked conceptual clarity. The influence of personalization on the relationship between journalists and politicians has been studied frequently but, as several researchers have stated, the definition of personalization has long been confusing and contradictory (Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, and Takens 2009; Van Aelst, Sheaffer, and Stanyer 2012; Van Santen 2012). Studying specific forms of personalization provides more nuanced insights into how these forms are established on talk shows and by whom. Moreover, it also confirmed the usefulness of the format as a perspective for research about personalization, because it showed that even seemingly similar shows, such as *Pauw* and *Jinek*, that are broadcasted at the same time and use the same studio, have quite different approaches to personal stories. The results show that whereas individualization and privatization are established mostly through the interview style, the creation of emotionalization is affected by the form of the shows. Moreover, it showed that the talk appears credible only if these elements correspond, as the mismatch of detached form and emotional interview style in *Jinek* exemplified.

This study therefore clearly stresses the influence of formal elements that are decisive parts of television formats, but are often forgotten or neglected in research. This aspect links this study to chapter 5, in which television specific elements are also emphasized. Both talkability (chapter 5) and cinematographic elements that stress emotion (chapter 6) are format elements that are influenced by television logic. Even the interview style can be seen as a feature of television logic, because it is a mix of the host's personal characteristics and other format elements, such as the duration and the adversarial tone of the interview and the combination with other guests. It is

this mix that makes talk show hosts inextricably bound up with the formats, which even sometimes bear the host's name as the title of the show, e.g. in the case of *Pauw* and *Jinek*. The hosts are therefore not an exchangeable part of the show, but a defining component of its character. This became clear, for example, in the summer of 2009 when *DWDD* was hosted by two substitute hosts during the summer break. The ratings and reviews were so disappointing that this experiment was not repeated in succeeding years. The format clearly functions only with Van Nieuwkerk as its host.

Talk shows' preference for talkability was also confirmed in the fourth and last study of this dissertation (chapter 7), which showed that on all shows politics is often discussed with experts. Again, as in the other chapters, this study has used specific cases from *Pauw*, *DWDD* and *RTL LN* to reveal general structures, in this case a typology of types of experts used in political talk show talk. This typology has been proven a useful instrument that clearly showed that the traditional expert, often a researcher with a great amount of factual information and knowledge is only one type of experts used by talk shows, and they are not hosted very frequently. The most frequent type, the media expert, people who are known for their appearances on or work in the media, such as journalists, actors, writers etc., shows how talk shows interpret the concept of expert differently. Being able to talk engagingly, unafraid of stating strong opinions is at least as important as having crucial information about the topic at hand. Here again, talkability proved to be a decisive criterion for talk shows, because media experts are often more talkable than politicians and therefore fit more easily into the talk show formats. They provide background information, entertain, or stress emotions, depending on the format's focus. Especially in shows with a focus on entertainment and opinionating talk, such as *DWDD* and *RTL LN*, media experts play a crucial role, because they fit into the strict format of fast, engaging talk. Even if politicians are also invited to the

table, experts are often considered more important and given the opportunity to frame the topic of the talk. Testing the politicians' accountability, they steer interviews with politicians in a direction that fits the show's format; creating talk about concrete events instead of abstract policy. Building upon a case study of the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe, the chapter revealed that the choice of experts influences the direction a talk takes and the angle and framing of a particular topic. While the use of experts can broaden political talk, adding information and personal reports that politicians are not willing or able to discuss, their use can also lead to a dominance of opinion and emotion over facts (Van Zoonen 2012). This study has therefore added the notion of format to the discussion of the blurring boundaries between facts, information and entertainment. The use of experts and the focus on talkability signals a shift from facts towards style and appearance, or even towards 'fact-free' politics, which has been observed previously (Brants 1998; Schudson 1998; Van Zoonen 2012). However, the studies in this dissertation have shown that the focus on facts and/or opinion depends on the specific talk show format and cannot be determined in general for all talk shows, therefore nuancing the general claim of a shift towards opinionating, fact-free political talk.

Staged spontaneity created off-screen

As with everything on television, talk shows are a constructed product, even though the producers and politicians try to stress the authenticity and spontaneity of the appearances. It is produced in an institutional setting and always 'highly planned and structured within the limits of the talk show format and practice' (Timberg and Erler 2002, 2). As the former television reviewer of the Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant*, Jean-Pierre Geelen, described:

“You have to come to realize that television is a strange box that deludes you with a world of magic in which nothing appears to be what it seems. In which everything is a distortion by definition, a cut-out of reality. I really think that not everyone is aware of this.”

(de Volkskrant, October 30, 2015)

Viewers are generally not aware of this construction, because it is a feature of television logic to disguise its constructed character. With television techniques such as editing and cinematography, a natural conversation is imitated and the artificiality of the situation is hidden. It is due to this construction that spontaneous talk can be established, because the structures, planning and restrictions of the format give it its spontaneous and immediate character (Plake 1999). One decisive element in the creation of this spontaneous impression is the host. He is responsible for the flow of the show, creates closeness with the public and functions as a link between the audience and the talk show guests (Haarman 2001; Bonner 2003).

On the other hand, viewers might get the impression that the host is the only one determining what is happening on the show, because he is the only deciding person they see. The studies in this research have shown, however, that especially when it comes to politics, various actors are involved in planning and preparing the talk. While talk shows have producers and editors who come up with suggestions for guests, who invite them and prepare the content of the talk, politicians have advisors and staff who do these negotiations with the producers. Thus, while the host is a decisive factor on screen, as well as for the reputation of the show, he is only one cog in the production process. One could state that the producers and PR advisors function as trustees of the staged spontaneity of the discussion, as they are usually responsible for the preparations and therefore prevent a meeting of the host and politician until shortly before the start of the show.

Politicians are attracted to the idea of a live conversation, which they think will bring them into contact with the audience more directly than, for example, news programs do (Bucy and Newhagen 1999). But they also work actively on the creation of an authentic appearance. The importance of authenticity for politicians has been discussed frequently in studies (Coleman 2011, De Beus 2011, Van Zoonen, Coleman, and Kuik 2011). The study in chapter 4 added to this discussion the role of PR advisors in establishing this authenticity and has shown that, according to their interpretation, authenticity can be created, or at least planned. It therefore gives insight into the off screen relations between talk shows, and politicians and their aids. Moreover it adds the PR advisors' perspective to the research of political PR.

The interpretive repertoire analysis has shown that PR advisors play a crucial role in the contact with talk shows and in facilitating the appearances of *their* politicians on the shows. Analyzing their main repertoires, namely competition and stage play, that both derive from the area of game, the study showed that they often downplay their own impact, but are at the same time very aware of their powerful position.

Describing the relationship simultaneously as a competitive game and a stage play enables PR advisors to downplay their role in positioning politicians on talk shows, as well as to legitimize their close relationships with journalists. Comparing politicians' appearances on talk shows with stage performances gives PR advisors the opportunity to explain their interpretation of an authentic appearance. Like in a stage play, the actor, i.e. the politician, needs to rehearse and prepare for the show. Only if they are well prepared are they able to perform convincingly and show their authentic selves, PR advisors argue.

These preparations by both sides come together in the talk shows. While both sides aim for an authentic appearance, they interpret it

differently. While politicians find an appearance authentic when they were able to tell their prepared message in a trustworthy way, talk show producers want to catch the politicians off guard. They see surprises and unexpected events as proof of authenticity. To create this authenticity talkability is needed. Only when the politician is able to talk freely and engagingly about the topic he is invited to speak about, as well as about other topics that are raised during the show, and is able to react spontaneously to other guests, using personal and lively stories, does he appear authentic and trustworthy. Politicians and PR advisors are aware of that. As the first case study has shown (Chapter 4), although they try to prepare as much as possible, they also want to keep a spontaneous note. Nonetheless, media experts, as well as experiential experts, are often seen as more authentic and spontaneous than politicians. Strictly formatted shows with a bigger focus on entertainment than on news, e.g. *RTLNL* and *DWDD*, would especially prefer inviting talkable media experts instead of politicians who are unable to act spontaneously, as chapter 7 has shown.

Despite all the careful preparations, talk shows still remain uncertain ground for politicians, because appearances still go wrong. What should one think of the parliamentary chairman of the governing party, VVD, Halbe Zijlstra, who got lost on *Pauw* (October 24, 2016) in his attempt to defend the ‘Black Pete’ tradition? Or the party leader of the small opposition party 50+, Henk Krol, who felt betrayed by, again, *Pauw*, because he had to answer questions about a topic he was not prepared to discuss? These are only the most recent examples at the time of writing. During this research period various appearances of that kind happened, and most of them were discussed on the news or social media afterwards, showing the reason for politicians’ cautiousness. While the circumstances and conditions of the talk are well prepared, there is still some room for spontaneous action once the show has started. It is this ‘staged spontaneity’ that makes talk shows talk intriguing to a broad audience.

Symbiotic power relations and the notion of politics

The journalist-source relationship has been studied widely, often focusing on who has the power in journalistic products and production: the journalist or the source. This kind of research often concentrates on the use of ‘elite sources’ and journalists’ watchdog role (e.g. Cook 1997; Manning 2001; Reich 2008). The relationship between politicians and journalists has often been described as symbiotic. It is a struggle for power and at the same time they need each other to reach the audience (Holtz-Bacha 2004; Brants et al. 2010; De Beus 2011). As has been noted in previous studies, politicians and journalists blame each other for either not playing along or not according to the rules of the game, as well as for the perceived waning trust in politics and journalism (Brants and Bardoel 2008; De Haan 2012). In 2012 De Haan concluded: “The phrase ‘it’s the media that did it’ has often been used to capture this overall discontent with media performance” (189). This observation still holds today, given the discussion about failing polls and analyses during the US elections, the Brexit referendum and the rising populism in Europe. It seems like a bad marriage between two partners who need each other but who are not a match at all. On the other hand, criticizing each other is part of the game and could be interpreted as a part of journalism’s watchdog function.

That ambiguous relationship also manifests itself in talk shows. In the case of an unfortunate political appearance, talk show producers and politicians often blame each other. These conclusions are often supported by politicians who complain about talk shows in interviews with other media. Television producers, on the other hand, complain about politicians who either do not dare to appear on a talk show or who are telling stories that are so well prepared that they are boring, as *DWDD* host Matthijs van Nieuwkerk explained in the television program *Meesterwerken* on June 4, 2015.

However, this criticism is based mostly on fragmented informa-

tion about specific events. A great part, if not the largest, of the interaction, however, takes part backstage, unavailable to the audience. In these preparations and negotiations backstage, powerful positions play an important role. Producers as well as PR advisors and politicians agreed that high-ranking politicians are the only politicians who can negotiate and demand certain conditions, while other politicians, such as MPs, have to accept the shows' conditions if they want to appear on them (chapter 4), confirming earlier studies on elite sources (Manning 2001; Strömbäck and Nord 2006; Reich 2008; Eriksson and Östman 2013). The focus on elite sources was also confirmed in the study in Chapter 5, which clearly showed that politicians in relevant political positions, mostly ministers and party chairmen, are most often hosted on the shows. While the networks presented in chapter 5 would contain different names during other seasons, the structure would probably remain the same, because the shows' preferences for specific functions and types of guests do not change. Thus in years with a different government, the parties and politicians at the center of the network might be different, because the shows follow mainly the parties with the most political influence and power. However, that does not change the overall structure of the networks, clustering elite sources in the center. The study therefore showed that the talk shows do not invite politicians according to a preference for a particular party or ideology, but based on the journalistic convention of following the most influential sources.

Journalists, as well as politicians and PR advisors, immediately recognized the field of tension that was described when they were invited to take part in this research. Most of them, however, were hesitant to talk about their own experiences, not to mention letting an outsider take a look backstage. This desire to keep their cards close to their chests can be explained by the competition they feel among media practitioners and politicians (chapter 4). They often think they need their secret strategies to get media attention and get

politicians on the shows respectively. As much as they want to keep their strategies to themselves, however, they want to know the considerations of the other side and frame that caution as unnecessary. However, this attitude feeds speculation about the relationship and prejudices about their functioning.

Partly because of this refusal of elite sources, but more so because of their hybrid mix of information and entertainment, talk shows have added to the changing interpretation of what journalists count as politics. By presenting politics in an entertaining, opinion-driven or emotional way and combining it with other topics, talk shows expand the traditional notion of politics (Costera Meijer 2001; Baum 2005; Van Zoonen 2005; Baym 2005; Cao 2010). Traditionally, journalists, and often also researchers, considered only those topics politics that were related to party or parliamentary affairs and policy, mostly with politicians as the main actors. Nowadays a broader, more inclusive interpretation of politics has become common among journalists. Not only are politicians' individual appearances in media addressed as 'politics' or 'political', but also public debate among citizens who are affected by new policies, for example. The discussion of topics related to political decision making with journalists, experts and/or 'the man on the street' is also included in this wider interpretation of *the political*. (Norris 2000; Van Zoonen 2003; Baum 2003; Blumler and Coleman 2015).

This broader definition of politics and *the political* made room for new voices and opinions that are not necessarily based on political facts, but can also derive from emotions and personal stories, as the personal story in chapter 6 exemplified (Van Zoonen 2012). Through this notion of the political, the traditional boundary between the private and the public has been blurred. As (Nieminen and Trappel 2011) argued, this also broadened journalism's watchdog role, focusing not only on politicians, but covering other participants who are in some way related to politics, such as experts, journalists

or citizens (Chapter 7). This research has shown that talk shows use this definition of politics to broaden political talk and fit it into their formats.

Aiming for a broad audience

The relationship between politicians and journalists is held together by their one big shared goal: reaching the audience. Television shows are competing for a large market share, trying to keep viewers' attention with entertaining, emotional and personal topics and surprising talk. Politicians on the other hand are facing an unpredictable and therefore intangible, electorate. People are not bound to a specific party anymore, but change their minds more frequently than ever (Manin 1997; De Beus 2011). Therefore politicians have to create complex authentic images of themselves to gain the voters' trust. Especially on talk shows, which are aimed at a broad audience, politicians hope to reach viewers whom they otherwise cannot reach, namely people who watch the shows as a form of entertainment and who are not actively looking for political information (Baym 2005). This goes especially for talk show formats, with their large focus on entertainment. However, these are at the same time the most difficult shows to get an invitation to, because politics is not their core business and they can choose other topics that fit their formats more easily.

As the idea of educating and informing the public is the basis of Public Service Broadcasting, the argument of market failure has often been used to legitimize PSB's existence in the last few decades. From this point of view, PSB should help to elevate people, give them political and other knowledge and an overview of diverse opinions about current affairs in order to help them to participate actively in society, a task commercial broadcasters do not have (Steeemers 2003; Van Dijk, Nahuys, and Waagmeester 2005; Bardoel and d'Haenens 2008;

Bergès Saura and Gunn 2011; Ferrell Lowe, Goodwin, and Yamamoto 2016). This can be clearly seen in the Netherlands, where the Public Service Broadcast has an educational and democratic mission: to serve as a forum for all social groups, for all opinions and discussion of all views (Daalmeijer 2004; Van Dijk, Nahuis, and Waagmeester 2005; Bardoel and d'Haenens 2008; d'Haenens, Sousa, and Hultén 2011; Donders and Van den Bulck 2016) (Mediamonitor 2015).

Therefore they are trying to reach a diverse audience. Broadcasters are constantly trying to find the middle ground between the democratic ideal, steered by normative values such as educating the public and maintaining cultural identity, and market constraints introduced by the commercial broadcasters (Steemers 2003; Bardoel 2003; Dahlgren 2005; De Haan and Bardoel 2009; Norris 2010; Goodwin 2014). In fact, reaching for a broad audience has become a part of PSB policy. As PSB should be for all people and reach a diverse audience, aiming for a large market share has become a legitimizing tool in itself, especially for shows that are broadcasted during prime time, on Ned1, the channel for everyone (Van den Bulck 2009; Donders and Van den Bulck 2016). This aim for high ratings seems to diminish (parts of) the differences between commercial and public broadcasters. Both strive for a large audience, not least because it is a means to receive financing (Van Zoonen 2004).

Talk shows are able to combine these aims, to reach a broad audience with a diverse selection of guests and topics, combining information with entertainment. The fact that five out of the six most prominent Dutch talk shows are produced by PSB shows that public television has embraced this genre for this ability. The study in chapter 5 demonstrated that the formats with a higher focus on current affairs and more flexibility show more diversity among guests, because they can adapt their setting and style according to a political news topic in order to fit a politician into their format. The stricter the construction of the format the more political guests have to com-

ply with the two criteria in order to be invited. The focus on elite sources shows that politicians of lower ranks, such as MPs, have a smaller chance of getting on the shows, which limits the political diversity on those, mostly entertaining, shows that exclusively host elite sources. The study reveals, however, that besides the elite sources, the shows with a high focus on current affairs and (political) news do also host other politicians, mainly because of their involvement in a particular topic, but also because of their talkability.

The example of Jesse Klaver, the parliamentary chairman of the small left-wing party GroenLinks, has shown that politicians who dare to discuss topics that sometimes only slightly touch upon politics can create successful talk show appearances. The use of experts is another example of how talk shows successfully discuss political topics. While the focus on a small pool of media experts might again create elite sources and might lead to fact-free politics, the use of different experts and combinations thereof with politicians might be a way to create opportunities to discuss political topics on talk shows. If talk shows create this, diverse political talk is determined by their formats.

A concern that many respondents stated, however, especially those who work in television, such as political reporters of news shows, but who were not directly involved in the production of the talk shows, was the overwhelming focus on ratings, which is a result of this struggle for a large audience. This focus has been confirmed in this research. Politicians and PR advisors prefer talk shows with high ratings to reach as many people as possible (Chapter 4) and talk show formats with the highest ratings do not bother to make concessions to get politicians on the shows, in turn, because high ratings, as a result of a successful format, are more important than political talk (chapter 5). They choose guests who fit into their formats well, so they do not disturb the formula for success. If politicians are rated unsuitable, they choose other guests, such as media experts, who are

able to provide the required mix of information and entertainment (chapter 7). This focus on ratings, however, prevents the shows from experimenting with new guests who have not yet proven to be talkable. They are often considered too high a risk, not only for the content and course of the talk, but also for the ratings.

This also goes for the form of the talk. Especially on the strictly formatted shows, such as *DWDD* and *RTLLN*, there is little to no room to adjust the item to suit a political guest or topic (chapter 4). This is especially apparent in the case of *Pauw*, which changed its format in the second season into a stricter planned show, with less variation in the duration of the talk and the combination of guests. While the causal effect cannot be proven, it is a fact that *Pauw* hosted fewer politicians in the second season. The longer one-on-one interviews with politicians that occurred throughout the first season had disappeared in the succeeding year, when all the guests sat at the table throughout the whole broadcast, as on *RTLLN*. Because *Pauw* struggled in the beginning to gain the high ratings that the NPO expected, this might have been a concession in order to achieve that goal.

It can be argued that, due to their different formats, the analyzed shows provide different approaches to politics and therefore together create a diverse picture of politics. This diversity among shows is one of the aims of PSB, implying providing shows for different audiences and therefore reaching a broad audience with the total of the shows (Leurdijk 1999). However, no one watches all of these shows. Thus, viewers who watch only the more entertaining formats such as *DWDD* or *RTLLN* do not get as much political information as viewers of *Buitenhof* or *Pauw*.

As this research has shown, the amount of political diversity within the shows varies. Only those with a clear focus on political news provide the viewer with a diverse selection of political functions and parties. However, the choices for the depicted political topics and

guests are not so much determined by political or ideological preferences, but by journalistic conventions and television logic, in combination with politicians' willingness to take their place at the talk show table. Talk show producers want to create interesting talk with guests who fit into their format. It is not politicians' party affiliation, but their newsworthiness that makes them suitable talk show guests.

In view of the discussion about the presumed lack of contact with a large part of the audience, the aim for high ratings seems understandable, because high ratings mean reaching a large audience. On the other hand, that focus might prevent shows from trying new forms to discuss politics, and therefore to combine entertainment and information to disseminate information and knowledge about public affairs, *the* task of Public Service Broadcasting (e.g. Bardoel and d'Haenens 2008; d'Haenens, Sousa, and Hultén 2011; Donders and Van den Bulck 2016).

One thing must not be forgotten in this discussion of how politicians are treated by talk shows, how political topics are presented and how politicians try to influence this presentation: While talk shows present a combination of information and entertainment, their core business is to discuss the 'talk of the day' and not primarily to disseminate political information. Whoever watches talk shows as a source of pure information will be disappointed. Talk shows are fast, opinionating and sometimes even sensational, depending on their format. So they must not be judged for something they do not pretend to be.

On the other hand, PSB talk shows have a broader task than merely entertaining a large audience. The research in this dissertation has shown that there are talk show formats that are able to incorporate political topics into their shows and to represent a diversity of political guests, but whether they do so depends on their format. Talk show formats possess the unique ability to combine entertainment with information, using elements such as talkability, experts, spontaneity

and personal aspects. They should be enabled to use these elements to create innovative, surprising talk about politics. This implies daring to experiment with new (combinations of) guests and topics, but also getting the time and credit for these experiments. If talk shows have to score high ratings every day, they stick to their success formula, which is at the cost of the diversity of political topics and guests on these shows. Given the still occurring tension between journalists and politicians on talk shows, these formats still manage to provide surprising political talk, and the viewer never knows what to expect beforehand, be it for the better or the worse. Embracing this ability might ensure political diversity on talk shows.

References

- Aalberg, Toril, Jesper Strömbäck, and Claes H De Vreese. 2011. "The Framing of Politics as Strategy and Game: A Review of Concepts, Operationalizations and Key Findings." *Journalism* 13 (2): 162–78. doi:10.1177/1464884911427799.
- Aalberts, Chris. 2006. *Aantrekkelijke Politiek? : Een Onderzoek Naar Jongeren En Popularisering van Politiek*. Apeldoorn: Het Spinhuis.
- Aalberts, Chris, and Maarten Molenbeek. 2010. *U Draait En U Bent Niet Eerlijk: Spindoctoring in Politiek Den Haag*. Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers.
- Achterberg, Peter, and Dick Houtman. 2013. "De Gevolgen van Politieke Personalisering." In *Omstreden Democratie. De Problemen van Een Succesverhaal*, edited by Remieg Aerts and Peter d. Goede, 187–203. Amsterdam: Boom.
- Allen, Robert Clyde, and Annette Hill. 2004. *The Television Studies Reader*. Psychology Press.
- Altheide, David L. 1976. *Creating Reality*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- . 2002. "Journalistic Interviewing." In *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, 411–30. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- . 2004. "Media Logic and Political Communication." *Political Communication* 21 (3): 293–96.
- Altheide, David L., and Robert P. Snow. 1979. *Media Logic*. Beverly Hills ; London: Sage Publications.
- Arnsfeld, Andreas. 2005. *Medien - Politik - Gesellschaft: Aspekte Ihrer Wechselwirkungen Unter Dem Stichwort Politainment*. Marburg: Tectum Verlag.
- Asp, Kent. 2014. "News Media Logic in a New Institutional Perspective." *Journalism Studies* 15 (3): 256–70.
- Atifi, Hassan, and Michel Marcoccia. 2006. "Television Genre as an Object of Negotiation : A Semio-Pragmatic Analysis of French Political 'Television Forum.'" *Journal of Pragmatics* 38 (2): 250–68.
- Bakker, Piet, Pieter Broertjes, Ad van Liempt, Marlis Prinzing, and Gerard Smit. 2013. "'this Is Not What We Agreed'. Negotiating Interview Conditions in Germany and the Netherlands." *Journalism Practice* 7 (4): 396–412. doi:10.1080/17512786.2013.802475.
- Banks, Anna. 1992. "Frontstage/Backstage: Loss of Control in Real-Time Coverage of the War in the Gulf." *Visual Communication Studies in Mass Media Research* 13 (2): 111–19.
- Bardoel, Jo. 2003. "Back to the Public? Assessing Public Broadcasting in the Netherlands." *Javnost - The Public* 10 (3): 81–95. doi:10.1080/13183222.2003.11008836.
- Bardoel, Jo, and Leen d'Haenens. 2008. "Reinventing Public Service Broadcasting in Europe: Prospects, Promises and Problems." *Media, Culture & Society* 30 (3): 337–55. doi:10.1177/0163443708088791.
- Barry-Hirst, Amanda. 2005. *PR Power: Inside Secrets From the World of Spin*. Lon-

- don: Virgin Books.
- Baum, Matthew A. 2003. "Soft News and Political Knowledge: Evidence of Absence or Absence of Evidence?" *Political Communication* 20 (2): 173.
- . 2005. "Talking the Vote: Why Presidential Candidates Hit the Talk Show Circuit." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (2): 213–34.
- Baym, Geoffrey. 2005. "The Daily Show: Discursive Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism." *Political Communication* 22 (3): 259–76.
- Bazalgette, Peter. 2005. *Billion Dollar Game : How Three Men Risked It All and Changed the Face of Television*. London: Time Warner Books.
- Bergès Saura, Laura, and Sara Enli Gunn. 2011. "Commercial Television: Business in Transition." In *Media in Europe Today*, edited by Josef Trappel, Werner A. Meier, Leen d'Haenens, Jeanette Steemers, and Barbara Thomass. Bristol, Chicago: Intellect.
- Bignell, Jonathan. 2004. *An Introduction to Television Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Bijker, Wiebe E., and Karin Bijsterveld. 2000. "Women Walking through Plans." *Technology and Culture : The International Quarterly of the Society for the History of Technology* 41 (3): 485–515.
- Biressi, Anita, and Heather Nunn. 2008. "Introduction." In *The Tabloid Culture Reader*, edited by Anita Biressi and Heather Nunn, 1–4. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- Blankson, Isaac A. 2012. *Negotiating Democracy: Media Transformations in Emerging Democracies*. SUNY Press.
- Blumler, Jay G., and Stephen Coleman. 2015. "Democracy and the Media—Revisited." *Javnost - The Public* 22 (2): 111–28. doi:10.1080/13183222.2015.1041226.
- Blumler, Jay G., and Michael Gurevitch. 1995. *The Crisis of Public Communication*. London: Routledge.
- Blumler, Jay G., and Wolfgang Hoffmann-Riem. 1992. "New Roles for Public Service Television." In *Television and the Public Interest: Vulnerable Values in Western European Broadcasting*, edited by Jay G. Blumler. Sage Publications.
- Boczkowski, Pablo J. 2004. *Digitizing the News. Innovation in Online Newspapers*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bolin, Göran. 2014. "Television Journalism, Politics, and Entertainment: Power and Autonomy in the Field of Television Journalism." *Television & New Media* 15 (4): 336–49.
- Bonner, Frances. 2003. *Ordinary Television : Analyzing Popular TV*. London: Sage.
- Boogers, Marcel, and Gerrit Voerman. 2010. "Independent Local Political Parties in the Netherlands." *Local Government Studies* 36 (1): 75–90. doi:10.1080/03003930903435807.
- Bordwell, David, and Kristin Thompson. 2004. *Film Art : An Introduction*. 7th ed.

Boston: McGraw-Hill.

- Borg, James. 2016. *Talkability: Discover the Secrets of Effective Conversation*. FT Press.
- Boukes, Mark, and Hajo G. Boomgaarden. 2016. "Politician Seeking Voter: How Interviews on Entertainment Talk Shows Affect Trust in Politicians." *International Journal of Communication*; Vol 10 (2016). <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2849>.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson. 1998. *On Television*. New York: The New Press.
- Brants, Kees. 1998. "Who's Afraid of Infotainment?" *European Journal of Communication* 13 (3): 315.
- . 2005. "Informatief, Hard En Toch Leuk. Journalistieke Stijlen En Politieke Bias in Tv-Interviews." In *Politiek En Media in Verwarring: De Verkiezingscampagnes in Het Lange Jaar 2002*, edited by Kees Brants and Philip Van Praag. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- . 2008. "Risico's, Schandalen En Publiciteit. De Nieuwswaardigheid van Een Falende Overheid."
- Brants, Kees, and Jo Bardoel. 2008. "Death Duties Kelly, Fortuyn and Their Challenge to Media Governance." *European Journal of Communication* 23 (4): 471–89. doi:10.1177/0267323108096995.
- Brants, Kees, Claes H De Vreese, Judith Möller, and Philip Van Praag. 2010. "The Real Spiral of Cynicism? Symbiosis and Mistrust between Politicians and Journalists." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 15 (1): 25–40.
- Brants, Kees, and Peter Neijens. 1998. "The Infotainment of Politics." *Political Communication* 15 (2): 149–64.
- Brants, Kees, and Philip van Praag. 2015. "Beyond Media Logic." *Journalism Studies* 0 (0): 1–14. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2015.1065200.
- Brants, Kees, and Philip Van Praag. 2005. *Politiek En Media in Verwarring : De Verkiezingscampagnes in Het Lange Jaar 2002*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- . 2006. "From Accommodation to Professionalisation? The Changing Culture and Environment of Dutch Political Communication." *Changing Media, Changing Europe* 3: 97–110.
- Broersma, Marcel, Bas Den Herder, and Birte Schohaus. 2013. "A Question of Power." *Journalism Practice* 7 (4): 388–95. doi:10.1080/17512786.2013.802474.
- Brown, Robin. 2011. "Mediatization and News Management." In *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy Challenging the Primacy of Politics*, edited by Kees Brants and Katrin Voltmer, 59–74. Basingstoke [etc.]: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bucy, Erik P, and John E. Newhagen. 1999. "The Micro- and Macro-drama of Politics on Television: Effects of Media Format on Candidate Evaluations." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 43 (2): 193–210.

- Buneau, M.A. 2001. "Up for the Price?" *Television Business International*, 25–28.
- Caillouis, Roger. 2001. *Man, Play and Games*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Cao, Xiaoxia. 2010. "Hearing It From Jon Stewart: The Impact of the Daily Show on Public Attentiveness to Politics." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 22 (1): 26–46. doi:10.1093/ijpor/edp043.
- Cappela, Joseph N., and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 1996. "News Frames, Political Cynicism, and Media Cynicism." *Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science* 546: 71.
- Chalaby, Jean K. 2011. "The Making of an Entertainment Revolution: How the TV Format Trade Became a Global Industry." *European Journal of Communication* 26 (4): 293–309.
- . 2012. "At the Origin of a Global Industry: The TV Format Trade as an Anglo-American Invention." *Media, Culture & Society* 34 (1): 36–52.
- . 2015. *The Format Age: Television's Entertainment Revolution*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2002. "Qualitative Interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis." In *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, 675–94. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Charmaz, Kathy, and Richard G. Mitchell. 2001. "Grounded Theory in Ethnography." In *Handbook of Ethnography*, edited by Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland, and Lyn Lofland, 160–74. London: Sage.
- Clayman, Steven E. 2010. "Address Terms in the Service of Other Actions: The Case of News Interview Talk." *Discourse & Communication* 4 (2): 161–83.
- Clayman, Steven E., Marc N. Elliott, John Heritage, and Laurie L. McDonald. 2006. "Historical Trends in Questioning Presidents, 1953-2000." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36 (4): 561–83.
- Clayman, Steven E., and John Heritage. 2002. "Questioning Presidents: Journalistic Deference and Adversarialness in the Press Conferences of U.S. Presidents Eisenhower and Reagan." *Journal of Communication* 52 (4): 749.
- . 2007. "When Does the Watchdog Bark? Conditions of Aggressive Questioning in Presidential News Conferences."
- Clayman, Steven E., John Heritage, Marc N. Elliott, and Laurie L. McDonald. 2007. "When Does the Watchdog Bark? Conditions of Aggressive Questioning in Presidential News Conferences." *American Sociological Review* 72 (1): 23–41. doi:10.1177/000312240707200102.
- Coleman, Stephen. 2011. "Representation and Mediated Politics: Representing Representation in an Age of Irony." In *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy Challenging the Primacy of Politics*, edited by Kees Brants and Katrin Voltmer, 39–56. Basingstroke: Macmillan.
- Collins, Richard, Adam Finn, Stuart McFadyen, and Colin Hoskins. 2001. "Public Service Broadcasting beyond 2000: Is There a Future for Public Service Broad-

- casting?" *Canadian Journal of Communication* 26 (1).
- Cook, Timothy E. 1997. *Governing With the News. The News Media as a Political Institution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Corner, John. 1999. *Critical Ideas in Television Studies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- . 2000. "Mediated Persona and Political Culture: Dimensions of Structure and Process." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 3 (3): 386.
- Corner, John, and Dick Pels. 2003a. "Introduction: The Re-Styling of Politics." In *Media and the Restyling of Politics : Consumerism, Celebrity and Cynicism*, 1–18. London etc.: Sage.
- . 2003b. *Media and the Restyling of Politics : Consumerism, Celebrity and Cynicism*. London etc.: Sage.
- Costera Meijer, Irene. 2001. "The Public Quality of Popular Journalism: Developing a Normative Framework." *Journalism Studies* 2 (2): 189–205.
- . 2005. "Impact or Content?: Ratings vs Quality in Public Broadcasting." *European Journal of Communication* 20 (1): 27–53. doi:10.1177/0267323105049632.
- Costera Meijer, Irene, and Robert Adolfsson. 2006. *De Toekomst van Het Nieuws : Hoe Kunnen Journalisten En Programmamakers Tegemoetkomen Aan de Wensen En Verlangens van Tieners En Twintigers Op Het Gebied van Onafhankelijke En Pluriforme Informatievoorziening?* Amsterdam: Cramwinckel.
- Cottle, Simon. 2000. "New(s) Times: Towards a (Second Wave(of News Ethnography)." *Communications* 25 (1): 19–41.
- . 2007. "Ethnography and News Production: New(s) Developments in the Field*." *Sociology Compass* 1 (1): 1–16.
- Cramer, Janet M., and Michael McDewitt. 2004. "Ethnographic Journalism." In *Qualitative Research in Journalism. Taking It to the Streets*, edited by Sharon H. Iorio, 127–44. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Cushion, Stephen. 2012. *Television Journalism*. London: SAGE.
- Cushion, Stephen, and Richard Thomas. 2013. "The Mediatization of Politics: Interpreting the Value of Live versus Edited Journalistic Interventions in U.K. Television News Bulletins." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 18 (3): 360–80.
- Daalmeijer, Joop. 2004. "Public Service Broadcasting in the Netherlands." *Trends in Communication* 12 (1): 33–45.
- Dahlgren, Peter. 1995. *Television and the Public Sphere : Citizenship, Democracy and the Media*. London: Sage.
- . 2003. "Reconfiguring Civic Culture in the New Media Milieu." In *Media and the Restyling of Politics*, edited by John Corner and Dick Pels, 151–70. London: Sage Publications.
- . 2005. "Television, Public Spheres, and Civic Culture." In *A Companion to Television*, edited by Janet Wasko. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

- Davis, Aeron. 2007. *The Mediation of Power: A Critical Introduction*. London; New York: Routledge.
- . 2009. "Journalist-Source Relations, Mediated Reflexivity and the Politics of Politics." *Journalism Studies* 10 (2): 204–19. doi:10.1080/14616700802580540.
- . 2013. *Promotional Cultures. The Rise and Spread of Advertising, Public Relations, Marketing and Branding*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- De Beus, Jos. 2001. *Een Primaat van Politiek*. Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UVA.
- . 2011. "Audience Democracy: An Emerging Pattern in Postmodern Political Communication." In *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy. Challenging the Primacy of Politics*, edited by Kees Brants and Katrin Voltmer, 19–38. Basingstroke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- De Haan, Yael. 2012. "Between Professional Autonomy and Public Responsibility. Accountability and Responsiveness in Dutch Media and Journalism." Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.
- De Haan, Yael, and Jo Bardoel. 2009. "Publieke Verantwoording of Politieke Opzet? Evaluatie van de Eerste Visitatie van de Nederlandse Publieke Omroep." *Tijdschrift Voor Communicatiewetenschap* 37 (3): 197–214.
- . 2011. "From Trust to Accountability: Negotiating Media Performance in the Netherlands, 1987–2007." *European Journal of Communication* 26 (3): 230–46.
- De Haan, Yael, Harmen Groenhardt, Ad van Liempt, Niek Hietbrink, Anouk Kragtwijk, Erik Wolters, Freek Diephuis, Jimmy Leenders, Arjanne Aleman, and Tijmen de Groen. 2013. "Gerepeteerde Toneelstukjes of Inhoudelijke Verkiezingsstrijd. Een Onderzoek Naar de Onderhandelingen Tussen Politici En Media Tijdens de Nederlandse Verkiezingscampagne van 2012." Utrecht: Hogeschool Utrecht.
- De Vreese, Claes H., and Matthijs Elenbaas. 2008. "Media in the Game of Politics: Effects of Strategic Metacoverage on Political Cynicism." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13 (3): 285–309. doi:10.1177/1940161208319650.
- De Vries, Jack. 2014. "Foreword." In *De Patatbalie: Do's and Don'ts van het Intrigerende Kat- en Muispel Tussen Media en Politici in Den Haag*, by Hans Izaak Kriek. Uithoorn: Karakter Uitgevers.
- Deming, Karen. 2005. "Locating the Televisual in Golden Age Television." In *A Companion to Television*, edited by Janet Wasko. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research (3rd Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Djerf-Pierre, Monica, and Lennart Weibull. 2008. "From Public Educator to Interpreting Ombudsman. Regimes of Political Journalism in Swedish Public Service Broadcast, 1925-2005." In *Communicating Politics. Political Communication in the Nordic Countries*, edited by Jesper Strömbäck, Mark Orsten, and Toril

- Aalberg, 195–214. Gothenburg: Nordicom.
- Domingo, David. 2003. "Ethnography for New Media Studies: A Field Report of Its Weaknesses and Benefits." In . Institute for New Media Studies, University of Minnesota.
- . 2008. "Inventing Online Journalism: A Constructivist Approach to the Development of Online News." In *Making Online News. The Ethnography of New Media Production*, edited by Chris Paterson and David Domingo, 15–28. New York: Peter Lang.
- Donders, Karen, and Hilde Van den Bulck. 2014. "The 'Digital Argument' in Public Service Media Debates. An Analysis of Conflicting Values in Flemish Management Contract Negotiations for VRT." In *The Value of Public Service Media*, edited by Gregory Ferrell Lowe and Fiona Martin, 145–65. Göteborg: Nordicom.
- . 2016. "Decline and Fall of Public Service Media Values in the International Content Acquisition Market: An Analysis of Small Public Broadcasters Acquiring BBC Worldwide Content." *European Journal of Communication* 31 (3): 299–316. doi:10.1177/0267323116635833.
- Driessen, Olivier, Karin Raeymaeckers, Hans Verstraeten, and Sarah Vandebussche. 2010. "Personalization according to Politicians: A Practice Theoretical Analysis of Mediatization." *Communications: The European Journal of Communication Research* 35 (3): 309–26.
- Ekström, Mats, and Åsa Kroon Lundell. 2011. "The Joint Construction of a Journalistic Expert Identity in Studio Interactions between Journalists on TV News." *Text & Talk* 31 (6): 661–81.
- Ellis, John, Andrea Esser, and Juan Francisco Gutiérrez Lozano. 2016. "Editorial." *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture* 5 (9): 1–5.
- Entman, Robert M. 2004. *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Chicago, IL US: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2007. "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power." *Journal of Communication* 57 (1): 163–73. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00336.x.
- Epstein, Edward J. 1974. *News from Nowhere*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Eriksson, Göran. 2010. "Politicians in Celebrity Talk Show Interviews: The Narrativization of Personal Experiences." *Text & Talk* 30 (5): 529–51.
- . 2011. "Politicians' Performances of 'Ordinariness' in Talk Show Interviews." *Conference Papers – International Communication Association*, 1–27.
- Eriksson, Göran, and Johan Östman. 2013. "Cooperative or Adversarial? Journalists' Enactment of the Watchdog Function in Political News Production." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* XX (X): 1–21. doi:10.1177/1940161213482493.
- Esser, Andrea. 2010. "Television Formats: Primetime Staple, Global Market." *Popular Communication* 8 (4): 273–92.

- Esser, Frank. 2013. "Mediatization as a Challenge: Media Logic versus Political Logic." In *Democracy in the Age of Globalization and Mediatization*, edited by Hanspeter Kriesi, Sandra Lavenex, Frank Esser, Jörg Matthes, Marc Bühlmann, and Daniel Bochsler, 155–76. Basingstroke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2001. *Language and Power*. 2nd ed. Harlow etc.: Longman.
- Farnsworth, Stephen, and Robert Lichter. 2008. "Trends in Television Network News Coverage of US Elections." In *The Handbook of Election News Coverage around the World*, edited by Jesper Strömbäck and Lynda Lee Kaid, 41–57. London: Routledge.
- Faugier, Jean, and Mary Sargeant. 1997. "Sampling Hard to Reach Populations." *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 26 (4): 790–97.
- Ferrell Lowe, Gregory, Peter Goodwin, and Nobuto Yamamoto. 2016. "Crossing Borders & Boundaries in PSM. Heritage, Compliaction and Development." In *Crossing Borders and Boundaries in Public Service Media RIPE@2015*, edited by Gregory Ferrell Lowe and Nobuto Yamamoto, 11–31. Göteborg.
- Fictoor, Joke, Yvonne Leunissen, Lody Crabbendam, Rob Van Dongen, Kees Groenewoud, Fred Hoekstra, and Peter Horssekenberg. 2006. *Televisiemaken: Van Idee Tot Programmaformat*. Amsterdam: Boom onderwijs.
- Fink, Katherine, and Michael Schudson. 2014. "The Rise of Contextual Journalism, 1950s–2000s." *Journalism* 15 (1): 3–20. doi:10.1177/1464884913479015.
- Fiske, John. 1992. "Popularity and the Politics of Information." In *Journalism and Popular Culture*, edited by Peter Dahlgren. CA: SAGE Publications.
- . 1994. *Television Culture*. Repr. London: Routledge.
- Fiske, John, and John Hartley. 1978. *Reading Television*. London etc.: Methuen & Co. Ltd.
- Fontana, Andera, and James H. Frey. 2005. "The Interview: From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement." In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 3rd ed, 695–728. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Franklin, Bob. 2003. "A Good Day to Bury Bad News?": Journalists, Sources and the Packaging of Politics." In *News, Public Relations and Power*, edited by Simon Cottle, 45–61. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Freelon, D. 2010. "ReCal: Intercoder Reliability Calculation as a Web Service." *Journal of Internet Science* 5 (1): 20–33.
- Gaber, Ivor. 2000. "Government by Spin: An Analysis of the Process." *Media, Culture & Society* 22 (4): 507–18. doi:10.1177/016344300022004008.
- Gans, Herbert J. 1979. *Deciding What's News*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Culture*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gerhards, Claudia. 2002. *Daily Talkshows : Untersuchungen Zu Einem Umstrittenen TV-Format*. Frankfurt am Main; Berlin; Bern; Bruxelles; New York; Oxford; Wien: Lang.

- Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research : Principles and Practices; Case Study Research : Principles and Practices*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Glaser, Barney G. 1992. *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glynn, Kevin. 2000. *Tabloid Culture : Trash Taste, Popular Power, and the Transformation of American Television*. Durham, N.C., etc: Duke University Press.
- Goffman, Erving. 1984. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. 8th reprint. Harmondsworth: Penguin books.
- Goodwin, Peter. 2014. "The Price of Everything and the Value of Nothing? Economic Arguments and the Politics of Public Service Media." In *The Value of Public Service Media*, edited by Gregory Ferrell Lowe and Fiona Martin, 77–87. Göteborg: Nordicom.
- Grabe, Maria Elizabeth, and Jessica G. Myrick. 2016. "Informed Citizenship in a Media-Centric Way of Life." *Journal of Communication* 66 (2): 215–35. doi:10.1111/jcom.12215.
- Grabe, Maria Elizabeth, Shuhua Zhou, and Brooke Barnett. 2001. "Explicating Sensationalism in Television News: Content and the Bells and Whistles of Form." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 45 (4): 635.
- Gripsrud, Jostein. 2008. "Tabloidization, Popular Journalism, and Democracy." In *The Tabloid Culture Reader*, edited by Anita Biressi and Heather Nunn, 34–44. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- Gubrium, Jaber F., and James A. Holstein, eds. 2002. *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Haarman, Louann. 2001. "Performing Talk." In *Television Talk Shows: Performance, Discourse, Spectacle*, edited by Andrew Tolson. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1962. *Strukturwandel Der Öffentlichkeit : Untersuchungen Zu Einer Kategorie Der Bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Neuwied: Herman Luchterhand Verlag.
- . 2006. "Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research." *Communication Theory* 16 (4): 411–26. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2006.00280.x.
- Haeck, Jacobus Frederik. 1998. *Idee En Programmaformule in Het Auteursrecht*. Deventer: Kluwer].
- Haenens, Leen d', Helena Sousa, and Olof Hultén. 2011. "From Public Service Broadcasting to Public Service Media." In *Media in Europe Today*, edited by Josef Trappel, Werner A. Meier, Leen d'Haenens, Jeanette Steemers, and Barbara Thomass. Bristol, Chicago: Intellect.
- Hallin, Daniel C. 1992. "Sound Bite News: Television Coverage of Elections, 1968–1988." *Journal of Communication* 42 (2): 5.

- Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. 2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hamo, Michal, Zohar Kampf, and Limor Shifman. 2010. "Surviving the 'Mock Interview' : Challenges to Political Communicative Competence in Contemporary Televised Discourse." *Media, Culture & Society* 32 (2): 247–66.
- Hart, Roderick P. 1994. *Seducing America: How Television Charms the Modern Voter*. New York, NY US: Oxford University Press.
- Hepp, Andreas. 2013. "The Communicative Figurations of Mediatized Worlds: Mediatization Research in Terms of the 'Mediation of Everything.'" *Communicative Figurations*, 06-08-2013.
- Hill, Annette. 2005. *Reality TV: Audiences and Popular Factual Television*. Psychology Press.
- Hjarvard, Stig. 2008. "The Mediatization of Society: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change." *NORDICOM Review* 29 (2): 105–34.
- . 2014. "Mediatization and Cultural and Social Change: An Institutional Perspective." In *Mediatization of Communication*, edited by Knut Lundby. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Hofer, Lutz, Wouter Van der Brug, and Philip Van Praag. 2013. "Personalisering van de Politiek: Fabel of Niet?" In *Omstreden Democratie. Over de Problemen van Een Succesverhaal*, edited by Remieg Aerts and Peter d. Goede, 167–86. Amsterdam: Boom.
- Holtz-Bacha, Christina. 2004. "Germany: How the Private Life of Politicians Got into the Media." *Parliamentary Affairs* 57 (1): 41–52.
- Houtman, Dick, and Peter Achterberg. 2010. "De Haagse Kaasstolp En de Mensen in de Samenleving: Populisme En Personalisering in de Nederlandse Politiek. (Dutch/Flemish)." *Sociologie* 6 (1): 102–11.
- Huizinga, Johan. 1955. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Huls, Erica, and Jasper Varwijk. 2011. "Political Bias in TV Interviews." *Discourse & Society* 22 (1): 48–65.
- Ingham, Bernard. 2003. *The Wages of Spin*. First Edition edition. London: John Murray.
- Johnson, John M. 2002. "In-Depth Interviewing." In *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, 103–20. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jones, Jeffrey P. 2005. *Entertaining Politics : New Political Television and Civic Culture*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jones, Nicholas. 1996. *Soundbites and Spin Doctors: How Politicians Manipulate the Media and Vice Versa*. Indigo.
- Kee, Peter. 2012. *Het Briefje van Bleker : Over Intriges Op Het Binnenhof, Politici, Spindoctors En Pauw & Witteman*. Amsterdam: Atlas Contact.

- Keinonen, Heidi. 2016. "Television Format As a Site of Cultural Negotiation: Studying the Structures, Agencies and Practices of Format Adaptation." *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture* 5 (9): 60–71.
- Keller, Harald. 2009. *Die Geschichte Der Talkshow in Deutschland*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Kepplinger, Hans Mathias. 2002. "Mediatization of Politics: Theory and Data." *Journal of Communication* 52 (4): 972.
- Keulen, Jolien van. 2016. "Aesthetic Proximity: The Role of Stylistic Programme Elements in Format Localisation." *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture* 5 (9): 93–104.
- Kleinnijenhuis, Jan, D. Oegema, and J. H. Takens. 2009. "Personalisering van de Politiek." In *Jaarboek Documentatiecentrum Nederlandse Politieke Partijen*. Groningen: University of Groningen.
- Kleinnijenhuis, Jan, Janet Takens, Anita van Hoof, Wouter van Atteveld, and Annemarie Walter. 2013. "Gevaren van Medialogica Voor de Democratie." In *Omstreden Democratie. Over de Problemen van Een Succesverhaal*, edited by Remieg Aerts and Peter d. Goede, 111–30. Amsterdam: Boom.
- Klinger, Ulrike, and Jakob Svensson. 2015. "The Emergence of Network Media Logic in Political Communication: A Theoretical Approach." *New Media & Society* 17 (8): 1241–57. doi:10.1177/1461444814522952.
- Kroon Lundell, Åsa, and Mats Ekström. 2013. "Interpreting the News: Swedish Correspondents as Expert Sources, 1982–2012." *Journalism Practice* 7 (4): 517–32. doi:10.1080/17512786.2013.802490.
- Kunelius, Risto, and Esa Reunanen. 2016. "Changing Power of Journalism: The Two Phases of Mediatization." *Communication Theory* 26 (4): 369–88. doi:10.1111/comt.12098.
- Lane, Shelley. 1992. "Format Rights in Television Shows: Law and the Legislative Process / Shelley Lane."
- Langer, John. 1998. *Tabloid Television : Popular Journalism and The "other News."* London: Routledge.
- Lauerbach, Gerda. 2010. "Manoeuvring between the Political, the Personal and the Private: Talk, Image and Rhythm in TV Dialogue." *Discourse & Communication* 4 (2): 125–59.
- Leurdijk, Andra. 1999. *Televisiejournalistiek over de multiculturele samenleving*. Het Spinhuis.
- Livingstone, Sonia M., and Peter Lunt. 1994. *Talk on Television : Audience Participation and Public Debate*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Lundby, Knut. 2009. "Media Logic: Looking for Social Interaction." In *Mediatization. Concept, Changes, Consequences*, edited by Knut Lundby, 101–20. New York: Peter Lang.
- Lundell, Åsa Kroon. 2010. "Dialogues between Journalists on the News: The Intra-

- professional 'Interview' as a Communicative Genre." *Media, Culture & Society* 32 (3): 429–50.
- Luyendijk, Joris. 2010. *Je Hebt Het Niet van Mij, Maar...: Een Maand Aan Het Binnenhof*. 6e dr. Amsterdam: Podium.
- Mancini, Paolo, and David L. Swanson. 1996. *Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and Their Consequences*. First Edition. Westport, Conn: Praeger.
- Manin, Bernard. 1997. *The Principles of Representative Government*. Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press.
- Manning, Paul. 2001. *News and News Sources: A Critical Introduction*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Mark, David. 2006. *Going Dirty : The Art of Negative Campaigning*. 1st Edition edition. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Mazzoleni, Gianpietro, and Winfried Schulz. 1999. "‘Mediatization’ of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?" *Political Communication* 16 (3): 247.
- Mazzoleni, Oscar, and Gerrit Voerman. 2016. "Memberless Parties." *Party Politics*, January, 1–10. doi:10.1177/1354068815627398.
- McNair, Brian. 2000. *Journalism and Democracy : An Evaluation of the Political Public Sphere*. London etc.: Routledge.
- . 2004. "PR Must Die: Spin, Anti-spin and Political Public Relations in the UK, 1997–2004." *Journalism Studies* 5 (3): 325–38. doi:10.1080/1461670042000246089.
- . 2009. *News and Journalism in the UK*. 5th ed. London: Routledge.
- McNair, Brian, Matthew Hibberd, and Philip Schlesinger. 2003. *Mediated Access: Broadcasting and Democratic Participation*. Luton: University of Luton Press.
- Meyen, Michael, Markus Thieroff, and Steffi Strenger. 2014. "Mass Media Logic and The Mediatization of Politics." *Journalism Studies* 15 (3): 271–88.
- Miller, David. 2004. "System Failure: It's Not Just the Media ? The Whole Political System Has Failed." *Journal of Public Affairs* 4 (4): 374–82.
- Mittell, Jason. 2004. *Genre and Television: From Cop Shows to Cartoons in American Culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Montgomery, Martin. 2008. "The Discourse of the Broadcast News Interview." *Journalism Studies* 9 (2): 260–77.
- . 2010. "Rituals of Personal Experience in Television News Interviews." *Discourse & Communication* 4 (2): 185–211.
- Moran, Albert. 2004. "The Pie and the Crust. Television Program Formats." In *The Television Studies Reader*, edited by Robert C. Allen and Annette Hill, 258. London: Routledge.
- . 2005. "Configurations of the Television Landscape." In *A Companion to Television*, edited by Janet Wasko. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

- . 2009. "Global Franchising, Local Customizing: The Cultural Economy of TV Program Formats." *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 23 (2): 115–25.
- Moran, Albert, and Justin Malbon. 2006. *Understanding the Global TV Format*. Bristol: Intellect Books.
- Newton, Kenneth. 2006. "May the Weak Force Be with You: The Power of the Mass Media in Modern Politics." *European Journal of Political Research* 45 (2): 209–34.
- Nieminen, Hannu, and Josef Trappel. 2011. "Media Serving Democracy." In *Media in Europe Today*, edited by Josef Trappel, Werner A. Meier, Leen d'Haenens, Jeanette Steemers, and Barbara Thomass. Bristol, Chicago: Intellect.
- Norris, Pippa. 2000. *A Virtuous Circle : Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies*. Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press.
- . , ed. 2010. *Public Sentinel: News Media & Governance Reform*. Washington DC: World Bank Publications.
- Nuijten, C. M., P. G. J. Hendriks Vettehen, A. L. Peeters, and J. W. J. Beentjes. 2007. "Over Competitie in de Televisienieuwsmarkt En Sensationeel Nieuws Als Publicistrekker . Het Nederlandse Televisienieuws in de Periode 1980-2004."
- Papathanassopoulos, Stylianos, Sharon Coen, James Curran, Toril Aalberg, David Rowe, Paul Jones, Hernando Rojas, and Rod Tiffen. 2013. "Online Threat, But Television Is Still Dominant." *Journalism Practice* 7 (6): 690–704. doi:10.1080/17512786.2012.761324.
- Paterson, Chris. 2008. "Introduction: Why Ethnography?" In *Making Online News. The Ethnography of New Media Production*, edited by Chris Paterson and David Domingo, 1–11. New York: Peter Lang.
- Patterson, Thomas E. 1993. *Out of Order*. New York, N.Y.: Knopf.
- . 1996. "Bad News, Bad Governance." *Annals of the America Academy of Political and Social Science* 546 (July 1996): 97–108.
- Pauka, Tom. 1991. *Paard Bijt Hond : Naar Het Beter Voorspellen En Beïnvloeden van Effecten van Publiciteit*. 's-Gravenhage: SDU.
- Paul, Nora. 2008. "Foreword." In *Making Online News: The Ethnography of New Media Production*, edited by Chris Paterson and David Domingo, ix–xi. New York: Peter Lang.
- Pels, Dick. 2003. "Aesthetic Representation of Political Style, Re-Balancing Identity and Difference in Media Democracy." In *Media and the Restyling of Politics: Consumerism, Celebrity and Cynicism*, edited by John Corner and Dick Pels. SAGE.
- Pels, Dick, and Henk Te Velde. 2000. *Politieke stijl: over presentatie en optreden in de politiek*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- Plake, Klaus. 1999. *Talkshows : Die Industrialisierung Der Kommunikation*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

- Pleijter, Alexander Rijk Johannes. 2006. *Typen En Logica van Kwalitatieve Inhoudsanalyse in de Communicatiewetenschap; Typen En Logica van Kwalitatieve Inhoudsanalyse in de Communicatiewetenschap*.
- Potter, Jonathan, and Margaret Wetherell. 1987. *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London ; Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Prenger, Mirjam, Leendert Van der Valk, Frank Van Vree, and Laura Van der Wal. 2011. *Gevaarlijk Spel: De Verhouding Tussen PR & Voorlichting En Journalistiek*. Studie van Het Stimuleringsfonds Voor de Pers 35. Diemen: AMB.
- Reich, Zvi. 2006. "The Process Model of News Initiative." *Journalism Studies* 7 (4): 497–514. doi:10.1080/14616700600757928.
- . 2008. "How Citizens Create News Stories." *Journalism Studies* 9 (5): 739–58. doi:10.1080/14616700802207748.
- Riffe, Daniel, Stephen Lacy, and Frederick Fico. 2005. *Analyzing Media Messages: Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research*. 2 edition. Mahwah, N.J: Routledge.
- Rodriguez, Hector. 2006. "The Playful and the Serious: An Approximation to Huizinga's Homo Ludens." *Game Studies* 6 (1). <http://gamestudies.org/0601/articles/rodrigues>.
- Ruigrok, Nel, Otto Scholten, Joep Schaper, Nadia Ismaili, and Kasper Welbers. 2011. "Nieuws & Actualiteiten Op Televisie: Pluriformiteit Rond de Middenstip." *Nieuwsmonitor*.
- Ryfe, David M. 2009. "Broader and Deeper: A Study of Newsroom Culture in a Time of Change." *Journalism* 10 (2): 197–216.
- Salgado, Susana, and Jesper Strömbäck. 2012. "Interpretive Journalism: A Review of Concepts, Operationalizations and Key Findings." *Journalism* 13 (2): 144–61. doi:10.1177/1464884911427797.
- Salgado, Susana, Jesper Strömbäck, Toril Aalberg, and Frank Esser. 2017. "Interpretive Journalism." In *Comparing Political Journalism*, 50–70. Routledge.
- Santen, Rosa van. 2012. *Popularization and Personalization : A Historical and Cultural Analysis of 50 Years of Dutch Political Television Journalism*.
- Savigny, Heather. 2008. *The Problem of Political Marketing*. New York: Continuum.
- Schlesinger, Philip. 1978. *Putting "Reality" Together*. London: Methuen.
- Schohaus, Birte. 2013. "The Perfect Cut. The Use of Quotes in Interpretation Strategies on Dutch Television News." *Journalism Practice* 7 (4): 502–16.
- Schohaus, Birte, Marcel Broersma, and Huub Wijfjes. 2016. "Negotiation Games." *Journalism Practice* 0 (0): 1–17. doi:10.1080/17512786.2016.1213138.
- Schudson, Michael. 1998a. "Public Journalism Movement and Its Problems." In *The Politics of the News/The News of Politics*, edited by Doris Graber and et al, 132–49. Washington: CQ Press.

- . 1998b. *The Good Citizen : A History of American Civic Life*. New York: Free Press.
- . 2000. "The Sociology of News Production Revisited (Again)." In *Mass Media and Society*, edited by J. Curran and M. Gurevitch, 3rd ed. London: Edward Arnold.
- . 2011. *The Sociology of News*. Second Edition edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Schütz, Astrid. 1995. "Entertainers, Experts, or Public Servants? Politicians' Self-Presentation on Television Talk Shows." *Political Communication* 12 (2): 211–21.
- Shattuc, Jane M. 2005. "The Shifting Terrain of American Talk Shows'." In *A Companion to Television*, edited by Janet Wasko. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Sigelman, Lee. 2001. "The Presentation of Self in Presidential Life: Onstage and Backstage With Johnson and Nixon." *Political Communication* 18 (1): 1–22.
- Silverman, David. 2001. *Interpreting Qualitative Data. Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Simons, Jan. 1998. *Zwevende Kiezers, Zappende Kijkers*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Singer, Jane B. 2008. "Ethnography of Newsroom Convergence." In *Making Online News. The Ethnography of New Media Production*, edited by Chris Paterson and David Domingo, 157–70. New York: Peter Lang.
- Stake, Robert E. 2005. "Qualitative Case Studies." In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 3rd ed, 443–66. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stasheff, Edward, and Rudy Bretz. 1951. *The Television Program : Its Writing, Direction, and Production*. New York: Wyn.
- Steele, Catherine A., and Kevin G. Barnhurst. 1996. "The Journalism of Opinion: Network News Coverage of U.S. Presidential Campaigns, 1968-1988." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 13 (3): 187.
- Steemers, Jeanette. 2003. "Public Service Broadcasting Is Not Dead Yet. Strategies in the 21st Century." In *Broadcasting & Convergence: New Articulations of the Public Service Remit*, edited by Taisto Hujanen and Gregory Ferrell Lowe, 123–36. RIPE. Gothenburg: Nordicom.
- Stigel, Jorgen. 2001. "Aesthetics of the Moment in Television. Actualisations in Time and Space." In *The Aesthetics of Television*, edited by Gunhild Agger and Jens Jensen, 25. Aalborg: Aalborg University Press.
- Street, John. 1997. *Politics and Popular Culture*. Cambridge etc.: Polity Press.
- . 2003. "The Celebrity Politician: Political Style and Popular Culture." In *Media and the Restyling of Politics*, edited by John Corner and Dick Pels. London: Sage Publications.
- Strömbäck, Jesper. 2008. "Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 13 (3): 228–46.

- Strömbäck, Jesper, and Frank Esser. 2014. "Introduction." *Journalism Studies* 15 (3): 243–55.
- Strömbäck, Jesper, and Lars W. Nord. 2006. "Do Politicians Lead the Tango? A Study of the Relationship between Swedish Journalists and Their Political Sources in the Context of Election Campaigns." *European Journal of Communication* 21 (2): 147–64. doi:10.1177/0267323105064043.
- Sussman, Fern. 2007. *Talkability: People Skills for Verbal Children on the Autism Spectrum; A Guide for Parent*. First edition. Toronto: Hanen Program.
- Takens, Janet, Nel Ruigrok, Anita Van Hoof, and Otto Scholten. 2010. "Old Ties from a New(s) Perspective: Diversity in the Dutch Press Coverage of the 2006 General Election Campaign." *Communications: The European Journal of Communication Research* 35 (4): 417–38.
- Tameling, Klaske. 2015. *En wat doen we online?: crossmediale dilemma's op de Nederlandse nieuwsredactie*. Amsterdam: Boom Lemma Uitgevers.
- Tedlock, Barbara. 2005. "The Observation of Participation and the EMergence of Public Ethnography." In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 3rd ed, 467–82. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Thorburn, David, Henry Jenkins, and Brad Seawell. 2003. *Rethinking Media Change : The Aesthetics of Transition; Rethinking Media Change : The Aesthetics of Transition*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Thornborrow, Joanna. 2001. "'Has It Ever Happened to You?': Talk Show Stories as Mediated Performances." In *Television Talk Shows: Discourse, Performances, Spectacle*, edited by Andrew Tolson, 117–137. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- . 2010. "'Going Public': Constructing the Personal in a Television News Interview." *Discourse & Communication* 4 (2): 105–23.
- Timberg, Bernard M., and Robert J. Erler. 2002. *Television Talk : A History of the TV Talk Show*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Tolson, Andrew. 2001. *Television Talk Shows : Discourse, Performance, Spectacle*. Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum.
- Tuchman, G. 1978. *Making News: A Study in the Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Van Aelst, Peter, Tamir Sheafer, Nicolas Hubé, and Stylianos Papathanassopoulos. 2017. "Personalization." In *Comparing Political Journalism*, 112–29. Routledge.
- Van Aelst, Peter, Tamir Sheafer, and James Stanyer. 2012. "The Personalization of Mediated Political Communication: A Review of Concepts, Operationalizations and Key Findings." *Journalism* 13 (2): 203–20.
- Van den Bulck, Hilde. 2009. "The Last yet Also the First Creative Act in Television?" *Media History* 15 (3): 321–44. doi:10.1080/13688800902966253.
- Van Dijck, José, and Thomas Poell. 2015. "Making Public Television Social? Public

- Service Broadcasting and the Challenges of Social Media.” *Television & New Media* 16 (2): 148–64. doi:10.1177/1527476414527136.
- Van Dijk, Machiel, Richard Nahuis, and Daniel Waagmeester. 2005. “Does Public Service Broadcasting Serve the Public? : The Future of Television in the Changing Media Landscape; Does Public Service Broadcasting Serve the Public? : The Future of Television in the Changing Media Landscape.” 05.36 televisie; 83.52 overheidseconomie. CPB Discussion Paper. Den Haag: CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis.
- Van Manen, J. C. H. 1994. *Televisieformats En -Ideeën Naar Nederlands Recht*. Amsterdam: Cramwinckel.
- Van Praag, Philip, and Kees Brants. 2000. *Tussen Beeld En Inhoud : Politiek En Media in de Verkiezingen van 1998*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- . 2014. *Media, Macht En Politiek: De Verkiezingscampagne van 2012*. Diemen: AMB.
- Van Santen, Rosa. 2012. *Popularization and Personalization : A Historical and Cultural Analysis of 50 Years of Dutch Political Television Journalism*.
- Van Santen, Rosa, and Liesbet Van Zoonen. 2009. “Stand van de Wetenschap : Popularisering En Personalisering in Politieke Communicatie.” *Tijdschrift Voor Communicatiewetenschap* 37 (2): 155.
- Van Weezel, Max. 2011. *Haagse Fluisteraars; Haagse Fluisteraars; Haagse Fluisteraars*. Amsterdam: Balans.
- Van Zoonen, Liesbet. 1998. “A Day at the Zoo: Political Communication, Pigs and Popular Culture.” *Media, Culture & Society* 20 (2): 183.
- . 2000. “De Talkshow: Personalisering Als Politieke Strategie.” In *Tussen Beeld En Inhoud: Politiek En Media in de Verkiezingen van 1998*, edited by Kees Brants and Philip Van Praag. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- . 2003. “After Dallas and Dynasty We Have... Democracy.” In *Media and the Restyling of Politics*, edited by Dick P. John Corner. London: SAGE Publications.
- . 2004a. *Media, Cultuur & Burgerschap : Een Inleiding*. 3e, gecorr. dr ed. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- . 2004b. “Popular Qualities in Public Broadcasting.” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 7 (3): 275–82.
- . 2005. *Entertaining the Citizen : When Politics and Popular Culture Converge*. Lanham, MD etc.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- . 2012. “I-Pistemology: Changing Truth Claims in Popular and Political Culture.” *European Journal of Communication* 27 (1): 56–67. doi:10.1177/0267323112438808.
- Van Zoonen, Liesbet, Stephen Coleman, and Anke Kuik. 2011. “The Elephant Trap: Politicians Performing in Television Comedy.” In *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy Challenging the Primacy of Politics*, edited by Kees

- Brants and Katrin Voltmer, 146–63. Basingstroke: Macmillan.
- Van Zoonen, Liesbet, and Christina Holtz-Bacha. 2000. “Personalisation in Dutch and German Politics: The Case of Talk Show.” *Javnost-The Public* 7 (2): 45–56.
- Voltmer, Katrin, and Kees Brants. 2011. “A Question of Control: Journalists and Politicians in Political Broadcast Interviews.” In *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy. Challenging the Primacy of Politics*, edited by Kees Brants and Katrin Voltmer, 126–45. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vraga, Emily K., Stephanie Edgerly, Leticia Bode, D. J. Carr, Mitchell Bard, Courtney N. Johnson, Mie Kim Young, and Dhavan V. Shah. 2012. “The Correspondent, the Comic, and the Combatant: The Consequences of Host Style in Political Talk Shows.” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 89 (1): 5–22.
- Vreese, Claes de, Frank Esser, David Nicolas Hopmann, Toril Aalberg, and Peter Van Aelst. 2017. “Our Goal - Comparing News Performance.” In *Comparing Political Journalism*, 1–9. Routledge.
- Warren, Carol A. B. 2002. “Qualitative Interviewing.” In *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, 83–102. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wasko, Janet. 2005. “Introduction.” In *A Companion to Television*, edited by Janet Wasko. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Wetherell, Margaret. 1998. “Positioning and Interpretative Repertoires: Conversation Analysis and Post-Structuralism in Dialogue.” *Discourse & Society* 9 (3): 387–412. doi:10.1177/0957926598009003005.
- Wijffes, Huub. 2004. *Journalistiek in Nederland 1850-2000. Beroep, Cultuur En Organisatie*. Amsterdam: Boom Lemma Uitgevers.
- . 2005. “De Journalistiek van Het Journaal : Vijftig Jaar Televisienieuws in Nederland.” *Tijdschrift Voor Mediageschiedenis* 8 (2): 7–29.
- . 2009. *VARA : Biografie van Een Omroep*. Amsterdam: Boom.
- Wijffes, Huub, and Gerrit Voerman. 2009. *Mediatization of Politics in History*. Vol. ol. 35. Leuven etc.: Peeters.
- Williams, Raymond. 1990. *Television : Technology and Cultural Form*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Wimmer, Roger D., and Joseph R. Dominick. 2011. *Mass Media Research. An Introduction*. 9th ed. Cengage Learning.
- Yaxley, Heather, and Alison Theaker. 2011. *The Public Relations Handbook*. 4 edition. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Yin, Robert K. 1989. *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*. Vol. 5. London: Sage.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Vragenlijst experts

- Waarom word je vaak uitgenodigd als expert? Wat maakt je tot een geliefde gast aan?
- Hoe zou jij de definitie van een expert in een talkshow omschrijven? Kennelijk is dat iets anders dan bijvoorbeeld hoe wetenschap een expert zou definiëren?
- Word je vaker uitgenodigd naar mate je vaker op tv bent geweest?
- Zijn er onderwerpen waar je al weet, nu gaan ze bellen, zo ja welke en hoe komt dat?
- Draag je zelf ook wel onderwerpen aan, en zo ja, wat voor?
- Wat kun jij aan een onderwerp toevoegen wat (actieve) politici niet kunnen/willen/durven?
- In hoeverre krijgt de kijker een ander beeld van (politieke) gebeurtenissen als jij aan tafel zit ipv een politicus?
- Heb je als oud-politica/cus soms nog wel het gevoel dat je jouw partij moet beschermen of verdedigen? Of nodigen ze je juist uit als “afvallige”?
- Hoe bereid je onderwerpen voor? Lees je je inhoudelijk in of ga je vooral af op je gevoel/mening?
- Wat voor programma’s vind jij het prettigst/minst prettig, met het oog op jouw rol als expert, en waarom?
- Ik neem aan dat je vaker wordt gevraagd dan we je daadwerkelijk op televisie terugzien. Welke afwegingen maak jij om wel of niet mee te doen?
- Over wat voor onderwerpen zou je nooit aanschuiven of zijn er geen taboes?
- Heb je vaste contactpersonen bij programma’s? In hoeverre kunnen zij (of de relatie met een programma) je keuze beïnvloeden en je bijvoorbeeld alsnog overhalen?
- Wanneer beschouw je een talkshow optreden als geslaagd/mislukt? Waar heeft dat mee te maken?
- Stel je eisen aan medegasten? Wat voor combinatie werkt (niet)?
- Zit je graag met politici aan tafel?

APPENDIX B

Vragenlijst redacteur/journalist/producent

Politiek

- Andere talkshows steeds minder politiek, jullie doen het wel elke week, vaak als grootste gesprek, vanwaar deze keuze?
- Jullie hebben maar 1 keer per week, aan de hand van welke criteria kiezen jullie gasten?
- Wanneer is een politicus geschikt voor jullie?
- Is contact met politici/voorlichters veranderd door de jaren heen?
- Is het nu moeilijker/makkelijker iemand te krijgen?
- Moeten jullie ze over de streep halen of komen ze graag?
- Zijn er politici die zich vaak aanbieden? Verschilt de samenwerking per partij of politicus?
- Wat voor soort afspraken maken jullie van te voren?
- Worden er eisen gesteld? Waarover? Hoe ver ga je daarin mee?
- Woordvoerders: handig of hinderlijk?
- Hoe prettig/onhandig is dat 'mee-denken' van woordvoerders/voorlichters?

Format

- Zou je *Buitenhof* als talk show omschrijven? Hoe zou je het zelf omschrijven?
- Welke sfeer willen jullie met het programma creëren?
- Wat is een echt *Buitenhof* onderwerp?
- Hoe kijk je tot nu toe terug op dit seizoen?
- Wanneer is een uitzending geslaagd?
- Welke elementen moeten in een goed gesprek/interview zitten?
- Wat is de kracht van *Buitenhof*?
- En is er ook een minpuntje?
- Merken jullie verschil als er nieuwe programma's opkomen? Is er concurrentie? Hoe zit het met WNL op zondag?

Voorbereiding

- Hoe is de voorbereiding? In vergelijking met een dagelijks programma hebben jullie meer tijd, neem ik aan?
- Hebben jullie ook een redacteur rondlopen in Den Haag of hoeft dat niet bij een wekelijks programma?
- Speelt actualiteit een rol of ligt veel ook al lang vast van te voren?
- De gesprekken zijn relatief lang, in hoeverre zijn die van te voren besproken, bijvoorbeeld de opbouw of hoofdlijnen?

APPENDIX C

Vragenlijst politici/woordvoerder

Vorbereiding/keuze

- Om te beginnen, hoe is je contact met redacties? Hoe gaat dat in zijn werk? Wat is prettig?onprettig?
- Wat is de rolverdeling tussen u en uw woordvoerder? Wat bepaalt u/wat hij?
- Hoe vaak benadert u programma's? Wat is de aanleiding?
- Door welke programma's wordt u (hoe vaak) benaderd? Wat is de aanleiding? Op welke momenten?
- Heeft u een voorkeur voor een bepaald programma? Waarom?
- Wat voor eisen verbindt u aan u deelname? Waarover onderhandelt u?
- Welke afwegingen maakt u om wel/niet aan te schuiven?
- Spelen eventuele medegasten een rol in deze overwegingen? Welke aspecten spelen nog meer een rol?

Format

- Welke rol spelen talkshows voor u? En televisie in het algemeen?
- Welke rol speelt het programma format voor u? Vergt een ander format andere voorbereiding?
- Weet u van te voren wat er allemaal in een uitzending te gebeuren staat?
- Hoe bereidt u zich voor op beperkte interviewtijd?
- Mengt u zich in gesprekken met medegasten? Of andere onderwerpen? Wat zijn de voordelen/valkuilen? Wordt hier van te voren over gesproken? Verschilt dit per programma?
- Bereidt u zich ook voor op medegasten? Wat voor gasten zijn prettig?
- Speelt het tijdstip van uitzending/het zender- of programma-profiel een rol in uw voorbereiding en presentatie? Welke?
- Zijn er onderwerpen die beter geschikt zijn voor een bepaald programma? Voorbeelden? Selecteert u hierop?
- Hoe belangrijk is de 'naborrel', de derde helft?

Politieke strategie

- Wat is u een algemeen beleid/strategie wat televisie-optredens betreft?
- Wat wilt u bereiken met u televisieoptredens? Wanneer is een deelname aan een programma geslaagd? Voorbeeld?
- Heeft u weleens gedacht, hier had ik beter niet aan mee kunnen doen? En zo ja, wanneer/waarom? Wordt dit geëvalueerd?
- Hoe belangrijk is een goeie sfeer/relatie met redactie? Verandert dit het interview? Maakt dat pittig gesprek makkelijker of juist moeilijker?
- Contact met redacties: strijd of samenwerking?
- Hoe zet u zelf onderwerpen op de agenda in zo'n gesprek?

Interview

- Hoe bereidt u zich op het interview voor? Verschilt dit per programma/presentator/onderwerp?
- Welke rol speelt uw woordvoerder erin?
- Is het lastig als medegasten zich ermee bemoeien?
- Hoe belangrijk zijn persoonlijke anekdotes?
- Hoe ver gaat u mee in persoonlijke vragen? Is er een grens? Spreken jullie die van te voren af?
- Heeft u een voorkeur voor een bepaalde interviewstijl?
- Hoe belangrijk of storend vindt u de entertainment gehalte van het gesprek? Hoe ver gaat u daarin mee?

Persoon politicus

- Op welke manier probeert u een authentiek beeld van uzelf te laten zien?
- zijn er persoonlijke karaktertrekken die jullie proberen te benadrukken? Of waar jullie juist proberen die niet naar voren te laten komen?
- Moet je tv leuk vinden? Of kun je dat voorbereiden? Heeft u er moeite mee als het al té gezellig wordt? U lijkt soms een beetje gespannen.
- Zijn er trucs/strategieën voor? Oefent u dit?

Nederlandse samenvatting

Eind 2016 pleitte een aantal bekende journalisten en media-persoonlijkheden voor een nieuwe talkshow, omdat de bestaande shows geen afspiegeling van de samenleving zouden tonen. Bepaalde gevoelens, opinies en groepen zouden niet gehoord worden. Op dat moment waren er op zijn minst zes talkshows op de nationale televisie die actualiteiten op het gebied van politiek, sport, cultuur en maatschappij behandelden. Zijn zij er allemaal in gefaald een pluri-form beeld te schetsen van de politieke actualiteit?

Dit proefschrift heeft onderzocht hoe Nederlandse talkshows omgaan met politiek, hoe de verschillende formats de keuze voor politieke gasten en onderwerpen beïnvloeden en of zij een voorkeur hebben voor bepaalde gasten. De altijd gespannen verhouding tussen politiek en journalistiek lijkt in talkshows extra op scherp te staan. Terwijl politici klagen dat ze zich moeten aanpassen aan de wetten en grillen van de programma's, verwijten journalisten en redacteurs de politiek juist dat voorlichters elke ruimte voor spontaniteit dicht-timmeren door hun strikte voorbereiding. Deze gespannen relatie tussen politiek en talkshows is nog niet uitgebreid onderzocht. Dit onderzoek geeft daarom antwoord op de vraag:

In hoeverre zijn de formats van Nederlandse talkshows van invloed op de interactie tussen politieke en journalistieke actoren voor en achter de schermen van deze programma's?

Deze vraag is door middel van een combinatie van onderzoeksmethodes beantwoord. Interviews met politici, woordvoerders, voorlichters, redacteurs, journalisten en vaak gevraagde experts werden gecombineerd met een inhoudsanalyse van zes programma's (*Buitenhof*, *WNL op Zondag*, *De Wereld Draait Door*, *RTL Late Night*, *Pauw* en *Jinek*) en kortlopend etnografisch onderzoek op de redacties van *Pauw* en *Jinek*. Dit heeft een gelaagd beeld opgeleverd van hoe deze programma's omgaan met politiek.

Om zo veel mogelijk verschillende aspecten van de verhoudingen tussen politici en journalisten te belichten zijn vier afzonderlijke casestudies verricht. De eerste (hoofdstuk 4) bevat een analyse van de “interpretive repertoires” van voorlichters en woordvoerders. De studie toont hoe zij hun eigen rol in de onderhandelingen en omgang met talkshows zien en hoe zij de spelmetafoor gebruiken om hun werkwijze te legitimeren. In de tweede casus (hoofdstuk 5) is middels een netwerkanalyse in kaart gebracht welke politici in de seizoenen 2014-15 en 2015-16 het vaakst aanwezig waren in de boven genoemde programma’s. Gecombineerd met de resultaten uit interviews konden hieruit de twee belangrijkste criteria voor geschikte gasten worden afgeleid: politieke relevantie en talkability. Hoofdstuk 6 bevat de derde casus, een analyse van het persoonlijke verhaal dat staatssecretaris Van Rijn vertelde bij Pauw en Jinek. Verschillende vormen van personalisering bleken afzonderlijk van elkaar tot stand te komen door de inzet van specifieke formatelementen. In de laatste casus (hoofdstuk 7) zijn politieke gesprekken met en zonder politici vergeleken. Hierin werden verschillende soorten experts onderscheiden en hun invloed op het gesprek aangetoond.

Talkshow Formats

Terwijl voor sommige shows politiek één van de belangrijkste onderwerpen is, bespreken anderen politieke onderwerpen maar mondjesmaat. Deze verschillen zijn geworteld in de specifieke formats van de shows, het unieke recept van elk programma. Format is dan ook het leidende concept van dit onderzoek. Het bepaalt op welke manier politiek in de shows wordt besproken en met wie. Formats bevatten de ‘mechanics of a show’, dus alle elementen waaruit een show is opgebouwd. Hiertoe behoren ten eerste de contextuele kenmerken zoals tijdslot en frequentie van uitzenden, de doelgroep en de zender waarop het programma te zien is. Verder zijn de elementen onder te

verdelen in vorm en inhoud. De inrichting van de studio, de setting, cameravoering, licht, maar ook het gebruik van visuele elementen zijn formele aspecten die het karakter van een show medebepalen. De lengte van interviews, alsmede de samenstelling van gasten hebben grote invloed op de inhoud van het gesprek. Op inhoudelijk vlak zijn het karakter van de presentator en zijn interviewstijl bepalend voor de sfeer, de toon en de verloop van het gesprek. Het is de unieke combinatie van al deze elementen die het format van een talkshow bepaalt en daarmee niet alleen de interviews op het scherm, maar ook alle voorbereidingen. Voorlichters en politici passen hun boodschap aan het format aan of proberen een talkshow te kiezen die er het beste bij aansluit. Redacteuren kunnen bepaalde elementen, zoals de duur of samenstelling van een interview, juist in de strijd gooien om een gast over te halen om aan te schuiven.

Dit proefschrift bepleit daarom een benadering van talkshows op het niveau van formats in plaats van algemene claims over het genre, aangezien de verschillen binnen het genre te groot zijn om er generaliserende uitspraken over te doen. Denk bijvoorbeeld alleen aan het verschil tussen Amerikaanse en Nederlandse talkshows. Alleen als er naar de deze specifieke verschillen wordt gekeken kunnen er uitspraken worden gedaan over hoe deze programma's omgaan met politiek.

Het onderzoek naar deze verschillende formatelementen laat zien dat de combinatie ervan in totaal verschillende programma's kan resulteren. *Buitenhof*, dat zichzelf liever een praatprogramma noemt dan een talkshow, zet bijvoorbeeld alle elementen in om een informatie discussie te bevorderen. Vorm, setting en interview stijl worden gebruikt om een situatie te creëren waarin een diepgaand inhoudelijk gesprek gevoerd kan worden. *WNL op Zondag* daarentegen creëert de sfeer van een licht ochtendgesprek over uiteenlopende onderwerpen. Uit de vergelijking van Pauw en Jinek blijkt dat juist de specifieke combinatie van vorm en inhoud tot verschillende

formats leidt en daardoor verschillende vormen van personalisering opleveren.

De vergelijking van de formats bracht echter ook overeenkomst tussen op het oog nogal verschillende programma's naar voren. Ondanks hun verschillende omroepen en tijdstippen, bleek de aanpak van politiek van *De Wereld Draait Door* (DWDD) en *RTL Late Night* (RTLLN) verrassend vergelijkbaar. In hun strak geregisseerde formats moet politiek concurreren met vermakelijke onderwerpen. Vaak worden andere onderwerpen en gasten als beter geschikt gezien voor de snelle, energieke formats dan politici met een ingewikkeld verhaal.

De ideale politieke gast

Een concept dat nou samenhangt met de formats is 'talkability'. Dit begrip houdt in dat de gasten in staat moeten zijn om op een makkelijke, onderhoudende manier te praten over het politieke onderwerp, zonder vast te klampen aan politiek jargon, maar ook over andere onderwerpen die ter tafel komen. Het betekent ook dat ze een interessante uitstraling moeten hebben en goed kunnen omgaan met spontane en onverwachte gebeurtenissen. Ze moeten de aandacht van de kijker vast kunnen houden met hun verhaal. Dit onderzoek heeft uitgewezen dat alle talk shows 'talkability' als criterium hanteren om te bepalen of een gast geschikt is voor het programma. Dat er desondanks niet overal altijd dezelfde politici aanschuiven komt doordat de programma's nog een ander criterium hanteren: politieke relevantie. Wie politiek meer in de melk te brokkelen heeft is interessanter voor de shows omdat hun statements ook daadwerkelijk politieke invloed kunnen hebben.

Talkshows waarin de politieke inhoud centraal staat zullen het criterium van politiek relevantie doorgaans zwaarder laten wegen dan de talkability, maar voor shows waarin televisie-elementen en entertainment een belangrijkere rol spelen, zoals RTLLN en DWDD,

is juist het tweede criterium vaker doorslaggevend. Wie aan beide criteria voldoet is in alle programma's een graag geziene gast. In combinatie met de bereidheid van politici om aan te schuiven bepalen deze criteria welke politici we te zien krijgen, en niet, zoals vaak wordt beweerd, ideologische of politieke voorkeuren. Voor dit laatste werden geen aanwijzingen gevonden.

De voorkeur van talkshows voor makkelijke praters blijkt ook uit hun keuze om politiek te bespreken met 'experts'. De expert die verreweg het vaakst aanwezig was, is de 'media expert', mensen bekend uit de media, vaak journalisten, maar ook schrijvers of acteurs. Ze worden niet gehinderd door politieke banden en verantwoordelijkheden en durven makkelijker hun ongezouten mening te geven. Terwijl experts politieke gesprekken kunnen aanvullen met informatie die politici niet willen geven en een persoonlijke noot kunnen toevoegen, kan hun aanwezigheid ook leiden tot een overmaat aan opinie en emotie ten opzichte van de feitelijke informatie.

Geënceneerde spontaniteit

Ondanks het feit dat zowel redacteurs als politici de authenticiteit en spontaniteit van talkshowoptredens benadrukken, zijn talkshows gepland, gestructureerd en minutieus voorbereid, net als alles op televisie. Paradoxaal genoeg is het juist deze structuur die het spontane karakter van de shows mogelijk maakt. Een belangrijk element in het tot stand komen van deze spontane indruk is de presentator (m/v). Hij is verantwoordelijk voor de 'flow' van het programma en is een link tussen het publiek en de gasten. Met zijn interviewstijl bepaalt hij de sfeer van een gesprek en de verhouding tussen informatie, emotie en persoonlijke verhalen.

De kijker zou echter de indruk kunnen krijgen dat de presentator de enige bepalende factor is, aangezien hij als enige zichtbaar is en zijn stijl daarom in het oog springt. Dit onderzoek heeft echter laten

zien dat er met name als het gaat om gesprekken met politici aan beide kanten verschillende actoren een rol spelen. De shows hebben niet alleen eindredacteuren die het geheel bepalen en regisseurs die alles in beeld brengen, maar ook politieke redacteuren die de politieke gasten voorstellen, benaderen en voorbereiden. Politici aan de andere kant hebben voorlichters die het contact met de shows onderhouden en optredens voorbereiden. Men zou zelfs kunnen zeggen dat het de redacteuren en voorlichters zijn die de geënceneerde spontaniteit garanderen, aangezien zij voorkomen dat de politici en presentatoren voor de uitzending uitgebreid met elkaar in contact komen. De daadwerkelijke verloop van het interview blijft daardoor altijd tot op zekere hoogte ongewis, alle voorbereiding ten spijt. Deze laatste mate van onzekerheid is de kracht van deze programma's.

Diversiteit vs. kijkcijfers

Hoe gecompliceerd de verhoudingen tussen politici en talkshows ook mogen zijn, ze hebben een gezamenlijk doel: het bereiken van een breed publiek. Door het grote aantal zwevende kiezers moeten politici steeds opnieuw proberen het vertrouwen van de kiezer te winnen. Door zichzelf als capabel maar vooral ook menselijk neer te zetten in een talkshow, proberen ze hen te bereiken. Talkshows, aan de andere kant, spelen een belangrijke rol in de strijd om marktaandeel en kijkcijfers die ook bij de Publieke Omroep wordt gestreden. Bij de commerciële omroepen betekenen hoge kijkcijfers enkel hoge reclame-inkomsten en daarmee financiering van de productie. Maar ook voor de programma's van de publieke omroepen geldt dat hun financiering en daarmee hun bestaan vaak wordt gekoppeld aan een te bereiken kijkcijfer aantal, omdat hoge kijkcijfers gezien worden als bewijs voor het bereiken van een breed publiek. Juist talkshows worden door hun mengeling van informatie en entertainment als geschikt gezien om een breed publiek te bereiken.

Deze focus op het bereik gaat echter ten koste van de diversiteit in de programma's. Programma's en politici spelen op safe, waardoor nieuwe politieke gasten die zich nog niet hebben bewezen in het talk-showcircuit niet makkelijk worden uitgenodigd. De concurrentie is immers moordend en misstappen worden snel afgestraft. Hierdoor durven beide partijen ook niet snel nieuwe manieren uit te proberen op politieke te bespreken, denk aan een combinatie met andere gasten, een gedurfde onderwerpskeuze of een onconventionele interviewopzet.

Dit onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat de politieke diversiteit sterk verschilt tussen de onderzochte formats. Alleen de programma's met een duidelijke focus op politieke actualiteiten, zoals *Pauw*, Buitenhof en in iets minder mate *Jinek*, presenteren een diverse selectie van politieke partijen en functies. De *corebusiness* van een talkshow is echter niet het overbrengen van informatie, maar het presenteren van 'het gesprek van de dag'. Talkshows erop afrekenen niet informatief genoeg te zijn zou dan ook onterecht zijn. Waar wel vraagtekens bij kunnen worden geplaatst die de nadruk op kijkcijfers bij de Publieke Omroep. Het onderzoek in dit proefschrift heeft uitgewezen dat talkshowformats in staat zijn een breed publiek aan te spreken met een unieke combinatie van informatie en entertainment, waarin politiek een belangrijke rol kan spelen. Deze mogelijkheid om tegelijkertijd inhoudelijke, verrassende, emotionele en persoonlijke gesprekken te creëren zou nog meer dan nu het geval is benut kunnen worden om politiek op een vernieuwende manier te bespreken, maar dan moeten de programma's wel de ruimte krijgen om ermee te experimenteren zonder meteen af te worden gerekend op tegenvallende kijkcijfers.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Am Ende des Jahres 2016 plädierten ein paar bekannte niederländische Journalisten und Medienpersönlichkeiten für eine neue Talkshow, da die vorhandenen die Gesellschaft unzureichend widerspiegeln würden. Bestimmte Gefühle, Meinungen und Bevölkerungsgruppen blieben ungehört. Zu dem Zeitpunkt wurden mindestens sechs Talkshows im nationalen niederländischen Fernsehen ausgestrahlt, die das Tagesgeschehen in Politik, Sport, Kultur und Gesellschaft behandelten. Ist es keiner dieser Shows gelungen, ein vielseitiges Bild der aktuellen politischen Lage wiederzugeben?

In dieser Doktorarbeit wurde untersucht, inwieweit verschiedene Niederländische Talkshowformate die Wahl der politischen Themen und Gäste sowie den Ablauf der Interviews beeinflussen. Das angespannte Verhältnis von Politik und Journalismus scheint in Talkshows noch brisanter. Während Politiker sich beklagen, sie würden gezwungen sich an die Regeln und Unwägbarkeiten der Programme anzupassen, werfen Redakteure und Journalisten der Politik vor, mit all ihren Vorbereitungen und Beratern jegliche Form von Spontaneität im Keim zu ersticken. Dieses angespannte Verhältnis zwischen Talkshows und Politik ist noch nicht ausführlich wissenschaftlich erforscht, weshalb in dieser Doktorarbeit die folgende Frage im Mittelpunkt steht:

Inwiefern beeinflussen die Sendeformate niederländischer Talkshows die Interaktion politischer und journalistischer Akteure vor und hinter den Kulissen dieser Programme?

Diese Frage wurde mit einer Kombination verschiedener Analysemethoden beantwortet. Interviews mit Politikern, Pressesprechern, Redakteuren, Journalisten und Experten wurden kombiniert mit einer Inhaltsanalyse von sechs Programmen (*Buitenhof*, *WNL op Zondag*, *De Wereld Draait Door*, *RTL Late Night*, *Pauw* und *Jinek*) und kurzfristiger ethnografischer Forschung in den Redaktionen von

Pauw und Jinek. Dies ergab ein vielschichtiges Bild von dem Umgang dieser Programme mit Politik.

Um möglichst viele Aspekte dieses Verhältnisses zu umfassen, wurden vier separate Fallstudien durchgeführt. Die erste (Kapitel 4) umfasst eine Analyse der „interpretive repertoires“ von Pressesprechern. Die Studie zeigt auf, wie sie ihre eigene Rolle in den Verhandlungen und im Kontakt mit Talkshows sehen und wie sie die „Spielmetapher“ benutzen zur Legitimierung ihrer Arbeitsweise. Im zweiten Kasus (Kapitel 5) wurde mittels einer Netzwerkanalyse aufgezeigt, welche Politiker in den Staffeln 2014-2015 und 2015-2016 am häufigsten zu Gast waren in den oben genannten Programmen. In Kombination mit den Resultaten der Interviews konnten daraus die zwei wichtigsten Kriterien zur Bestimmung geeigneter Gäste abgeleitet werden: Politische Relevanz und ‚Talkability‘. Kapitel 6 beinhaltet die dritte Studie, eine Analyse der persönlichen Geschichte des Staatssekretärs Van Rijn, die er bei *Pauw* und *Jinek* erzählte. Hier kamen unterschiedliche Formen der Personalisierung unabhängig voneinander zustande durch den Gebrauch spezifischer Formatelemente. In der letzten Studie (Kapitel 7) wurden politische Interviews mit und ohne Politiker verglichen. Hierbei wurden unterschiedliche Experten typisiert und ihr Einfluss auf die Gespräche aufgezeigt.

Talkshowformate

Während Politik für manche Shows eines der wichtigsten Themen ist, besprechen andere politische Themen nur spärlich. Diese Unterschiede wurzeln in dem bestimmten Format einer Show, dem einmaligen Rezept jedes Programmes. Das Format dient darum als maßgebendes Konzept dieser Arbeit. Es bestimmt in welcher Weise Politik besprochen wird und mit wem. Formate bestehen aus den ‚Mechanics of a Show‘, also allen Elementen, aus denen ein Programm aufgebaut ist. Dazu gehören zum einen kontextuelle Merkmale wie der Zeitpunkt

und die Frequenz der Ausstrahlungen, sowie ihre Zielgruppe und der Sender, in dem das Programm zu sehen ist. Des Weiteren unterscheidet man formale und inhaltliche Elemente. Die Einrichtung des Studios, Kameraführung, Licht, aber auch der Einsatz von visuellen Elementen gehören zu den Formaspekten, die den Charakter einer Talkshow ausmachen. Die Dauer der Interviews sowie die Zusammenstellung der Gäste sind von großem Einfluss auf den Inhalt der Gespräche. Auf inhaltlichem Gebiet sind der Charakter und Interviewstil des Präsentators entscheidend für die Atmosphäre, den Ton und den Ablauf der Interviews. Es ist die einmalige Kombination all dieser Elemente, die das Format einer Talkshow bestimmt und damit nicht nur die ausgestrahlten Interviews, sondern auch jegliche Vorbereitungen. Pressesprecher und Politiker passen ihre Botschaft an die unterschiedlichen Formate an oder probieren eine Talkshow auszuwählen, die zu ihr passt. Redakteure hingegen können bestimmte Elemente sowie die Dauer oder Zusammenstellung eines Gesprächs anführen, um Gäste davon zu überzeugen in ihrer Show aufzutreten.

Diese Doktorarbeit plädiert darum für eine Behandlung der Talkshows auf dem Niveau der Formate anstelle von Verallgemeinerungen über das Talkshowgenre, da die Unterschiede innerhalb des Genres zu groß sind für generell geltende Aussagen darüber. Man denke zum Beispiel nur an die großen Unterschiede zwischen amerikanischen und niederländischen Talkshows. Nur wenn die spezifischen Formate in Augenschein genommen werden, kann man Aussagen darüber treffen, wie die Programme mit Politik umgehen.

Der ideale politische Gast

Ein Konzept, das eng verbunden ist mit dem der Formate, ist ‚Talkability‘. Dieser Begriff bedeutet, dass Gäste in einer unterhaltsamen und leichten Art über politische Themen sprechen, sich aber auch in andere Themen, die angeschnitten werden, einbringen können.

Das heißt auch, dass sie eine interessante Ausstrahlung haben sollten und souverän mit spontanen, unerwarteten Situationen umgehen können. Sie müssen in der Lage sein, mit ihrer Geschichte die Aufmerksamkeit der Zuschauer festzuhalten. Diese Arbeit hat aufgewiesen, dass alle Talkshows das Kriterium der ‚Talkability‘ anwenden, um herauszufinden, ob ein Gast geeignet ist für das Programm. Dass trotzdem nicht in allen Shows ausschließlich dieselben Gäste erscheinen, hängt damit zusammen, dass sie ein zweites Kriterium heranziehen, das der politischen Relevanz. Wer politisch einflussreich ist, das heißt oftmals, wer einen hohen Posten bekleidet, der ist interessanter für die Programme, da seine Aussagen auch tatsächlich politische Folgen haben können.

Anhand dieser beiden Kriterien in Kombination mit der Bereitschaft der Politiker in den Talkshows zu erscheinen, wird entschieden, welche Politiker in den Programmen Platz nehmen und nicht, wie oft behauptet wird, anhand politischer Präferenzen oder Ideologien. Für Letzteres wurden keine Anhaltspunkte gefunden.

Dass Talkshows flotte Plauderer bevorzugen, zeigt sich auch an ihrer Entscheidung, politische Themen oftmals mit sogenannten Experten zu besprechen. Die am häufigsten auftretenden ‚Experten‘ sind die Medienexperten; Menschen bekannt aus den Medien, oft Journalisten, aber auch Schauspieler oder Schriftsteller. Sie können ihre persönliche Meinung ungehindert von politischen Verantwortungen oder Bindungen zum Besten geben und damit beitragen zum Unterhaltungswert der Shows. Während die Experten politische Gespräche mit inhaltlichen Informationen, die Politiker manchmal nicht herausgeben wollen, ergänzen können, kann ihre Anwesenheit auch zu einem Übermaß an Meinungen und Emotionen auf Kosten des Inhalts führen.

Inszenierte Spontanität

Trotz der Tatsache, dass sowohl Redakteure als auch Politiker die Authentizität und Spontanität der Talkshowauftritte betonen, sind Talkshows minutiös geplant, strukturiert und vorbereitet, genau wie alles andere im Fernsehen. Es klingt paradox, aber es ist ausgerechnet diese Planung, die den spontanen Charakter der Shows ermöglicht.

Ein wichtiges Element, das dazu beiträgt diesen spontanen Eindruck zu erreichen, ist der Präsentator. Er ist für den ‚Flow‘ des Programmes verantwortlich und fungiert als Verbindungsstück zwischen den Zuschauern und den Gästen. Mit seinem Interviewstil bestimmt er die Atmosphäre des Gesprächs sowie das Verhältnis von Informationen, Emotionen und persönlichen Anekdoten.

Der Zuschauer könnte hierdurch den Eindruck gewinnen, dass der Präsentator der alleinige entscheidende Faktor ist, da er als einziger Mitarbeiter der Show zu sehen ist, aber die Studien in dieser Arbeiten haben ergeben, dass vor allem auf dem Gebiet der politischen Gespräche auf beiden Seiten verschiedene Akteure eine Rolle spielen. Für die Shows arbeiten nicht nur Chefredakteure und Regisseure, sondern auch Redakteure mit dem Ressort Politik, die Politiker vorschlagen, sie einladen und die Gespräche mit ihnen inhaltlich vorbereiten. Politiker dagegen haben ihre Pressesprecher, die den Kontakt zu den Programmen pflegen und die Politiker auf ihre Auftritte vorbereiten. Man könnte sogar sagen, dass es die Redakteure und Pressesprecher sind, die die inszenierte Spontanität der Shows garantieren, da sie einen direkten Kontakt zwischen Politiker und Präsentator bis kurz vor Beginn der Show verhindern. Der Ablauf des Interviews bleibt dadurch immer in gewisser Weise unvorhersehbar, trotz aller Vorbereitungen. Dieses kleine bisschen verbleibende Unsicherheit macht die Anziehungskraft der Talkshows aus.

Diversität vs. Einschaltquoten

Wie schwierig das Verhältnis zwischen Politikern und Talkshows auch mag sein, ihr gemeinsames Ziel ist es, ein breites Publikum zu erreichen. Talkshows spielen eine wichtige Rolle im Streit um Marktanteile und Einschaltquoten, der auch beim öffentlichen Fernsehen geführt wird. Mit ihrem Mix von Information und Unterhaltung werden sie als besonders geeignet gesehen ein breites Publikum zu erreichen. Darum wird ihre Finanzierung oft abhängig gemacht von angestrebten Einschaltquoten, denn hohe Quoten gelten als Beweis dafür ein breites Publikum erreicht zu haben.

Dieser Quotenfokus geht jedoch auf Kosten der Diversität in den Programmen. Shows und Politiker gehen lieber auf Nummer Sicher, was zur Folge hat, dass neue politische Gäste, die sich noch nicht in einer der Talkshows bewiesen haben, nicht schnell eingeladen werden. Die Konkurrenz ist schließlich mörderisch und falsche Entscheidungen werden schnell bestraft. Darum trauen sich beide Seiten, Politiker und Talkshows, nur zögerlich neue Arten des politischen Talks auszuprobieren, wie zum Beispiel andere Zusammenstellungen oder unbekannte Gäste.

Diese Forschungsarbeit hat aufgezeigt, dass politische Diversität in den untersuchten Programmen in unterschiedlichem Maß vorkommt. Nur Shows, die die politische Aktualität bewusst zum Thema haben, präsentieren eine unterschiedliche Auswahl der politischen Parteien und Ämter. Das *Corebusiness* einer Talkshow ist es jedoch nicht Informationen und Fakten zu vermitteln, sondern das Gespräch des Tages zu führen. Dieses muss nicht unbedingt politisch oder inhaltlich sein. Darum wäre es auch ungerecht, sie nach fehlendem Informationsgehalt zu beurteilen. Sehr wohl kann jedoch der Schwerpunkt des öffentlichen Fernsehens auf Einschaltquoten hinterfragt werden. Die Studien in dieser Arbeit haben ausgewiesen, dass Talkshowformate in der Lage sind, ein breites Publikum mit einer einmaligen Kombination von Information und Unterhaltung zu er-

reichen und dass Politik darin eine große Rolle spielen kann. Diese Fähigkeit, gleichzeitig emotionelle, informative und überraschende Gespräche zu führen, könnte noch mehr eingesetzt werden, um Politik auf neue Arten zu thematisieren und damit ein neues, anderes Publikum für Politik zu interessieren. Dafür müssten Talkshows jedoch auch das Vertrauen und den Spielraum für neue Experimente bekommen, ohne gleich wegen enttäuschender Einschaltquoten abgesetzt zu werden.

Dankwoord

Mijn dankbaarheid staat in geen verhouding tot de omvang van het dankwoord. Zoals Goethe schreef:

“In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister.”

Mijn grote dank gaat uit naar

- mijn promotoren voor al hun advies, kritiek en geduld.
- alle politici en woordvoerders die me te woord hebben gestaan en hun ervaringen met mij hebben gedeeld.
- alle journalisten en redacteurs die me over hun schouders hebben laten mee kijken en/of openhartig over hun werk hebben verteld.
- mijn collega's, paranimfen, vrienden en familie voor alle (promotiegerelateerde of andere) steun en advies, hun geloof in mij en vooral de nodige afleiding.



What happens behind the scenes of a talk show? Why do some politicians seem to appear on every show while others are hardly ever seen? This research reveals how backstage preparations, considerations, and agreements at Dutch talk shows influence the interaction on screen, and how this is impacted by the shows' formats.

Birte Schohaus used to work as a lecturer and researcher at the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies of the University of Groningen. Next to her research, she works as a freelance journalist and writes about political social, and cultural matters for print and online media.

