

Thursday, June 21st 2007 17.15-18.00h

Whither Cultural Diversity on the Dutch TV Screen?

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In this paper, a country which has traditionally played a visible role in the development of multiculturalism in Western Europe will be examined as a discursive and policy exemplar. In accordance with the Media Act (1988), and notwithstanding important shifts in Dutch integration policy in the last three decades paralleled by an overall toughening of the social climate, cultural diversity continues to be given considerable encouragement on public radio and television, both in program provision and in staff composition. The Concession Act (2000), i.e. the first time that the public broadcaster's social and cultural role is laid down by law, encourages public broadcasting services to make more programs for ethnic minorities as target groups. In its task of serving as a model, the Netherlands Program Foundation (NPS) has to devote no less than 20 per cent of its television and 25 per cent of its radio broadcasting time to multicultural subjects. The Netherlands has focused on the public broadcasting system, which in itself is a 'pillarized' model shared among about twenty organizations that have obtained a license because they each represent a certain ideological, political, religious, or demographic section of society.

After historically differentiating framing multicultural programming initiatives in the Netherlands, this paper will carefully examine the lessons and best practices that may emerge from the Dutch experience. What does research inform us about how media can best be utilized to sustain and encourage the co-existence and social cohesion of multiple constituency groups living in the Netherlands? Referring to content analysis on the degree of 'colour' on Dutch television, in-depth interviews were conducted with program-makers. This research evidence will allow us to analyze the enabling mechanisms and strengths, as well as the obstacles and failures that have been experienced in an effort to build an integrated, cohesive, and transformative media system in which all members of society are recognized to having a right to both fair portrayal practices and employment opportunities.

Leen d'Haenens

DEGREES

1994: University of Ghent, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Dept. of Communication Science -
- Ph.D. in Political and Social Sciences.

Dissertation: *The Viewer under Scrutiny. Theory-Building Aiming at Optimizing Information on Television. Practical Examples of a Renewed Channel Strategy.*

1989: University of Toronto (Canada), Faculty of Library and Information Science -- Master's Degree
in Information Science. Thesis: *Machine Translation of Non-Literary Texts. The Canadian
Experience.* Toronto: University of Toronto.

1988: University of Ghent, Faculty of Law, Department of Press- and Communication Sciences --
Master's Degree in Press- and Communication Sciences.

1985: University of Ghent, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Department of Romance Languages --
Master's Degree in Romance Languages - Option Spanish.

POSITIONS

October 2004 -- now: Catholic University of Leuven, Associate Professor

Responsible for four courses: *Media Policy, Analysis of Media Texts, Media and Diversity, News
Production and Reception.*

December 1996 -- now: Radboud University Nijmegen, Associate Professor as of June 2001;
Assistant Professor until May 2001;

Responsible for four courses: *Media Landscape; European Media Policy; International
Communication; Media, Minorities and Prejudice.*

As of December 2004: Part-time position (20%).

1990-5: University of Ghent, Researcher (National Research Council), Ph.D. in 1994, post-doctoral
fellow as of March 1994.

Guest lecturer on issues such as Media Policy, Media and Minorities, Media Convergence and
Media Ethics, and Canadian Studies at the University of Indonesia (Universitas Indonesia,
Jakarta); Université de Montréal (Canada); Concordia University (Montreal, Canada); University of
Ghent (Belgium), University of Twente, Utrecht University (the Netherlands).

2002-2007: *Jean Monnet* Centre of Excellence – European Centre for the Interdisciplinary
Assessment of Initiatives for Public Governance.

2000-2007: Chair *Jean Monnet* on European Integration in Media and Telecommunications.

PUBLICATIONS (1998-2007)

(Co)-author of 75 articles (refereed journals, mostly in English); (Co)-author of 6 books; Editor of 6
books; Co-ordinator of 13 research projects (the majority of which international), which led to
publications.