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APPENDIX A

Composition of the People-Meter Data

Three different types of data from the Dutch national audience research were used for this research project: viewing, program, and survey data (Peeters, Jager, & Kalfs, 2005; SKO, 2008). To conduct analyses on the level of individual viewers, these three sources had to be transformed and combined. The following section contains a brief description of the composition of the used datasets as well as the steps that were performed to obtain the level of analysis that was applied in the studies. The data were provided as separate raw data files per day that were imported to SPSS were all necessary transformations and computations were conducted. For each year of the study, data about individual viewing behavior of one week was obtained. Thus, the described procedure was followed in a consistent manner for each year. Due to changes of the people-meter data collection in 2002, the procedure had to be adjusted for the data from 2002 to 2010 so that consistency was assured.

Program Data

TV Times and since 2007 *MediaXim Nederland* collected data about the programming of Dutch channels. The program offer of the major Dutch channels was coded – ranging from the two public-service channels Nederland 1 and Nederland 2 in 1988 to 19 public-service and commercial channels in 2010. The data contained scheduling information per channel per day including the exact times of programs and program breaks, such as commercial breaks or program announcements. Therefore, program parts were the unit of analysis in the raw data. Relevant characteristics per program part were: channel, broadcaster, program title, genre category, starting time, and program length. Two additional variables allowed to determine program parts that belonged to the same program. The program parts were combined resulting in a dataset on the level of individual programs. Commercial breaks and announcements were not kept as separate programs but subsumed to the adjacent programs. Codes for the typology of public-affairs formats developed in this study were assigned to each program (see Appendix B).

Viewing Data

The viewing data were collected by Intomart GfK. In every panel household, people-meters were connected to every television set. To register as a viewer, each panel member was asked to log on or off to the meter with a separate remote control device every time he or she started or finished watching TV, respectively. Individual recognition was assured by separate buttons on the remote control assigned to each household member. When logged on, viewing behavior was electronically registered – including the viewing times, the channels watched and the exact moments of switching between channels.

The raw data contained the exact times of TV viewing on the individual viewers level subdivided in channel intervals, in other words, the time intervals that a viewer spent watching a specific channel. A new channel interval started when the TV set was switched to a different channel. To obtain information about co-viewers who were present during a channel interval, the viewing times of members of the same household were compared.

From 2002 on, the raw data contained channel intervals on the household level. Per time interval that a household spent watching a specific channel, person variables indicated which household members were present. A new channel interval started when the TV set was switched to a different channel or when one person joined or left the viewing situation. The household data were transformed to the individual viewer level. Channel intervals caused by changing persons were combined with the preceding interval. The person variables were used to calculate the number of co-viewers that were present during a channel interval.

In a next step, these data were merged with the program data. For this purpose, the times that viewers spent watching specific channels had to be allocated to programs that were broadcast on these channels during these times. Thus, the channel intervals of the viewers were divided into program intervals. Hence, the most detailed viewing data contained program intervals of individual viewers. These program intervals could be related to channel intervals, i.e., the time that a viewer spent watching that channel, and viewing sessions, i.e., the time that the viewers spent watching TV consecutively. Of course, several viewing sessions per day were possible for one viewer. Additional information that was related to a program interval was: the broadcasting time of the program (that did not have to match the viewing time), program title and genre, and the number of co-viewers. The comparison of broadcasting and viewing times as well as information of adjacent program and channel intervals was used to derive additional viewing

characteristics: Did a viewer switch, i.e., change channels, to watch a program? Was a program the first one viewed during a viewing sessions (appointment viewing)? Was viewing a program interrupted by switching back and forth to different channels (hopping)? Did a viewer drop out of a program by changing channels or turning the TV off? Which types of programs were watched prior and subsequently on the same or a different channel and for how long (lead-in and lead-out)?

The seven datasets of viewing data on the program level per day were combined for each sample week. The data on the week level were used to calculate the viewing-related variables used in the studies. Thus, via aggregation on the week level we calculated, for instance, a viewer's availability, that is the overall time that a viewer spent watching TV, a viewer's channel repertoire, and measures of exposure to public-affairs programs such as the number of days or programs and the exact viewing duration per format (see the operationalizations in the measures sections of chapters 2 to 5).

Survey Data

An annual survey among the panel members was conducted by Intomart GfK that provided a wide range of socio-demographic information about each household and each individual. Viewer characteristics relevant for this research were collected from the survey codebook and imported to SPSS. These included sociodemographics such as age, gender, and education. Relevant viewer attitudes were genre preferences and interest in politics. Finally, we included information about media use, such as the frequency of radio, newspaper, and internet use. Due to changing codebooks over the years, media use and genre preferences were not available for the entire research period from 1988 to 2010 and could, therefore, not be included in the longitudinal analyses. The viewer characteristics were merged with the viewing data via viewer ID numbers.

References

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