HUNGER FOR NEWS VERSUS CRISIS FATIGUE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DUTCH 'DISASTER MEDIA' AND THE NEWS PERCEPTION AND –BEHAVIOR OF ITS DIVERSE AUDIENCE

ANNELOT HEKMAN

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

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Hunger for News versus Crisis Fatigue

M.Sc. Thesis: The relationship between Dutch 'disaster media' and the news perception and -behavior of its diverse audience.

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Annelot Hekman – 900528320120

Master International Development Studies
Disaster Studies (RDS)
SDC-80733
Supervisor: Gemma van der Haar

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY
WAGENINGEN UR

Abstract

Within this research on the relationship between Dutch ‘disaster media’ and its diverse audience, an attempt is made to broaden and deepen the existing knowledge. Academic theories on ‘disaster media’ seem to focus mainly on the direct, selective considerations of media makers and their effects. This research assumes that different choices made within the ‘disaster media world’ are also related to- and influenced by the perception and behavior of its audience. Next to that, it tries to not only confirm, but also explore this relationship more in-depth by concerning the diversity of the audience in the Netherlands. Finally, it takes into account the influence of the Internet on changing behavior of the audience and its effects on Dutch 'disaster media’.

The conclusions of this research may have an academic as well as a societal value. As already mentioned, it expands the existing knowledge base on this subject. Next to that, it could raise awareness among both parties. While the audience may become more aware of their own position within the media – audience relationship, ‘disaster media’ makers could become more aware of Dutch audience diversity through recorded differences in behavior, experience and needs.

The research builds upon several academic theories ranging from practical considerations of ‘disaster media’ makers to theories on news hunger, crisis fatigue and ‘new’ online behavior. Through exploring two major Dutch news programs (NOS news and Nieuwsuur) and the performance of an audience analysis, these theories are examined in practice. Audience diversity was explored through a differentiation based on age and cultural background which resulted in the emergence of three research groups: 1) Dutch native youngsters (age 18-30), 2) Dutch native middle aged people (age 31-65) and 3) Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background (age 18-30). Methods used were in-depth interviews, surveys, focus groups and informal conversations.

Results of this research show that 1) there is a clear influential relationship between the Dutch ‘disaster media’ world and its diverse audience, and 2) that there may be a change in behavior that could alter the course of ‘disaster journalism’. Both statements are interesting for follow-up research, which could focus on the effects on humanitarian aid or the possible threat of online news to the quality of traditional news.

Contents

Preface

I have always been interested in the 'unknown' world that I saw on television. From the small, quiet town where I grew up, I already wondered why it was that natural disasters and war characterized daily life for so many people around the world while we were living peacefully in our quiet environments. This personal interest never disappeared and the idea for writing my master thesis on this topic is partly a result from this original, childhood interest.

After finishing my bachelor on cultural anthropology in Utrecht, I decided to pursue a master degree in international development and disaster studies at Wageningen University. I started courses in September 2012 and in August of 2013 I was selected for an internship at the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs where I worked for half a year at the humanitarian aid department. It is for a reason that I bring this up here, at the beginning of my master thesis, as it was during this internship that the idea of writing a master thesis on 'disaster media' was actually born.

In November of 2013, the devastating typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines. While we were working around the clock for the victims of the political crisis in Syria, a crisis that was passing a two year anniversary at that moment, the Dutch humanitarian department then had another crisis to pay attention to. After a few weeks it became clear that a so-called 'Giro 555' television show was organized for the Haiyan victims. I was present during the show and although its purpose is by no means wrong, what drew my attention was the fact that never such a television show was organized for the humanitarian crisis in Syria. 'Disaster media' and their power in the selection and framing of humanitarian disasters, was something that was new, but at the same time extremely interesting to me. I started to wonder how choices within these areas are being made by these 'disaster media makers' and how we, as an audience, are influenced by and related to such choices. I read many articles on the subject and found it so interesting that I decided to make this my master thesis topic.

Before I start introducing the topic substantively, I would like to use this opportunity to thank a few people without whom doing this research and writing my thesis would not have been possible. First and foremost my gratitude goes out to all my respondents, whether they participated in the surveys and focus groups or inspired my research with their knowledge on and experience in 'disaster media'. A special thanks to NOS news and Nieuwsuur (and their editors and journalists), who were extremely open and helpful towards my research. Second, I would like to thank my supervisor, Gemma van der Haar who helped me through the different phases of my research. Without her help and ideas the end result would not be what it is today. Finally, I want to thank my partner, family and friends for their support during the different, sometimes difficult, periods of performing this research.

I carried out this research with a drive and enthusiasm for the interesting subject of 'disaster media'. This enthusiasm only grew during the months I actively worked on it. I hope that through this thesis I will be able to transfer some of this enthusiasm to the ones reading it, so that you might become as interested by the topic as I am.

- Annelot Hekman

Introduction

Every year again they enter our living rooms, the images of disaster victims. Dead, injured, displaced people as well as their devastated livelihoods. While in the comfort of our living rooms, nearly everybody comes into contact with 'disaster news'. Media is the first source that people get their information from, making it an important, crucial and powerful actor within the humanitarian world. The media may in fact be the "intermediate link between the level of social situations in which audiences' interpretations and responses develop, and humanitarian organizations and politics"[1].

According to the theory of global compassion "the suffering of others in the public sphere" [2] seems to bring them closer to our personal lives encouraging compassion, involvement and consequently, support. But while we consume the information we receive through news media, we do not often stand still to wonder why and how the people behind this information are showing us what they show. What determines the selection and framing of media coverage in case of humanitarian disasters and how are we as an audience influenced by, and related to, these choices?

In the Netherlands media and humanitarian disasters are closely connected. For most of the inhabitants of this small country, war, natural hazards and severe crimes against humanity are in principle geographically and emotionally distant. Therefore, the audience is largely depending on what I would like to call 'disaster media', for obtaining these sorts of information. Although the world is becoming smaller through internet and new forms of media, journalists are still traveling to disaster areas to create the stories and images we hear and see on the news. Old media, and especially television, seems to remain of influence on the imaging and the public opinion formation of people with respect to humanitarian disasters. Next to the daily eight o'clock news and other news related programs, television shows like the already mentioned 'Giro 555' show in the Netherlands, remain extremely successful and raise enormous amounts of money for emergency assistance.

The discussion on the determinants of 'disaster media' coverage is perhaps one of the most debated ones within humanitarian journalism. Although there are many theories ranging from the pursuit of 'breaking news' to government influence on media coverage (and vice versa), they are all not very precise and clear[3]. More importantly, theories seem to focus on the direct selection of certain humanitarian disasters over others and do not so much include framing (the images and stories we get to see and hear) and the relationship with its (diverse) audience. Höijer (2004) argues that "questions about media-reported suffering and misery, such as if and how they move us as audience, have received very little academic attention"[4]. While there has been a great amount of research on for example the damaging effects of violence in the media on children, there has been almost no research on how media relates to its adult audience. In her conclusion Höijer stresses that the relationship

[1] Höijer 2004:514
[2] Ibid.
[3] Robinson 1999:304
[4] Höijer 2004:513

between audience reactions and “questions of how different media report on different human catastrophes”[5] remains undiscovered and therefore still needs to be addressed.

The above suggests that there is a clear knowledge gap to fill with respect to academic research on the relationship between the audience and the choices made in the selection and framing of international ‘disaster news’. Although the interest for this research started with the direct question of why certain humanitarian disasters were covered more extensively and emotionally than others, the relationship between ‘disaster journalism’ and its audience soon revealed itself as perhaps more undiscovered and interesting. To be of added academic value, the apparent relationship should not only include the ways in which disaster media affects the audience differently. It should also cover the extent to which the media take into consideration the audience, its (new) behavior and its diversity while making choices concerning the selection and framing of ‘disaster news’.

Within this research I will first map out the academic theories that are of influence within this domain. Theories on coverage determination, disaster framing and audience analysis will place my own research within a broader scientific field. I will then present my own findings on the relationship between the Dutch audience and ‘disaster media’ choices by using several qualitative methods. Through in-depth interviews with actors and experts working in the field of humanitarian journalism and media, an exploration of their considerations and viewpoints with respect to this subject is being made. Second, surveys, focus groups and informal conversations are used to perform an audience analysis and to explore the relationship between disaster media and the Dutch audience more in-depth.

To provide a practical example to the above work, I will use the political crisis in Syria as a case study. Media coverage on the Syrian conflict has been relatively limited during the last three years. Although the conflict has been displayed on the news almost every night, the qualitative value remains debatable and different discourses on the conflict have passed the revue. Next to that, the conflict is losing the attention of the Dutch audience (as well as the international public). Can we use the Syrian case as an example of the current relationship between the audience and ‘disaster media’?

In the conclusion of this research I will combine my findings to present my own theory on the possible media – audience relationship and its effects, by answering the question: *What is the relationship between choices in selection and framing that are being made by Dutch ‘disaster media’, and the (new) behavior and news perception of its diverse audience?*

[5] Höijer 2004:529

1. The existing academic knowledge: building a theoretical framework

Within this chapter the main theories on which this research is built will be explicated. Thereby it provides an overview of the existing academic knowledge on the subject of 'disaster media' and its audience. The theoretical framework is composed of several elements.

First, the selection and framing of 'disaster news' coverage in itself will be addressed. Existing theories on the determination of what crisis to broadcast will be outlined, where after the focus shifts to the visual and substantial framing of humanitarian crises.

In paragraph 1.3 the focus shifts towards the relationship between 'disaster media' and its audience. Theories on audience diversity, global compassion, crisis fatigue, the hunger for news and developments towards 'online journalism', will take the discussion towards the more empirical part of my research question which concerns the relationship between media coverage and its audience.

1.1 Direct and indirect determinants for choices in 'disaster media' coverage

1.1.1 Trends in 'disaster media' coverage: direct and practical considerations

When opening a newspaper or watching the eight o'clock news we learn the stories captured by journalists that cover disasters and humanitarian aid. But what is news? On what basis are decisions about media coverage made? Obvious for most people, "a humanitarian crisis has to be 'news'"[6]. But the choice between stories on different humanitarian disasters is perhaps more difficult to make. Selective choices can be crucial, and sometimes even of vital importance with respect to humanitarian aid[7].

In collaboration with Fritz Institute and Reuters Foundations' AlertNet, Steven Ross carried out a research into the "dynamics of media coverage"[8], in which he exposed the direct considerations for journalists in their coverage choices. Although the research is of North-American origin, the author argues that "around the world, the coverage patterns are almost identical"[9].

Disaster reporters in general do not exercise their jobs on a full time basis (only 2 out of 265 claimed full time crisis coverage). Therefore it is perhaps not surprisingly that when they do, they focus on breaking news. "Almost half (48%) of all the stories"[10] are categorized by the journalists in the research as so called 'breaking news'. Within these stories a high death rate seems to be one of the greatest determinants for coverage for all disaster journalists[11].

It appeared that with respect to the strive for breaking news, a tension exists between journalists and non-governmental development organizations (NGO's). The latter claim that

[6] Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen (2003):112
[7] Ibid:109
[8] Ross (2004):3
[9] Ibid.:10
[10] Ibid.:11
[11] Ross (2004):12

journalists are focusing on breaking disaster news only and fail to cover “chronic issues such as poverty, disease and famine”[12]. Next to that, they argue that not only long-term crisis stories in itself are hard to sell in the media, it can be equally difficult to “sell the story of sustainable development success”[13].

Although coverage on long-term humanitarian disasters does appear to go up in general[14], “most editors do not perceive it as ‘news’ when Africans are killing Africans”[15] or when Africa is going through yet another long-term humanitarian disaster. This might sound crude, but it might also explain the little media reporting on civil wars with high numbers of casualties and suffering that are going on or that are slumbering in different African countries, for example in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Many have wondered why different bloody conflicts in the DRC have been so relatively absent in Western media reporting. The hidden message behind this absence is that media coverage could depend on more than only high death rates or extreme suffering.

When looking into this shortage of media in certain conflicts we can first distinguish a rather obvious and direct determinant, namely security. Although security has always been an issue in disaster journalism, the transformation of conflicts from war between two armies towards “lower-level or asymmetric conflicts”[16] has made it an even more vulnerable issue. ‘Reporters Without Borders’ is an organization that strives for the freedom of information around the world. They argue that:

> Armed conflict’s new protagonists, especially terrorist groups, do not feel bound by the Geneva Conventions, which protect civilians, including journalists, during armed conflict. On the contrary, journalists become high-value targets in an ‘information war’[17].

Furthermore, it is stated that “control of media has always been a strategic goal in conflicts”[18] and that striving for freedom of information is therefore a high risk for journalists.

Of course there are more direct factors of influence than only security, bombings and death rates. Direct contributing elements such as financial barriers, timeliness of reporters at the scene and ethical values appear to be extremely important with respect to stories that stay off the agenda[19]. But as already slightly touched upon, there appear to be indirect determinants as well. While some take into consideration government and policy (as detailed below), others relate to the behavior of audiences as influential in ‘disaster media’ choices (paragraph 1.3).

[12] Ross (2004):12
[13] Ross (2004):10
[14] Ibid.:9
[15] Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen (2003):112
[16] World Press Freedom index 2014 [via www.rsf.org/index2014]
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ross (2004):12

1.1.2. The CNN effect versus manufacturing consent theory

When searching for theories on determining factors surrounding 'disaster media' coverage, the 'CNN effect'-theory is hard to miss. It captures the idea that media attention to global events triggers responses by "domestic audiences and political elites"[20].

The fall of the Berlin Wall was one of the first events in the West that was globally broadcasted, signifying the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism. Robinson (2002) argues that together with new technologies that emerged around the 1980s, this event "transformed the potential of the news media to provide a constant flow of global real-time news"[21]. Clear media policy within the opposing parties of the Cold War no longer existed and journalists became freer in their choices on media coverage. In the years that followed, the discussion came up as to what extent these new trends were impacting on foreign policy. The new ways of taking major events global seemed to "reduce the scope for calm deliberation over policy"[22] as governments were more and more forced to directly act upon issues in the media. The CNN effect-theory mainly looks at the ways in which media coverage creates political responses and how these responses affect humanitarian intervention. However, 'the CNN effect'-theory has also been sharpened over time. Wheeler for example argues that the relationship between media coverage and humanitarian intervention is not so direct. He argues that it is not so much the media coverage in itself that causes political intervention, but it is the "dramatic media coverage" that helps policy-makers win the public support they need to intervene[23]. Furthermore, there has been a lot of debate on the positive and negative sides of this theory. Realists exposed "the dangers of media dictated foreign policy"[24], cautious on the inaccuracy and incompleteness of news items that were often displayed without any contextual embedding. Humanitarians on the other hand, celebrated the new public activism and were relieved that the discussions on humanitarian intervention and foreign policy were no longer limited to politics only. But as neither one of these parties questioned the theory in its essence, 'the CNN effect' became an "untested and unsubstantiated 'fact' for many in foreign policy and humanitarian circles"[25].

The manufacturing consent theory however, did question this theory in its essence, leading to the counter-theory of the 'CNN effect'. It states the exact opposite, namely that the content of 'disaster media' is influenced by governments and the "cultural and political prisms"[26] through which journalists perceive global events. Contrary to the 'CNN effect theory' (which explains how media attention triggers intervention) this theory tries to explain why certain humanitarian disasters are (more extensively) covered while others are not, making it specifically interesting for this research. The government influence on media coverage appears to be more noticeable and clear when the state has a "monopolistic control over the media, often supplemented by official censorship"[27]. It is far more difficult to claim such a

[20] Robinson (1999):301
[21] Robinson (2002):7
[22] Ibid.
[23] Wheeler (2000:300) in Robinson (2002) : 12
[24] Robinson (2002):10
[25] Ibid.:12
[26] Chomsky & Herman (1994):1
[27] Ibid.

direct influence when a country, like the Netherlands, has freedom of press enshrined in its law. Especially when the media is competitive, criticizes its government and journalists "portray themselves as spokesmen for free speech and the general community interest"[28]. However, Chomsky and Herman (1994) argue that manufacturing consent theory is also applicable in those countries, be it in a more subtle way. We can for example see this in the way countries more extensively cover countries in which they are politically involved (Afghanistan and Mali are good examples in the case of the Netherlands).

1.2 Visual dramatization and disaster discourse: the framing of 'disaster news'

The choice to cover (or not) a certain humanitarian disaster is not the only choice being made within the realm of 'disaster news' coverage. There is also discussion on the determinants of what images we get to see and what stories we get to hear. Framing is "the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality that makes those aspects more salient to a media consumer"[29]. With respect to 'disaster journalism', framing is needed to "interpret, organize, and understand"[30] the information that is being captured in disaster areas.

When it comes to 'disaster news' framing, there are two angles. Below I will first discuss the ways in which visual framing can be decisive and how this has changed over time. Thereafter I will address the ways in which stories are presented through 'disaster news' media and perceived by its audience as 'the truth' by looking at substantial framing or 'disaster discourse'.

1.2.1 Visual framing

Because a news item has to be short, convincing and informative, journalists need to assemble and frame their material in a certain way. As regarding a person as "helpless and innocent"[31] seems to be necessary to move and mobilize the audience, images of suffering children, women and elderly people[32] are often selected in framing processes with respect to humanitarian disasters. However, there are also differences. Non-North American journalists (40%) agree with the above and believe that especially the suffering of children makes a story compelling, while North American journalists (34%) seem to focus on people from their own background to 'sell' their stories to the audience[33].

The framing of humanitarian disaster images has dramatically changed over time. Johan Cronström

Share of all items which contain violence

1979: 16% of the items in *Rapport*
1993: 25% of the items in *Rapport*
28% of the items in *TV4 Nyheterna*

Violence in the picture:
share of items containing violence

1979: 47% of such items in *Rapport*
1993: 62% of such items in *Rapport*
51% of such items in *TV4 Nyheterna*

Pictures of human victims:
share of items containing violence

1979: 13% of such items in *Rapport*
1993: 36% of such items in *Rapport*
25% of such items in *TV4 Nyheterna*

Dramaturgical effects:
share of items containing violence

1979: none
1993: 12% of such items in *Rapport*
13% of such items in *TV4 Nyheterna*

Note: Rapport is the news programme of one of Sweden's two public service channels, SVT2. *TV4 Nyheterna* is the news programme of the commercially financed, privately owned nationwide channel. Both channels operate under the terms of contractual agreements with the state.

Table 1: Outcomes of Cronströmes' research
Source: Cronström (1994) in Höijer (1996):3

[28] Chomsky & Herman (1994):1
[29] Houston et al. (2012):608
[30] Ibid.
[31] Höijer (2004):521
[32] Höijer (2004):522
[33] Ross (2004):12-13

compared the framing of violence in Swedish 'disaster media' from 1979 and 1993. He found that the "proportion of items with violent content has increased" and "that violence is depicted in greater visual detail than before"[34]. Furthermore, violence seems to be "dramatized in over ten per cent of the violent news items"[35]. This dramatization consists of visual effects like "slow-motion sequences or spectacular camera angles" and the use of music or sound effects. Striking is the fact that there were no examples of this dramatization in humanitarian disaster coverage in 1979[36]. More notable outcomes of Cronströms' research can be found in table 1.

This visual framing process brings all sorts of ethical, and perhaps also cultural, issues along. What is acceptable for the journalist as a person, but also what is being accepted by the audience that the journalist is trying to reach? There are many "debates over the morality of the representation and sanitization of images of the suffering, the dying and the dead"[37]. In his article on the ethical problems surrounding the coverage of the Asian tsunami in 2004, James Hollings describes many dilemmas for journalists working in humanitarian emergencies that want to capture and visualize their stories. Journalists have to continuously make decisions about what images they can and should use: "how to report death, in particular what kinds of pictures of dead bodies should be shown, if at all"[38]. There is extensive debate about which images to show or not to show. "Most Western news media tend to avoid showing pictures of dead bodies unless to do so would mislead by omission or underplay what has happened"[39]. Finally, journalists are often confronted with sorrow, loss and grief by relatives and other survivors. When dealing with grief of relatives it is commonly viewed that journalists should be particularly careful and culturally sensitive when it comes to these kinds of situations and the framing of these personal emotions[40]. In some cultures people do not have a problem with displaying their grief and sorrow, while others cultures are far more private. It is assumed that journalists should carefully consider this and not thoughtlessly exploit these emotions.

1.2.2 Disaster Discourse

Discourse is a broad term that has been increasingly considered within the academic world. It has become a "fashionable term"[41] that is often not clearly defined. This is because definitions of the term are abundant and divergent. In their book on discourse analysis, Jørgensen & Philips (2002), propose discourse as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)"[42]. They explicate three different forms of discourse analysis, namely discourse theory, critical discourse analysis, and discursive psychology[43]. Although these three theories have a different approach, they all "share the

[34] Cronström (1994) in Höijer (1996):1
[35] Ibid.:3
[36] Cronström (1994) in Höijer (1996):3
[37] Hoskins & O'Loughlin (2010):20
[38] Hollings (2005)
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Jørgensen & Philips (2002):1
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

starting point that our ways of talking do not neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations but, rather, play an active role in creating and changing them"[44].

Jørgensen & Philips (2002) also argue that discourse is extremely visible in mass media's constructions of claimed reality. But how are these claims to "expert knowledge"[45] constructed, contested and consumed?[46] For the purpose of this research, the discourse theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, as explicated by Jørgensen & Philips (2002), is most useful. Their focus on "discursive struggle"[47] as a constant transformation "through contact with other discourses", might be the most appropriate theoretical angle with respect to the diverging discourses within 'disaster media'. According to Laclau and Mouffe, these discourses strive for "hegemony", the final "dominance of one particular perspective"[48].

Discourse within 'disaster news' media contains two components: the news in itself (the spoken or written text) and "the process involved in producing the texts"[49]. The first component has been subject to a large amount of research by media analysts and linguistic researchers within the academic domain of media discourse. The second component, the process leading up to the discourse displayed within news media, "including the norms and routines of the community of news practitioners"[50], has far less been on the discourse research agenda[51]. Furthermore, according to Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton (2001), the audience should receive a central "role in the construction of media realities"[52], an idea that can be supported by the discursive struggle theory of Mouffe and Laclau. Not only media makers take part in the strife for the dominant discourse, but the audience takes an equally important position through their contestation and/or consummation of a certain discourse. This idea stands in sharp contrast "with more conventional assumptions about mass communication which rely on the active sender/passive receiver [...] model"[53].

When talking about discourse struggles in 'disaster media', we should also consider 'the attribution of guilt'. Many news stories on violent conflicts take a position when producing a story on a conflict; who is the victim and who is the perpetrator? This is not only shaped by the opinion of the individual news maker, but may also depend on issues such as access or security. Furthermore it is again influenced by the entire 'disaster media' industry. News makers as well as its audience are involved in the discursive struggle that is creating a victim and a perpetrator within the conflict. After explicating how the Western media initially all reported from the side of the opposition, striving against president Assad, Jan Eikelboom describes his confusion and doubt when he found that a large proportion of the people was actually pro-Assad.

[44] Jørgensen & Philips (2002):1
[45] Ibid.:2
[46] Ibid.:2
[47] Ibid.:6
[48] Ibid.:7
[49] Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton (2001):416
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.:421
[53] Ibid.

> In Syria the people were supposedly fighting as one against the evil oppressor, and now all of a sudden we see all these people who are taking his side. I am not so sure of myself either. Are we seeing this right? Is it true what we are reporting? I have a feeling that people are telling the truth. Controlling this is impossible. Maybe they are only talking out of fear. On the other hand the question is: If we are right now, weren't we wrong before? This imaging that we are confronting is partly created by ourselves (free translation)[54].

1.3 News hunger, crisis fatigue and diversity: studying 'the audience'

> People are interested in news – whether the news comes to us from the mass media or from a neighbor, we like to be in the know. […] For example, even among those who were relatively uninterested, how many could resist watching the live television coverage of the Persian Gulf War? Who could fail to turn to the media if her country's president were assassinated, or if a major earthquake ripped through his state?[55]

As already mentioned in the introduction, the way we, as an audience, relate to the stirring images we see on our television screens remains almost undiscovered within academic circles[56]. Nussbaum (2001) argues that the compassion we feel when we see victims of humanitarian disasters is "a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's underserved misfortune"[57], that begins with the "rational idea of humanity"[58]. The first recordings of active compassion were the attempts to abolish slavery and child labor, which we saw emerging in the 18th and 19th centuries[59]. But it is through the current active reporting of 'disaster media' that we have experienced "the suffering of remote others"[60] more directly and visually.

1.3.1 The hunger for news

An inherent characteristic of people seems to be their "innate desire"[61] to understand and explore the world around them. Shoemaker (1996) argues that this 'hunger for news' is both biologically and culturally determined. People biologically contain an "orienting reflex"[62] that makes them respond to unexpected happenings in their daily lives. This interest in news is already visible in prehistory, through paintings on walls of caves 20.000 years ago[63]. On the other hand, our 'news hunger' is also culturally determined. Although we are apparently born with some sort of biological interest for new and unusual things in our environment, many societies also raise their children to some extent "to pay attention to the world around them"[64]. When something is culturally determined, it also presumes that there are supposed differences between cultures.

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[54] Eikelboom (2014):19
[55] Shoemaker (1996):32
[56] Ibid.
[57] Nussbaum (2001):3 in Höijer (2004):514
[58] Höijer (2004):514
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.:515
[61] Shoemaker (1996):32
[62] Ibid.:34
[63] Shoemaker (1996):24
[64] Ibid.:38

> The cultural explanation assumes that a predisposition to attend to news can be learned and is a function of the overall socialization of individuals to their community or country. The decision about what should be attended to is also more likely to be culturally determined[65].

The biological and cultural explanation of our 'hunger for news' seem to interact. Where the biological part has made us able to pay attention to the news surrounding us, our culture determines "the phenomena to which we may choose to attend"[66].

1.3.2 Crisis fatigue

But although we are biologically and culturally 'programmed' to pay attention to the disastrous happenings around the world, our attention span is only relative and its duration confronts many challenges.

"You can help this child or you can turn the page"[67]. An example of advertisement, supposed to shock and create a sense of guilt, that most of us have once seen in their life. According to Moeller:

> The first time a reader sees the advertisement he is arrested by guilt. He may come close to actually sending money to the organization. The second time the reader sees the ad he may linger over the photograph, read the short paragraphs of copy and only then turn the page. The third time the reader sees the ad he typically turns the page without hesitation. The fourth time the reader sees the ad he may pause again over the photo and text, not to wallow in guilt, but to acknowledge with cynicism how the advertisement is crafted to manipulate readers like him--even if it is in a "good" cause[68].

Although this quotation concerns an advertisement, it is easily comparable to 'disaster news' coverage. Crisis fatigue theory states that the attention of the audience for humanitarian disasters in the media at some point wanders off or even triggers cynicism and irritation. There are many reasons for this. Sometimes there are just too many disasters happening at once. In this case, crisis fatigue is a result of competing disasters in the world. The audience is supposedly only capable of handling one crisis at a time[69]. And if there are not many spontaneous disasters, we always have the ongoing long-term disasters that don't seem to get solved. A second cause of crisis fatigue seems to be related to these long-term disasters and their continuing coverage. News producers recognize the moment when the audience is getting bored by daily coverage of a humanitarian disaster. Consequently the trend is to "cover things until there's not much new to say"[70].

In the above part on news hunger, it is argued that people have a biologically and culturally determined desire to explore new happenings around them. The crisis fatigue theory states that this interest through news hunger is often temporal and might even transform into other emotions such as confusion, irritation, cynicism and anger. An often identified consequence

[65] Shoemaker (1996):38
[66] Ibid.
[67] Moeller (1999):2
[68] Ibid.:4
[69] Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen (2003):112
[70] Moeller (1999): 4

is a decline in interest in the public sphere, visible in low viewing figures. What does not become clear from the academic literature, but could become an interesting question, is to what extent the audience is in this way able to affect the choices of 'disaster media' makers with respect to selection and framing.

1.3.3 Audience diversity

Although these opposing theories on audience behavior provide an interesting starting point for this research, it does not take into account the diversity of people. Because, where there are people there are differences, and this also applies to the perception and handling of 'disaster news'. Denis McQuail emphasizes this differentiation within people as 'an audience', by arguing that "the problems surrounding the concept ['audience'] stem mainly from the fact that a single and simple word is being applied to an increasingly diverse and complex reality"[71]. He describes how the emerging of 'the mass' audience started with printing press, but how "calling an audience a mass reflected fears of depersonalization, irrationality, manipulation, and of a general decline in cultural or moral standards"[72]. He states that experiences of the audience are anything but impersonal and that they are integrated in "local environments and [..] embedded in local cultures"[73].

First, what people see and experience as 'suffering' or as 'violence' is not only a normative question. It depends on our personal definitions of these terms which are shaped by "social, cultural and historical circumstances"[74]. What we see as for example 'suffering' is a "cultural-cognitive construction"[75], resulting in some victims valued as 'better' or 'worthier' victims than others[76]. Another example of this socio-cultural definition of phenomena is our experience of the term 'violence'. When for example a child gets beaten, we tend to perceive it as abuse; a violent act. However, this is not applicable to all cultures and neither has it always been valued as abuse in the West[77]. The question of interest here is not so much whether or not it has to be seen as abuse or not, more important and of influence is the way people (are learned to) perceive it and act upon it. Therefore, what we experience as for example violence or suffering depends heavily on our background, culture and social values.

With respect to 'the audience' of 'disaster journalism', differentiations could furthermore be made based on gender and age. Höijer (1996) shows that in Sweden "women react with compassion more often than men, and elderly people much more often than younger people"[78]. This compassion is directly related to the content of visuals, or more exactly the (above mentioned socio-cultural) interpretation people make when seeing these visuals[79].

Finally, in distinguishing audience reactions, there is more than only compassion. Often recorded are feelings of shame and impotence when watching horrifying images while living

[71] McQuail (1997):1
[72] Ibid.:7
[73] Ibid.
[74] Höijer (2004):516
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Höijer (2004):519
[79] Ibid.:520

in comfort and peace[80] at home. On the other hand, watching 'disaster news' also creates a social dilemma for people resulting in some sort of burden. Although they want to be good citizens and care for others in the world, they are also occupied by the need to fulfill their daily work and responsibilities[81].

1.3.4 The proactive audience: online disaster journalism.

In the paragraphs above the theories on audience behavior and diversity concerned traditional 'disaster media' only. Although there is still a continuous need for journalists to travel to distant areas to cover the stories of disaster victims, our hunger for news and crisis fatigue in combination with new possibilities may also lead to a more proactive (sub) audience. This seems to be a fairly new trend that may have changed, and is still changing, our behavior as an audience and perhaps the entire 'disaster media' world in itself.

Over the last decade, the internet has served our news hunger in becoming the largest new medium for news collection. Through internet, the audience is able to take a proactive position and gather their own news. This proactive behavior "may have effects on existing media by providing new solutions to old needs or to more contemporary needs"[82]. However, on a more content-related basis, both media seem to serve identical needs and have "a moderately high degree of overlap or similarity"[83], making them competitive. And as the internet is extremely broad on its information base and you can choose on whatever information you want, it is shown that users are more satisfied when collecting information on the internet[84].

Furthermore, more pro-active behavior through internet brings people closer to the news and automatically makes them more critical towards it[85]. In his book on online journalism, Jim Hall argues that "one of the side-effects of the new medium is a more media-wise, certainly more sophisticated, readership"[86]. The gatekeeping role of the journalist through selection and framing decreases: "readers become their own story tellers [and] the role of 'gatekeeper' is largely passed from the journalists to them"[87]. This may automatically suggest that the power of the media through agenda setting and framing may also be decreasing.

1.4 Towards a broadening and deepening on the existing knowledge

This finally brings us to my own, empirical, research. There are several questions that still remain after exploring the existing academic writings. The conclusion of this theoretical framework is that when it comes to the process of choices by media makers in their coverage of humanitarian disasters, the knowledge on the interaction with its audience is not very

[80] Höijer (2004):520
[81] Höijer (1996):6
[82] Dimmick, J., Chen, Y., & Li, Z. (2004):31
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Hall (2001):34
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

broad and deep. In this paragraph I will explicate this and show how this can be translated into an empirical research framework.

It is interesting to see that although there are many theories on disaster coverage determination, they seem to focus mainly on practical considerations and political influences and do not so much involve the audience that media makers are trying to reach (paragraph 1.1). Theories on framing, (concerning visuals as well as the emergence of stories, perpetrators and victims), do seem to consider the audience, but knowledge on the practical application and effects of framing choices could be broadened. Finally, the paragraph that considers the media-audience relationship more in-depth lacks deeper knowledge. Although certain audience behavior is determined (through theories on news hunger on crisis fatigue), the link to what it means for 'disaster news' makers in their daily considerations is not made. Next to that, deeper knowledge on the diversity in behavior, through for example group-based audience analyses, is missing. Finally, there are theories on 'new', online audience behavior towards foreign, crisis news. Again, these theories lack a focus on audience diversity by arguing for a general 'new' trend.

Could it be that different audience groups act differently around 'disaster news', have different wishes and demands and perhaps unconsciously influence the daily considerations made by media makers? If a relationship could be determined, how is it constructed and is it recognized by both parties? And if the latter is the case, are all groups visible for media makers and served in their wishes consequently or could 'disaster news' provision be more applied to audience diversity?

All these remaining questions of interest can be translated into two research domains.

I. **The general determination and exploration of a relationship between 'disaster media' makers and their diverse audience.**

   - Could a media-audience relationship be determined?
   - If so, how is this relationship formed and substantiated?
   - Are there differences in this respect between audience groups in their news experience and – behavior?

II. **The 'new' online behavior and demands of the audience that appeared as a current theme within academic work on the 'disaster media' – audience relationship.**
   According to the authors, online behavior is characterized by a growing criticism through pro-activeness of the audience.

   - Is this a general phenomenon or are there again differences within 'the audience' as a group?
   - How could this 'new', online news behavior influence choices that are being made by media makers?
   - And what does this all say about the future of 'disaster media'?

2. Methodology

Within this chapter the methods and techniques that were used to answer the main research question and cover the two research domains will be explicated and substantiated. The research design will be addressed, whereby the actual methods that were used in each part of the research will be outlined, explained and reflected upon. Were all chosen methods successful or were there some problems or limitations?

The goal of this research is to determine and explore the relationship between 'disaster media' makers and their audience. As already mentioned above, two research domains have to be covered to reach this goal. But to explore a possible relationship it was in my opinion necessary to equally and independently deepen knowledge on both parties involved. Therefore, the main body of this research consists of two elements: an examination of the Dutch 'disaster media' world and a Dutch audience analysis. Next to that, performing the theoretical literature study above placed this research within a broader academic field. Finally, a case study was used as an example to see whether or not my findings are reflected in a current humanitarian crisis in Dutch media. Altogether these elements cover the two research domains and answer the main research question. In the conclusion of this thesis an attempt is made to re-join all these lines and come to general conclusions on the possible relationship between the 'disaster media' world and the diverse Dutch audience.

2.1 Theoretical literature study

This research started with a thorough exploration of the existing literature on this subject. Theories on considerations by media makers as well as literature on audience behavior, experiences and diversity are handled. Therefore the theoretical chapter forms the basis of this research and represents the current available knowledge within this field of study. From this chapter a few theories arose and appeared to be central to the subject. These theories are then used as a gauge in the other chapters to compare them with the data collected. The theoretical chapter is closed with a paragraph on remaining questions to explicate the added value of my research.

I spent a lot of time working on my theoretical base which has proved itself very useful. I read a lot of articles on this subject which made me more embedded in the existing knowledge as well as the knowledge gaps. The latter was specifically interesting, because it made me realize that there was even more to this subject than I initially thought and it consequently formed the core and goal of this research, namely to broaden and deepen the knowledge on the interaction between 'disaster news' media and its audience.

2.2 An analysis of the Dutch 'disaster media' world

As already mentioned, the central part of this research consists of two separate elements: an exploration of the 'disaster media' makers and an audience analysis. With respect to the first part, several interviews with journalists and news producers of NOS news and Nieuwsuur (two major Dutch news programs) were conducted.

Prior to the actual research, access to Dutch news programs appeared a bit of a threshold for me. But through a lecture by an important journalist, Jan Eikelboom, who worked for both NOS news and Nieuwsuur, I was able to establish an access point to both news programs. I approached him after the lecture and he was very enthusiastic and helpful. I used this contact in approaching the news programs directly and in my opinion this was crucial for my access to all respondents. Next to that, it was very positive to see the openness of both programs in general as they both welcomed and guided me extensively. This made me realize that they were perhaps interested in more knowledge on the subject themselves as well, confirming the already found knowledge gaps. Although my exploration of these two news programs provided me with substantial insights on the 'disaster media' – audience relationship in the Netherlands, in my opinion it would also have been interesting to involve RTL News (a commercial news station) as there are probably differences due to their profit oriented course and independency. Consequently, their considerations with respect to selection and framing might have also differed to that of the public-, government controlled news programs NOS news and Nieuwsuur.

I was able to do in-depth interviews with the editors in chief of both NOS news and Nieuwsuur. Next to that, I spoke with the foreign news coordinator of the NOS news and two of the most highly experienced 'disaster journalists' that are currently active in the field (Jan Eikelboom and Sander van Hoorn). The length of the interviews varied from 30 to over 60 minutes. Therefore I think that I was able to get a comprehensive image of the Dutch 'disaster media' world and covered substantial issues with respect to the subject of this research. Within the interviews several topics were addressed sequentially. First, attention was paid to the considerations towards selection and framing within 'disaster news', where after the relationship towards the audience received central stage. Finally, there was room to discuss new trends and the future of 'disaster media'.

Next to the opportunity to collect crucial information through in-depth interviews, being present at the headquarters of the NOS news provided me with some inside information on daily working environments. Although these findings were perhaps not as crucial as the interviews, they helped me to place some of the information and form a clear image.

As already mentioned above, several topics were addressed in the interviews sequentially and they eventually corresponded to the final structure of this chapter in my thesis by representing the different paragraphs. The data collected was analyzed through the method of coding. All interviews were voluntarily recorded and elaborated afterwards. Through color coding and labeling of certain sections I was able to arrange my data, which was very useful when writing my thesis. The coding that I used is represented in table 2.

Code	Color
General information (on the news programs and broadcasting system in the Netherlands)	Red
Direct, practical considerations (with respect to the selection of humanitarian crisis in Dutch 'disaster media')	Green
Framing (technical considerations such as visuals and discourse)	Blue
Relational considerations (with respect to the interaction between media makers and the audience)	Yellow
Information on 'new' online audience behavior	Orange

Table 2: coding system with respect to in-depth interviews

2.3 Audience analysis

To determine whether or not the relationship that emerged from the data in the previous part would also arise from the audience, an audience analysis was executed. However, my intention was to not only determine but also explore this relationship more in-depth by looking at audience diversity and 'new' online behavior (see the two research domains above). This asked for a more extended audience analysis.

For me personally, an exploration of differences in audience behavior appeared extremely interesting. I am a cultural anthropologist by origin, so I learned extensively that studying a mass as one group is hardly possible. Where there are people there are always differences. Next to that, existing knowledge on the 'disaster media'-audience relationship seemed to only focus on the confirmation of a relationship between media and 'the audience' as one group. Therefore, I chose to involve different groups within the audience analysis to find out if there were differences in the media-audience relationship and explore how online news exerts influence on these interactions. Then the next question could become: are different groups visible for the media makers and 'served' in their wishes consequently?

However, to keep the analysis manageable and yet interesting in this respect, I needed to specify and create a focus. Unfortunately, even in studying diversity you cannot prevent a certain delineation to be able to actually execute it. I considered this thoroughly and I chose to focus on two aspects specifically: age and cultural background. Of course there are several reasons for this. As already mentioned, after studying the academic literature, two research domains appeared to be of interest. The first domain wants to determine a media-audience relationship and explore differences within the Netherlands. While the Netherlands is a multicultural country, it was therefore in my opinion interesting to involve cultural background in my choices for respondent groups. The second domain tries to study 'new' online behavior through criticism and pro-activeness, for which I thought that the differentiation in age was specifically suitable.

These two differentiations finally resulted in the emergence of three research groups: Dutch native youngsters (age 18-30), Dutch native middle aged people (age 31-65) and Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background (age 18-30). At first, I had some trouble with the naming of these groups. First of all, I personally don't like the terms native versus immigrant (Dutch: 'autochtoon'/'allochtoon') as it might signify a certain superiority. Furthermore, the term 'immigrant' is not even suitable anymore in case of youngsters

nowadays, as most of them were born in the Netherlands and are therefore literally not immigrants themselves. As the focus lays on the difference in cultural background, norms and values, I chose to use to write it out as: 'Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background'. I decided to keep 'native' with respect to the first two groups, in order to retain clarity on which group I would be talking about.

2.3.1 Surveys

To create representable data and be able to make statements on all three groups, I found it essential to involve a wide base of respondents. Therefore, surveys were chosen as the main research method with respect to this part of the research. I expected that through surveys I would be able to address a wider group than if I would focus on interviews and focus groups only. The survey was anonymous and built up out of eleven questions of which ten were closed questions and the eleventh question was an open question. The reason I chose a closed survey was that I wanted the survey to be clear, comprehensible and not very time-consuming for my respondents (for the complete survey, see Appendix 1). Next to that, it also made the data analysis easier, on this I will return later on.

Through the snowball-effect (meaning that the survey would spread itself through social networking) I hoped to receive response from all three groups within the Dutch society. Therefore I started off by placing the survey online (through social media) and distribute it through my own personal network. Although one might argue that distributing a survey through a personal/social network could have some implications to the results, I am personally convinced that in this case this was not applicable as the survey was anonymous and scattered itself outside my personal network very fast. Thus, partially my expectations were lived up to, because in only a week time over 70 respondents reacted.

However, the third subgroup (Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background) was hardly represented within this response. Therefore I needed to alter my approach a little and also print the surveys on paper. I decided to go to Utrecht Central Station where I knew that the diversity of people was very high. Within an hour I was able to conduct more than 30 surveys with Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background. Although I am very glad with these results, it has some implications. The representation of cultural backgrounds at Utrecht Central Station remained relatively low. While there were also respondents from African-, Dutch Antillean- and Asian culture, the majority had a Middle Eastern/Islamic background. The cultures represented were mainly Turkish, Moroccan, Afghan, Iraqi, and Iranian. Although these groups make up for almost half (47%) of the Non-Western ethnic groups in the Netherlands[88], the results might have been different had I chosen to conduct surveys on another location within the country with for example only Surinamese respondents.

Although in some groups the respond rate was higher than in others, using this method led to a total of over 100 respondents within this analysis. Below the total respondents per

[88] Nicolaas et al., Centraal Bureau Statistiek (2010) :22

subgroup are displayed. Because the survey was partly distributed online, it is not possible to determine a response rate percentage.

Research group	Respondents
Dutch native youngsters/students (age 18-30)	48
Dutch native middle aged people (age 31-65)	35
Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background (age 18-30)	32

Table 3: amount of respondents with respect to surveys, divided between all three research groups

Because the amount of respondents was not equal in all groups, I used percentages to make a comprehensible analysis of the data. First I divided the surveys per subgroup. Then I calculated, per question, the amount of respondents per answer (X) and weighed that against the total of respondents (N) in that group (X/N*100). Consequently per subgroup and per question, percentages emerged on which I was able to make certain statements. With respect to the exploration of 'new' online behavior, the amount of criticism and pro-activeness of the different subgroups was analyzed through question 10 and 11 of the survey (see Appendix 1). Here I also calculated percentages which I used to place all three groups within a cross-comparison. The reason for this was that it gives a clear indication of the differences between the three groups and shows how criticism and pro-activeness relate to one another.

2.3.2 Focus groups

To deepen knowledge on the research groups and verify the outcomes, I decided to use focus groups as an additional method in the audience analysis. For both Dutch native groups I managed to organize a focus group meeting. For the Dutch native students group a focus group meeting was organized among participants of the bachelor program history teacher at the college of Amsterdam (Hogeschool van Amsterdam/HvA). I was able to approach them through my partner who is enrolled in this program as well. The meeting consisted of nine students, ages between 20 and 28. With respect to Dutch native middle aged people, I was able to organize a focus group meeting spontaneously, so it was not as organized as the first meeting. At a birthday party at my parental home, I was able to somewhat steer the conversation of a group of respondents as they were discussing about the political situation in Ukraine. Although it was more informal than the other focus group, I was also able to address the topics below, which made it interesting and of added value to my results.

Both groups were asked/steered to discuss around three topics, namely: 1) the reliability and completeness of Dutch 'disaster media', 2) reasons (personal or in general) to follow or unfollow 'disaster news' and 3) 'new' behavior through online self-journalism. As a researcher I introduced the topics, where after each topic was discussed for around 10 minutes. The focus groups did not so much provide me with new information, but were very helpful in the deepening of my knowledge and the determination of some underlying feelings, causes or considerations that were not always visible through the surveys.

Unfortunately, I lacked sufficient access to the last research group (Dutch youngsters/students with a different cultural background) to also organize a focus group meeting. The surveys gave me the data needed to make distinct assumptions on the 'disaster news' behavior and –perception of this group, and in some cases I was able to ask extra questions while conducting the surveys. However, due to the absence of an organized focus group, underlying causes for certain findings are often hypothetical and cannot always be confirmed by the data. As a result of this, but also due to the interesting outcomes of the survey study, this might be a subject for future, more in-depth research (see paragraph 6.4)

2.3.3. Informal conversations

Finally, my research was subject of many informal conversations during the research period. At different meetings with friends, family and colleagues my research topic was subject of conversation. Although I was not directly active as a researcher in these moments, some of these conversations did provide me with additional- or verifying information and gave me a wider insight into the different research groups. In the final thesis, I will sometimes use these conversations for quotes or to support the data found.

2.4 Case study

The fourth and final part of this research concerns a case study. The political crisis in Syria is used to see whether or not the findings of the research are reflected in a current humanitarian disaster in Dutch media. The reason for choosing this case was already shortly addressed in the introduction. While I was working on this case at the Dutch humanitarian aid department, I noticed that the attention of the public was quickly fading because of the occurrence of another humanitarian disaster (Philippines). Added to that was the growing blurredness of the crisis which made it even more difficult to retain the attention. However, the crisis is still continuing, creating more and more victims every day. Therefore, in my opinion, it was a perfect case to explore in light of this subject.

The case is studied on the aspects of discourse, visual framing and of course the handling of this crisis with respect to the Dutch audience. The case study is built on the earlier mentioned in-depth interviews with NOS news and Nieuwsuur, but is supplemented by interviews with Media Working Group Syria (MWS), an organization that provides critical counterweight to the Western media coverage on the Syrian crisis. I was able to interview several of their members and join them during a daily meeting with their supporters and volunteers in Amsterdam. In my opinion this was very valuable because it provided me with other insights on the Syrian case in the media that lay outside the scope of Western media thoughts. This hopefully prevented me from a one-sided point of view.

2.5 Problems and limitations

2.5.1 Validity

With respect to an audience analysis, it is always difficult to determine whether the reactions that people express in the surveys are not influenced by factors such as their current mood or social desirability. Through making the survey anonymous, composed of closed questions

and not very time consuming, an attempt was made to control this as far as possible. Next to that, organizing focus groups (and observing the reactions of people during these sessions), covered this issue for at least two out of three groups. As already mentioned, unfortunately I was not able to organize a focus group meeting with Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background. Although this has to be taken into account and may create opportunities for further research, I am convinced that the claims made with respect to this research group are valid, given the extremely distinct (and critical) outcomes. In my opinion the entire audience analysis provides a truthful insight into the relationship between 'disaster media' and all audience groups.

2.5.2 Generalizations

This specific research can provide us with more general knowledge on the subject of 'disaster media' and the ways in which it relates to the audience it tries to reach. But although the academic literature argues that coverage- and audience patterns are relatively similar around the world (and especially within the West), it should be clear that this research is focused on Dutch 'disaster media' only and consequently it might not be completely suitable to draw conclusions for other countries.

3. ‘Making news’: The Dutch ‘disaster-media world’

What do you choose to capture being a journalist present in disaster areas? What choices do you face as the foreign coordinator of a country’s’ major news program? How do the editors in chief of national news boards perceive their audience?

Within this chapter, answers to these and other questions will be provided through an analysis of the Dutch ‘disaster-media world’. Considerations with respect to selection, framing and the relationship towards the audience will be handled. It is important to notice that within this chapter, the findings are presented from the viewpoint of ‘disaster media’ makers. Several important factors emerged from in-depth interviews with editors, news coordinators and journalists of two Dutch news programs, NOS news and Nieuwsuur.

To provide coherence and a clear overview of the results, this chapter is divided into five paragraphs. First, the chapter will be introduced by an explanation of the Dutch broadcasting system and the two news programs that were involved in this research. The second paragraph will focus on direct and practical considerations that are of influence with respect to selective choices made by media makers. The three remaining paragraphs will focus more specifically on the media-audience relationship. Paragraph 3.3 will focus on framing and its interaction with the audience, in paragraph 3.4 the two most important relational considerations will be presented and finally, paragraph 3.5 will consider ‘new’, online audience behavior.

3.1 The Dutch broadcasting system

3.1.1 Public- and commercial stations, membership- and task broadcasters

When discussing ‘disaster media’ in the Netherlands, it is perhaps useful to introduce this topic by laying out its public broadcasting system (Dutch: ‘omroepbestel’). First of all, a division in broadcasting can be made between the public- and commercial stations. Commercial stations are profit oriented, receiving income mainly through commercials. Public stations are under the responsibility of the Dutch government. This means that input and output are controlled by authorities.

The public television system in the Netherlands still shows remnants of the pillarization period (Dutch: ‘Verzuiling’) in the Netherlands, which carried on far into the sixties. Within this period, people in the Netherlands were divided along religious lines. When born in a catholic family, you would go to a catholic school, have catholic friends, adhere to a catholic sports club and thus, watch catholic television. Currently there are three public television channels, The Netherlands 1, 2 and 3. They are managed by two different broadcasting streams, namely the membership broadcasters (Dutch: ‘ledenomroepen’) and the task broadcasters (Dutch: ‘taakomroepen’). According to Joost Oranje, editor in chief of the Dutch news program ‘Nieuwsuur’, the main difference between these streams is the fact that membership broadcasters make television for their own followers which are often members of a certain social, cultural or religious group, a clear remnant of the above mentioned pillarization

period[89]. The task broadcasters on the other hand, have the legal task to make news programs as laid down in the so-called Media law, which was established in 1987 and renewed in 2008. Although there are other news programs that broadcast news on the commercial news channels, the NOS (Nederlandse Omroep Stichting) "has the task to provide the media supply for the national public media service within the fields of news, sports and events, that lends itself for collective care"[90].

This research will take into consideration two news programs on the public-, government controlled stations (NOS news and Nieuwsuur), that have the legally established task to provide this news. As underlined by the manufacturing consent theory (paragraph 1.1.2), the fact that both news programs are government controlled might increase their influence on the news provided. I will come back to this later on.

3.1.2 NOS news and Nieuwsuur

As already mentioned, this research focuses on two major public news programs, NOS news and Nieuwsuur. The NOS news is responsible for the provision of daily news through the national public channel. It produces fifteen news broadcasts a day, starting at seven o'clock in the morning until midnight. In case of breaking news there are extra broadcasts[91]. All these different news broadcasts are visible at the department of the NOS news as every one of them has a separate staff and organization. Due to the fact that they are all located next to one another on the same floor, communication between the different broadcasting teams is easy and prevents overlap[92]. The NOS news works closely together with Nieuwsuur, a news program that provides background, interpretation and analysis to the daily news. The program is a collaboration of NOS and NTR, another Dutch task broadcaster that has been established in 2010. There have been a few struggles to create Nieuwsuur as it is today. The precursor of Nieuwsuur, Nova, was produced by NTR and VARA (one of the membership broadcasters) which created a conflict of interests. Nieuwsuur was established in 2011 and thereby definitively ends an inefficient system of many public broadcasters that were making background sections on the daily news. Nieuwsuur has the legally established task to provide independent and objective analyses of the daily news[93]. The program selects two or three subjects per broadcast. According to Oranje, "Nieuwsuur should not be an extended version of the daily news"[94]. Although it draws its own line, a close collaboration with the NOS news is considered as essential. With respect to the content of the items selected, it seems that political crises generally require more attention, interpretation and analysis. Examples of these substantially covered political crises are Syria and Ukraine[95].

[89] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014.
[90] Rijksoverheid, Mediawet 2008 (free translation from Dutch).
[91] J. Leemeijer, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[92] Field notes NOS news, 06-08-2014
[93] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.

3.2 Making a crisis into news: direct, practical considerations

"A status quo [..] is no news"[96].

For both news programs choices with respect to the selection of 'news' have to be made. Although the NOS news has fifteen broadcasts a day, it also has to cover nearly everything, from domestic news on health insurances to political crises all around the world. Selection of news is a tricky and often very difficult job. When it comes to the foreign news of both news programs, this task is in practice divided between editors on the department and journalists in the field. Sometimes choices are quite obvious, for example in case of the recent MH17 plane crash in Ukraine where around 200 Dutch people died[97]. But sometimes choices are more difficult and then well-thought out decisions have to be made. In these cases several factors are of influence.

3.2.1 News as the extraordinary

According to Jan Eikelboom, war reporter for both NOS news and Nieuwsuur, a first factor in the selection on humanitarian crises news is that "in 'making news', journalists are showing that which differs from the ordinary"[98]. The violent demonstration on for example Tahrir Square in Caïro is 'news', while the rest of the city is perhaps continuing daily activities. Although both programs (and especially Nieuwsuur in their strive for background and analysis) try to prevent a blinkered focus by also involving people outside the direct conflict, they are still 'making news'. This is also recognized by Dave Abspoel, foreign news coordinator at the NOS news, who adds that with respect to a conflict, "a status quo or developments that are halted, is no news"[99]. This 'news making' may also be linked to the frequency of happenings in a certain country. When something occurs in a country that is never subject to attacks, war or other crises, the news stands out. Compared to yet another attack in Syria or South-Sudan it is then more likely to make that day's news[100].

This search for 'news' is predominantly consistent with the concepts presented in the study of Steven Ross, as explicated in the initial sections of theoretical framework. In his research on the "dynamics of media coverage"[101], he found that nearly half (48%) of all news is focused on creating 'breaking news'. Although it is causing frustration by international development organizations as it might have effects on the creation of so-called 'silent disasters', stories on long-term, slumbering crises in countries in Africa or the Middle East are simply not seen as 'news'[102].

[96] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[97] J. Leemeijer, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[98] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[99] D. Abspoel, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[100] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[101] Ross (2004):3
[102] Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen (2003):112

3.2.2 Security

Security of staff is a second influential factor according to the academic theory[103] which is also pointed out by especially NOS news as an important consideration in the decisions on where to cover 'disaster news'. The safety of journalists in the field always comes first[104]. However, when a certain area is not accessible due to safety reasons, it does not automatically mean non-coverage; in this case locally trusted people in the field are often consulted.

But obviously security does influence the course of the news and brings ethical issues along. Unfortunately this is extremely visible these days in the kidnapping and murder of Western journalists by for example Islamic State (IS). Another example, more related to effects on prevailing discourses, is the Syrian crisis in which security and access were major issues for Eikelboom in his attempts to cover the conflict[105]. This will be further explicated in the case study (chapter 5).

3.2.3 Autonomy and distribution of power

When it comes to choices in the selection of humanitarian crises, the distribution of power and the autonomy of journalists and the editorial boards is also of crucial importance.

Although not directly confirmed by the data found (perhaps because it is not recognized, but maybe also because it is a sensitive issue), the already mentioned fact that both programs fall under government responsibility could have great effects on the amount of independency news makers have in their considerations. The manufacturing consent theory argues that decisions on what crisis to cover, and more importantly how to cover it, are influenced by governments and their political background, -contacts and -involvement. According to Chomsky and Herman (1994), this influence is even more direct when the news programs are under government control. Although the Netherlands has freedom of press enshrined in its law, the fact that both news programs are under public responsibility of the government could create similar effects. The political lens of, in this case the West, could influence the way 'disaster news' makers are supposed to perceive and present global events[106].

But while the manufacturing consent theory cannot be confirmed by the gathered data, autonomy and journalistic freedom is certainly mentioned with respect to selective decisions. Although Nieuwsuur is partly created by the NOS, Joost Oranje (editor in chief) argues that both news programs have their own editorial boards, budgets and thus their own considerations with respect to selection and framing[107]. This might result in different topics (or humanitarian crises) covered by both news programs.

With respect to actual decisions on what to cover in the field, journalists Jan Eikelboom and Sander van Hoorn both argue that due to their journalistic freedom, they are able to exert influence on news coverage choices. Although it differs per crises who decides, long

[103] World Press Freedom index 2014 [via www.rsf.org/index2014]
[104] J. Leemeijer & D. Abspoel, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[105] Eikelboom (2014)
[106] Chomsky & Herman (1994):1
[107] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014

experience and specialization within the field makes them able to make deliberate considerations that are accepted and appreciated by their editors in chief (NOS news and Nieuwsuur)[108]. This means that next to framing choices, considerations on selection are also partly made within the disaster areas themselves, and not only at the boards in Hilversum.

3.3 The 'disaster media' – audience relationship: framing

"The truth is always the first victim in a conflict"[109].

With respect to the exploration of the media-audience relationship from the viewpoint of 'disaster media' makers, I would first like to focus on the more technical aspects of the relationship by looking at framing. As already mentioned in the theoretical framework, framing is the selection of some aspects of a reality over others and it is needed to "interpret, organize, and understand"[110] the information that is being captured in disaster areas.

With respect to framing, a division can be made between discourse and visual framing. Discourse is in this case applicable to the quote above and captures the idea that a story is not 'made' by media makers and transferred to the receiving public, but that it is created in a much wider, often unclear process. Visual framing learns us about the power of the angle of the camera. The goal of this paragraph is to make a first step towards the relationship between media and audience by showing that decisions of journalists with respect to what they choose to capture can be crucial for the imaging of the audience.

3.3.1. 'Disaster discourse'

With different groups fighting for their own, diverse causes, it is always hard (and often even impossible) for journalists to find the core of a conflict and the truthful discourse or story. In his lecture that was titled with the above quotation, Jan Eikelboom used the example of Libya during the revolution to illustrate the difficulties and fragility surrounding discourse:

> We were driving past a devastated farm and alongside the road there were a few men who gestured us to stop. They took us to the farm and told us what had happened. The farm was completely destroyed, the roof was gone, there were toys laying around, all furniture was broken, the walls were collapsed and the ground was covered with bullet shells. The story that was told by the rebels was that a farmer family lived here (which we could somehow confirm due to remnants of their living circumstances), 'loving people who did nothing wrong, but look what happened!'. [..] Shells were picked up and shown in front of our camera: 'This is what that bastard Gadaffi is shooting his people with!' I thought that this was a very heavy and significant story and we consequently broadcasted it this way in the Netherlands. Much later, while I was writing my first book, I watched this scene again and realized that this could never have been the truthful story. Nobody shoots with bullet shells. Shells remain at the spot from which bullets are shot. This meant that the opposite of the story was actually true. Those rebels had been in that farm, shooting at the army of Gadaffi (free translation from Dutch)[111].

[108] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014 & S. van Hoorn, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[109] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 04-04-2014
[110] Houston et al. (2012):608
[111] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 04-04-2014

Discourse, as being the story constructed, contested and consumed, is an extremely delicate issue when it comes to violent, political conflicts displayed in the media. For the audience it creates 'a victim' and 'a perpetrator'; it determines peoples' imaging, needed to process and understand a certain situation[112]. It is important to note that, although it is sometimes hard to find the truthful story and prevent deception, journalists and news editors are well aware of the fact that conflict is more than only the fighting itself and that the public opinion and support is something the opposing parties are all striving for[113] However, Jan Eikelboom argues that the audience is often less aware of this phenomenon. Due to the fact that Dutch 'disaster media' makers are not openly discussing this, facts presented in the media remain untested and seen as reliable, maintaining the situation as it is[114].

As Syria provides more in-depth examples on 'disaster discourse' and the fighting of a 'public opinion war', this subject will be further discussed in chapter 5, where the Syrian crisis receives central position.

3.3.2. Showing what you show: the ethical- and cultural acceptance of images

In principle every journalist is, from their journalistic commitment, looking for the images and stories that show what is actually going on. But there are always choices involved. Will you cover a bombing on one side of the road or turn your camera ninety degrees and film the daily activities that continue despite the conflict? Are you showing shivering children covered in mud or children that are playing, notwithstanding the refugee situation they are in? These are very difficult, but at the same time also very powerful, decisions. Decisions that do, to a large extent, determine the imaging of people and therefore the public opinion in the country for which these journalists are working[115]. "In any case, the images that are being shown with respect to every humanitarian crisis are only a very limited part of reality"[116].

> Journalists are often playing 'bunched football' (Dutch: 'kluitjesvoetbal'). They are making the same story at the same place. Nine out of then times this means the capital city. This one-sided focus quite often leads to a distorted picture[117].

Next to that, the assembling process, which is also done by the team on sight, is a second form of selection in which certain images are used, while others are left out[118]. Images and/or stories that are omitted are left out for different reasons. The first is very simple; it is impossible to show everything. A second factor is that in 'making news', you are showing that which differs from the ordinary, as already mentioned in the first paragraphs of this chapter. "When a train disaster occurs, you are not showing that the other time schedules are all right, that is not what news television is for"[119]. The last factor, and perhaps the most significant one with respect to this particular research, is the field of tension between covering the entire story (with all its corresponding images and stories) and an audience that could change

[112] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[113] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 04-04-2014
[114] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Eikelboom (2004):211
[118] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[119] Ibid.

channels or not watch anything you want to show[120]. When an image has a great journalistic value, making it important for the coverage of a conflict or disaster, than it is impossible not to use it. But although journalistic considerations are preponderant[121], certain images are clearly not appreciated by the Dutch public.

Decisions on which images to use or not to use, are often culturally and ethically determined by its audience. As already mentioned above, sometimes images of death people are unavoidable because they have a high journalistic value to the conflict. Most of the times this is accepted by the Dutch audience, but images of death people are always subject of consideration. Images of people being shot or killed up-close are some sort of red line. But according to Dave Abspoel, "these red lines are fluid and considerations are always based upon the supportive value for the story in question"[122]. This means that there is a continuous question if people will be accepting them for the purpose of covering the conflict. These ongoing debates are corresponding to theories on visual disaster coverage of the Asian tsunami by James Hollings, who argues that images of death people are in principle avoided, unless it undermines the story to tell[123].

Dutch culture is respectively private on images and emotions surrounding death and loss[124]. According to Eikelboom and Van Hoorn, this is very different in the Arabic world where foreign journalists are actually somehow encouraged to cover the death, loss and grievance people deal with every day[125]. Next to that, local media, from whom images and stories are used in case of difficulties in access or safety, are always entangled in the conflict through their personal backgrounds and position within the conflict[126]. We can clearly relate this to the theories of Höijer (2004) who argued that what we as an audience see as 'suffering' or 'violence' is a "cultural-cognitive construction", shaped by our social, cultural and historical experiences and circumstances[127].

Finally it is important to notice that news programs like NOS news and Nieuwsuur are able to see per minute, through exact viewing figures, when the Dutch audience is switching channels or stops watching. This can then be translated into the altering of future decisions related to disaster coverages or confronting images shown[128]. However, both news editors argue that although these statistic figures are continuously consulted, they are not predominant in disaster news making and journalistic considerations will always come first[129].

[120] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014
[121] Ibid.
[122] D. Abspoel, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[123] Hollings (2005)
[124] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[125] Eikelboom (2014):30, J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014 & S. van Hoorn, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[126] S. van Hoorn, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[127] Höijer (2004):516
[128] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[129] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014 & D. Abspoel, personal communication, 06-08-2014

3.4 The 'disaster media' – audience relationship: relational considerations

"Journalism is nothing more than a mirror of society"[130]

The conclusion that we can draw from the paragraph above is that although journalists always try to put their journalistic values first, choices with respect to the images used and the story constructed, do in a certain way involve the audience and their cultural-, ethical-, and/or personal preferences and behavior.

However, the data collected through in-depth conversations with different experts working in the 'disaster media' world, show that there is more to the relationship than technical aspects alone. These 'behavioral' findings can be subsumed into two concepts that will be handled below.

3.4.1 Crisis fatigue

As already mentioned in the title of this thesis and thoroughly explicated in its theoretical framework, crisis fatigue is explained by Moeller (1999) as the phenomenon in which the interest and compassion for a certain crisis wanders off at a certain period[131].

According to Jan Eikelboom, the reasons behind crisis fatigue mainly come down to 1) the occurrence of multiple crises at the same time and 2) the blurredness and hopelessness of a certain situation. The first is clearly linkable to the theory of Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen who consider crisis fatigue to be the ability of an audience to handle only one crisis at a time[132]. For example, when the political situation in Ukraine emerged, attention soon shifted away from the civil war in Syria. Although a focus on Ukraine has many different reasons, that also have to do with connectedness, crisis fatigue (or perhaps the prevention of it) also played a crucial role. With respect to the second reason for the occurrence of crisis fatigue, an example again comes from the political crisis in Syria, where blurredness and hopelessness of the situation seemed to have reinforced crisis fatigue. An audience seems to need a clear, resolvable conflict with a good- and a bad guy, something that is becoming more and more absent in the case of Syria.

Either way, the Syrian case turns out to be a great example of crisis fatigue[133]. Therefore, it will be further elaborated upon in chapter 5, where the Syrian case is used as an example of the concepts described in the other empirical chapters.

For now it is important to consider the ways in which the 'disaster media' makers take into consideration, or handle, crisis fatigue in their daily work. First of all, it is something that is clearly recognized and struggled with in the Dutch 'disaster media' world. But although disaster media makers do recognize this trend in which public attention and humanitarian support is simultaneously declining, they also argue that media and public attention does not solve a conflict in itself. Furthermore they find that journalistic values should always come

[130] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014
[131] Moeller (1999):2
[132] Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen (2003):112
[133] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014

first: "The art is to create your news program in a journalistic responsible way, while at the same time remaining accessible to a wide public"[134]. Leemeijer states how the editorial board of the NOS news is always trying to balance the news and guard for "an automatic pilot through which you broadcast the same every night"[135]. Oranje confirms this by stating that focus is important and several crises will not often be handled within the same broadcast to prevent people from not watching at all[136]. It is not only impossible but more importantly, non-effective, to cover all foreign news: "If we would make an eight o'clock news broadcast on all crises in the world, then nobody would sit through the entire broadcast"[137]. For media makers this is the most important way to handle crisis fatigue: by trying to prevent it from happening.

3.4.2 Connectedness

The concept of 'connectedness', as I would like to call it, appears to be new in light of the relationship between the audience and 'disaster' news. In the context of the subject of this research, it does not seem to be academically studied. But the way in which a country and its inhabitants feel connected to a certain crisis appears to be a crucial factor in selective choices with respect to humanitarian disasters in the Dutch media. Thereby it shapes, in the eyes of media makers, the relationship between their daily work and the Dutch audience they are working for[138].

According to Eikelboom, the way in which connectedness is generally handled is through a constant fictitious calculation, whereby the number of deaths and the physical distance from the Netherlands are weighed and considered on importance to the Dutch audience. In practice this means that when it comes to Dutch 'disaster news', 200 deathly victims in China is generally not considered to be news, while 200 deathly victims in Germany would be the opening item of the eight o'clock news[139]. However, physical distance is not the only way connectedness can be of influence. Economic value, political connections, military involvement, shared characteristics and values, or Dutch victims present in the 'disaster area' in some way all automatically 'create' news. With respect to the latter, examples are Dutch victims of the Asian tsunami in 2004 or the most recent flight MH17 that intentionally crashed in Ukraine. "The audience identifies itself with them more easily"[140]. Another good example with respect to a physically far, but emotionally close situation is the bombing attack at the Boston marathon which had a relatively small amount of victims, but still became big news in the Netherlands[141]. The exact reasons for this remain unclear, but we could probably find explanations in the shared cultural characteristics and –values with the American culture, the shared fears for terrorist attacks, or economic-/political connections.

When trying to academically explain the emergence of the concept of connectedness, the theory of Edmund Husserl may be suitable as he uses the term 'lifeworld' to explain how "we,

[134] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014
[135] J. Leemeijer, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[136] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014
[137] J. Leemeijer, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[138] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014; J. Leemeijer, personal communication, 06-08-2014; S. van Hoorn, personal communication, 06-08-2014
[139] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.

as living in wakeful world-consciousness, are constantly active on the basis of our passive having of the world". With this he means that people are constantly trying to connect to the world around them, something that Shoemaker (1996) identified as a biological 'desire' to understand and explore the direct world around us[142]. When combining these two theories, the concept of connectedness appears to be the expression of our 'news hunger' within our personal lifeworld. Our lifeworld not only has a biological aspect, it is also socially, culturally and personally determined. Although the exploring characteristic is biologically present in our bodies, culture, society and our personal experiences are shaping the content of our lifeworld, making us feel more connected to some people, countries, cultures, victims and disasters than others. This is what determines our selection for certain forms of information over others.

This makes connectedness a very broad term as it involves a personal feeling that can be different for everybody and can be experienced in multiple, diverging occasions. It is thus multi-interpretable which touches upon audience diversity theories by Höijer (2004), who argues that certain concepts (of which connectedness could also be a very good example) are personally defined and shaped by "social, cultural and historical circumstances"[143]. Although the explicated data above shows that connectedness is experienced by media makers as a crucial consideration, audience diversity within connectedness was never mentioned, let alone be of consideration with respect to 'disaster news' composition. Therefore, it is arguable that Dutch 'disaster media' makers are well aware of the importance of a feeling of 'Dutch connectedness', and how this currently shapes their daily considerations, but are less informed on the diversity in feelings of connectedness that may be present within Dutch society. This diversity could be creating differences in the wishes, demands and expectations of the audience with respect to 'disaster news' that are currently not acted upon. This does not so much involve the question whether or not this is even possible or should be considered within one news program, but it could definitely have its effects on audience behavior towards Dutch 'disaster news' making it crucial for this research.

3.5 The 'disaster media' – audience relationship: 'An Internet Revolution'

"Speed versus facts and interpretation versus objectivity."[144]

After considering the technical, as well as the 'behavioral' aspects, the 'disaster media' – audience relationship has gone through a relatively new and important 'revolution'. As already discussed through the theories by Dimmick, Chen, & Li (2004) and Jim Hall (2001), news production, but especially its consumption is becoming faster every day. With the birth of the Internet in the 90's, news in general underwent an enormous change. This enormously affected the relationship between news(makers) and the audience. Not only were news makers able to transfer their stories and images faster to their boards, the news was also broadcasted through the internet. Many news channels added an internet platform to their

[142] Shoemaker (1996):32
[143] Höijer (2004):516
[144] Argos Media Logica, 'The Usual Suspects' – 19-02-2014

news provision. Next to that, the audience was able to take on a more proactive role through forums and social media channels[145].

War reporter and journalist Jan Eikelboom confirms this general Internet revolution with respect to 'disaster media'. He clearly remembers that about fifteen years ago the first computers with a connection to Internet were established on the headquarters of the editorial boards. This marked an enormous change in news production and consumption, which was most visible in the new speed of 'disaster news'. The Internet provides new possibilities for both the audience (as described above) as well as media makers, through for example quick truth verifications. However, "this new speed is not always good for the quality of the news"[146]. When a disaster occurs, the audience wants to know everything immediately and starts to speculate. To counterbalance this, the news production has to be fast, which may lead to imperfections and errors. An example of this pressure that may influence the current media – audience relationship, is the news production surrounding the terrorist attacks by Anders Breivik in Norway. The Dutch television program 'Media Logic' by Argos uses this event as an example in their episode named 'The Usual Suspects'. Within this episode it is explained how the initial confusion surrounding the attacks combined with the speed of news through internet created a situation in which the message immediately became 'Muslim terrorism'[147]. Within this episode the chief editor of Nieuwsuur explains how..

> ..this is the greatest dilemma of journalism in the year 2014. On the one hand you have an enormous speed of news media, and also an expectation of the public that there is a very rapid clarification. On the other hand you have an amount of trust the public has in the news media, that you are going to damage if you are too quick and make mistakes[148].

This two-sided influence created through Internet and the growing pro-activeness and criticism of the audience, is also underlined by Oranje in a personal interview in which he states that the public is demanding an enormous amount of speed. He uses the European elections as an example of how the public was immediately critical when Nieuwsuur was ten minutes later than other news channels because they wanted to verify the information more thoroughly. When on the other hand the information turns out to be incorrect, the audience will be critical as well. This reinforces each other creating a situation in which news speed is opposed to news quality[149]. This visible trend by Dutch 'disaster media' makers can be verified by the academic theories of Jim Hall who argues that internet brings people closer to news and thereby makes them more critical towards it. The audience is becoming the 'gatekeeper' of the emergence and quality of news, instead of the journalists themselves[150].

However, Oranje also discerns the upcoming of a very recent opposite trend in which the audience is starting to see the flaws of this behavior. The emergence and increasing

[145] Dimmick, J., Chen, Y., & Li, Z. (2004):31
[146] Ibid.
[147] Argos Media Logica, 'The Usual Suspects' – 19-02-2014
[148] Ibid.
[149] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014
[150] Hall, J. (2001):34

popularity of quality media (Dutch: kwaliteitsmedia) such as the Dutch 'Correspondent '[151] and 'Yournalism', through which the public is able to exert influence on more context based news provision, is an important indication for this development. According to Oranje, the generation that grew up with the idea that everything is available through Internet is slowly being replaced by a new generation that is also going to recognize the negative effects of news speed through internet, a trend that is already further developed in the United States[152].

[151] J. Oranje, personal communication, 27-05-2014
[152] Ibid.

4. Active, passive, critical, reliant?: an audience analysis

To gain insights into the 'disaster news' perception and – behavior of the diverse Dutch audience, an audience analysis was executed. Within this chapter this analysis will be explicated. The data is established through surveys, focus groups and informal conversations.

It is obviously clear that there are differences between people and this also applies to their perception and behavior towards 'disaster news'. Denis McQuail states that experiences of the audience are personal and that they are integrated in "local environments and [..] embedded in local cultures"[153]. To honor these differences, personal experiences, environments and cultures, the audience within this analysis was not handled as a homogenous group. In order to keep the research manageable, while at the same time providing insights into some possible differences within the Dutch audience, differentiations were made based on age and cultural background.

While looking at age is specifically interesting given the suggested recent developments towards 'online disaster journalism' and "[..] a more media-wise, [..] sophisticated, readership"[154], differentiations based on cultural background were proven to be practically unexplored within the academic literature.

As a result of these considerations, three groups emerged as central within this audience analysis. These groups are; 1) Dutch native youngsters/students (age 18-30), 2) Dutch native middle aged people (age 31-65) and 3) Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background (age 18-30), Each group represents at least 30 respondents, leading up to a total of over 100 respondents within this analysis (table 3). Next to surveys, data is used from discussion/focus groups. As already mentioned in the methodological chapter, unfortunately a focus group meeting could not be organized with respect to Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background. However, I am convinced that all the findings below provide interesting and useful insights into audience diversity within the Netherlands. Below the results for each group will first be analyzed separately, where after some interesting general observations will be made in paragraph 4.4.

4.1 Dutch native youngsters

4.1.1. Survey results

When looking at the Dutch native youngsters, it appears that their interest in disaster media is definitely present. All respondents follow humanitarian crisis news one way or another. While academic literature states that new media has overtaken old media, results show that ***television*** is still the most important channel through which this group comes into contact with 'disaster news'. With 87% of the respondents stating that television is their foremost source of information, it stands well above the other 'old' medium, the newspaper. But new media are starting to become more and more important. Through especially the use of ***smartphone news-apps and social media*** such as Facebook and Twitter, it seems that

[153] McQuail (1997):7
[154] Hall, J. (2001):34

academic theories might be correct and the first place for television is not a very secure one when it comes to this group of respondents.

With respect to the current Dutch disaster news provision, it is clear that the ***NOS news*** broadcast is perceived as most trustworthy and complete (75% of this respondent group). This result is also reflected in the news forms that adhere to this group. Over 40% indicate that they prefer ***short, to-the-point information*** which might explain the fact that NOS news broadcasts are most popular in comparison to longer, more in-depth news programs such as Nieuwsuur.

The analyzed data suggests that 'disaster news' seems to be an interesting subject for conversations and discussions in the daily lives of Dutch native youngsters. Although there are some respondents (11%) that are hesitant, approximately 60% of the respondents discusses the daily crisis news with mostly their friends and partner. While these two parties are most important, classmates and family also appear to play a role in the processing of the incoming information.

Compassion and shock mostly come up when asked about reactions to confronting images. Related to this, and also mentioned, is the desire to provide help to the victims they see through 'disaster media'. But although they do express feelings of shock in their 'disaster news' perception and the display of heavy images, this is definitely not the foremost reason for not watching or changing channels (only 15%). The overkill of information with respect to the same crisis (65%) or subject is the most important reason for dropping out of the disaster news handling. It is thus very plausible to argue that this subgroup is prone to ***crisis fatigue*** behavior. However, another interesting detail is the fact that for young people the remaining daily television programming also plays a role. 20% of the respondents states that when another, more enjoyable, show is programmed, they switch channels. This stands in contrast to the middle aged people (discussed below), who do not mark this as a motivation (0%).

Finally, it is worth to take a look at the ***criticism and pro-active behavior*** of this subgroup. The latter might be especially interesting with respect to the theories on online self-journalism, as described above. With respect to criticism it appears that 22% of native youngsters find the Dutch 'disaster news' provision unreliable and incomplete, 44% find it reliable and complete and 34% consider themselves to be neutral. In a behavioral sense, the pro-activeness of the group was also tested. Respondents were asked if they ever actively searched for additional information on a certain crisis (and if yes, what kind of crisis). Combined, 40% of this respondent group at least once actively searched for additional information on one or more recent crises (Syria, Ukraine, Philippines were used as examples). What is interesting is the fact that Dutch youngsters hardly ever searched for additional information in the case of a natural disaster such as the Philippines, while political crises did require proactive behavior. The most important reason for this was to find underlying information that was not present in the daily news provision, such as the history, motivations, background and context of a conflict. Youngsters seem to be missing this in the daily news of especially the NOS. This is surprising as it is contrasting to other outcomes in this group such as their preference for short and to-the-point information. Other motivations mentioned for pro-active behavior on especially the internet were the lack of trust in the Western media in general and the fact that (in the case of Ukraine) the conflict felt very close

by ("at the gates of Europe"[155]), and thus of greater importance to them personally. This last observation can be easily linked to connectedness, one of the most important influential factors mentioned by the 'disaster media' makers. This will be further analyzed in paragraph 4.4

4.1.2. Additional research: focus group and informal conversations

To verify, support or supplement the outcomes of the survey, data from the focus group and informal conversations can be used.

A focus group was organized among students of the bachelor program history teacher at the college of Amsterdam (Hogeschool van Amsterdam/HvA). This focus group consisted of nine students, ages between 20 and 28. They were asked to discuss around three topics, namely: 1) the reliability and completeness of Dutch 'disaster media', 2) reasons for students (personal or in general) to follow or not to follow 'disaster news' and 3) pro-active behavior of students through online self-journalism. Although the researcher introduced the topics and posed a few questions as an inspiration, students were free to discuss. The outcomes of this focus group were mainly supportive of the above found results[156]. However, the criticism and distrust towards not only Dutch 'disaster media', but Western media in general became somewhat stronger. Questions on the influence of Western governments on the directions of the media were central in the discussion. We could thus argue that the ideas of the manufacturing consent theory[157] (a political influence on the actions of journalists/media makers) are present within the speculations of this subgroup[158]. Through this focus group it became clear that a growing criticism among Dutch students is thus definitely present and perhaps higher than the 22% that were the result of the surveys[159]. Another important part of the focus group session considered online journalism and pro-activeness of youngsters in this respect. All respondents argued that they actively participated in the world of online journalism and concluded that this was mainly the case with political disasters and caused by a desire to deepen their knowledge on a certain conflict. Next to that, another important motivation was the earlier mentioned criticism towards Dutch/Western media[160].

Finally, informal conversations were held throughout the research phase with especially respondents within this subgroup (as they are present in the daily network of the researcher). The subject was informally discussed with friends, family, colleagues and classmates, or even at a party or in a bar. This turned out to be very useful to the research in question because people were often not aware of research circumstances and conversed openly. It might be argued that this is against the 'informed consent' rule, but on the other hand it did not concern 'sensitive information' and in this way the researcher was able to control social circumstances. Asking youngsters about what they found about the current 'disaster news' and how they behave towards it ('do you use other kinds of news sources?'), gave me additional insights to this research group. In fact, these conversations actually supported the

[155] Anonymous respondent, personal communication, 16-07-2014
[156] Focus group session with HvA students, 12-09-2014
[157] Chomsky & Herman (1994):1
[158] Focus group session with HvA students, 12-09-2014
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.

results of the surveys but made them clearer and provided me with some interesting quotations. Crisis fatigue appeared in almost every conversation with people stating that they were “so overwhelmed by all these crises nowadays” that “it is impossible to follow everything”[161]. What was new and therefore perhaps more interesting, was the fact that with respect to this subgroup in particular, people also identified as being “too busy to follow all these crises in the world”[162] as an important factor. Their social life with attending classes, visiting friends and family and going out appeared to play an important role in a failure to follow the daily ‘crisis news’.

4.2 Dutch native middle aged people

4.2.1. Survey results

Similar to the Dutch native young people, middle aged people are all concerned with ‘disaster news’. Zero percent of the respondents argues that they are not interested in foreign crisis situations. Again similar is the preference for ***television*** as the channel to acquire information on these situations. This preference is relatively even higher in comparison to the native youngsters (95%), which might be due to the fact that the use of smartphone-apps is clearly lower (35%). What is interesting though is the fact that middle aged natives seem to be letting go of newspapers as a medium even more than their younger counterparts (only 45% still uses newspapers). What is also interesting is the fact that this subgroup is not so far behind in their use of ***social media*** for ‘disaster news’ gathering. Over 50% of the respondents in this category states that they are using new media in their handling of ‘disaster news media’.

What is again comparable to the previous subgroup is the fact that the ***NOS news*** seems to be the most trusted and consulted news program (75%). However, Nieuwsuur and the preference for ***more background analysis*** also appear to be important (25%) within this subgroup when compared to all other subgroups in this research. Middle-aged people seem to relatively (prefer to) spend more time on ‘disaster news’. The preference for longer items and more context-based news (Nieuwsuur) is a result of this. With respect to the sharing of - and discussing about - disaster news, middle aged natives first and foremost adhere to their partners (85%) with whom they often live together.

When looking into the reactions on difficult images, ***wanting to help*** is marked as the first response (65%). Next to that, compassion is again an often experienced feeling (over 45%). The ***crisis fatigue***, which will be discussed more thoroughly below in paragraph 4.4, is again applicable to this subgroup. A clear majority states that the loss of attention occurs when a crisis is handled too often (60% of the subgroup). Therefore, it seems clear that stirring images are not a reason for this subgroup to stop attending ‘disaster news’.

Finally, the ***criticism and pro-activeness*** of this subgroup was also tested. Although these behavioral findings will be further discussed below, it is worth to say that overall this subgroup appeared to be more positive towards the Dutch news media with only 5% arguing

[161] Anonymous respondent, personal communication, 06-09-2014
[162] Ibid.

that it is incomplete and unreliable. The remaining 95% holds a positive or neutral position. With respect to their pro-active behavior, Dutch middle-aged people are overall less likely to consult other information on a disaster that is displayed on the news, when compared to the other subgroups in this research. Although the use of social media seems to also go up with respect to this subgroup, (only) 20% of the respondents argued that they at least once searched for additional information. Again this was predominantly in case of political crises or when a crisis (Ukraine was mostly mentioned) felt closer to their personal lifeworld.

4.2.2. Additional research: focus group and informal conversations

Again, also with respect to this research group, focus groups and informal conversations were used as a supporting/verification method. As already mentioned in the methodological chapter, this focus group was not formally organized but originated out of an informal conversation.

The results were again mainly coherent with the above mentioned results but again gave me confirmation of my analysis or provided me with additional understandings. It became clear that although some respondents do use social media for news gathering, they always used it as an extra method or more coincidently, due to the personal use of Facebook or Twitter. It is plausible that this could explain the high percentage (50%) within this subgroup that argued for social media as an important news channel. However, social media was never used as the main news gathering method, for all of them daily news via television remained principal.

This overall preference for television news could perhaps also be explained by their generation culture and the way the majority of them was raised; 'watching the eight o'clock news with the family and a cup of tea'. While some do use the Internet occasionally for additional information on for example the background of a certain crisis, this pro-activeness is hardly ever out of criticism or disappointment in the news provision via television. This is something which stands in direct contrast with the other subgroups within this research and especially the last research group: Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background.

4.3 Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background

4.3.1. Survey results

To make a differentiation based on cultural background, a large amount of youngsters with another cultural background than only Dutch were consulted. There was in principle no particular preference for one certain background over another, resulting in a variety of cultures represented in this group. However, the majority of respondents (80%) had an ***Islamic cultural background*** (Moroccan, Turkish, Kurdish, Afghan). 87% of all respondents in this group felt (strongly) connected to their cultural background or country of origin. The main goal of considering this subgroup was to determine whether or not a different cultural background (in general) and different cultural surroundings influence the behavior towards 'disaster news'.

On an academic level, there is practically no literature on this subject, making it an interesting case. Prior to this analysis a hypothesis was made, that was tested in practice.

This concerned the expectation that a feeling of connectedness would be greater among youngsters with a cultural background similar to the victims of the crisis. For example the crisis in Syria, where most victims have an Islamic background that is similar to many Dutch immigrant youngsters in the Netherlands (and represented in tis subgroup). This hypothesis was supported by Media Working Group Syria (MWS), who argue that "a sense of 'Muslim brotherhood' felt by immigrant Muslims, creates a greater connectedness to a certain crisis"[163]. According to them, this often results in more pro-active news behavior through consulting critical news blogs, websites and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube)[164]. Although other results are interesting as well, this hypothesis will receive a central role below.

The first notable and interesting factor when looking into the collected data that concerns Dutch immigrant youngsters, is the fact that 15% of all respondents state that they ***do not follow 'disaster news'*** at all. Although this is a minority of the group, it is a much higher percentage in comparison to the other two research groups (both 0%). Next to that, within this research group it was less common (only 20%) to share and/or discuss about 'disaster news' with others. Another difference to the other groups is the fact that the majority (75%) of those who do follow the foreign crisis events are consulting ***new/social media*** to do so. Only 30% lists television as an important channel. In these latter instances 75% finds the ***NOS news*** most trustworthy and complete. Surprisingly RTL news is also listed by 20% as their first choice in television news coverage (compared to 11 and 5 percent by the other subgroups). When asked about their personal experiences when confronted with disasters in the news (stirring images and/or stories), ***shock and compassion*** are also expressed as the foremost first reactions, making them comparable in this sense to the other subgroups.

With respect to their criticism and pro-active behavior, this subgroup differs greatly from their native counterparts. With zero percent listing Dutch 'disaster news' as reliable and complete, it became clear that they are generally far more critical than the other subgroups. Half of the respondents clearly judges Dutch news media as ***unreliable and incomplete***. This is also very noticeable in the answers to other questions concerning their behavior towards 'crisis news'. First, when asked about the reasons for changing channels or not watching at all, finding the news presented ***not trustworthy or valuable*** is listed as most decisive (60%). Crisis fatigue is also present in this subgroup, but to a lesser extent (only 33%). Second, with respect to the preferred news form, 60% of respondents in this group lists ***personal stories and authentic images.*** Next to that, over 20% argues that they prefer the news that they look up themselves (compared to 5% of Dutch native youngsters).

When going deeper into this pro-activeness towards 'disaster news', more than half of this subgroup states that they have at least once looked for additional information on a crisis. The hypothesis above can thus be confirmed on the aspect of a ***more pro-active attitude and criticism*** towards 'disaster news'. However, the reason that is claimed to explain this behavior (connectedness) is much harder to confirm when using the data available. Although 25% of the respondents claimed to not follow 'disaster news' if the crisis was "personally meaningless", not one respondent directly argued to be more pro-active due to the fact that

[163] Media Working Group Syria, personal communication, 14-06-2014
[164] Ibid.

they felt more connected through cultural similarities of the victims. Although the motivations for pro-active behavior were asked as an open question for the respondents, making connectedness not a clearly presented option, the hypothesis can only partly be confirmed by the data. Other motivations that were expressed with respect to pro-active behavior were 1) the perceived need for more knowledge and understanding of underlying causes, 2) the preferred use of other sources for their information, and 3) the unreliability of the Dutch 'disaster news'.

4.3.2. Additional research: analysis of the results and informal conversations

The above results are very clear in the sense that pro-active behavior and criticism is extremely high among Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background, especially in comparison with the other subgroups.

Although this partly confirms the hypothesis that this paragraph started with, the suggested motivation for it is harder to confirm. The main reasons for pro-activeness turned out to be a preference of online news and perhaps more importantly, criticism towards the Dutch traditional news. Due to the fact that the surveys mainly consisted of closed questions and the fact that I was not able to organize a formal focus group, makes it hard to say something about the underlying reasons for this criticism. However, the fact that 60% states that they would prefer personal stories and authentic images within the news, might suggest that this subgroup finds the news too one-sided, generalizing and impersonal.

Although these are only speculations, the accusation of being too one-sided could consequently also suggest that this subgroup might adhere to the manufacturing consent theory which also argues for a clear influence of the countries' cultural viewpoint and political connections[165].

Although a focus group was not organized, informal conversations while conducting the surveys provided me with some insights on the assumed feelings of generalization and impersonality of the presented news. A few respondents mentioned how it was difficult to see that "Islamic religion is often negatively displayed"[166] within Dutch 'disaster media'. One male respondent further explained how he understands that horrible things are happening in Islamic countries that should not be left out, but that only showing the bombings or terrorist attacks is not the entire story. This is coherent with the ideas of Jan Eikelboom who argues that the audience should "realize that what they see on television is not the entire truth"[167].

Further research could definitely generate more valuable knowledge with respect to the underlying motivations for pro-activeness and criticism of this large subgroup within the Netherlands.

[165] Chomsky & Herman (1994)
[166] Anonymous respondent, personal communication, 10-09-2014
[167] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014

4.4 General observations, analyses and conclusions

When looking at the three research groups above we can draw some general conclusions that are described in the subparagraphs below.

First, the ways in which different groups ***experience*** 'disaster news' personally, concerning their interest, feelings and the ways in which 'disaster news' takes a part in their daily lives, is concerned.

Second, the reported 'disaster news' ***behavior*** will be explicated as found in this analysis. Here, the actual activities are concerned, as argued to be generally performed by the diverse audience. The two most basic findings of the earlier empirical research, crisis fatigue and connectedness, will again receive a central role.

Finally, the ***findings with respect to criticism and pro-activeness*** will be conjoined in a cross-comparison where the pro-activeness and criticism of the age-culture differentiated research groups is compared.

4.4.1 'Disaster news' experience

With respect to the experience of the different audience groups it is clear that in general all groups appear to have an interest in 'disaster news'. However, there is a variety in the amount of interest among the different groups. With respect to the differentiation in cultural background, Dutch immigrant youngsters appear to be slightly less interested in 'disaster news' (15% argues that they do not follow 'disaster news'). When it comes to the role that 'disaster media' plays in peoples' daily lives, measured by the amount of sharing and/or discussing about it with others, middle-aged natives score highest. They all seem to be sharing what they saw and heard with mostly their partners. Although both groups of students (native and those with other cultural backgrounds) expressed that they talked about the news with others, Dutch immigrant youngsters scored lowest with only 20%.

What is interesting with respect to the reactions of respondents towards their disaster news perception, is the fact that compassion is high amongst all respondents. According to Höijer (2004) this has to do with the idea of humanity which is extremely reinforced by the current active and visual reporting of the media[168]. However, other statements on compassion made by this same author do not seem to be verified by the data in this research. Höijer for example argues that people in a higher age level react with compassion more often than younger people[169], something that could not be confirmed by the results of the current audience analysis which shows that a feeling of compassion is almost equal in all research groups, with youngsters even scoring slightly higher on compassion than middle-aged people. Another often expressed feeling is a desire to help. Although this feeling is far more present among middle aged people than youngsters and more among native Dutch people than their counterparts with another cultural background, the occurrence of this feeling among all respondent groups might support the idea that visuals (television) are still able to

[168] Nussbaum (2001):515
[169] Höijer (2004):519

play an enormously powerful role within the world of humanitarian aid as brought up by Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen (2003)[170]. A practical example are huge actions such as the Giro555 television shows in the Netherlands.

4.4.2 'Disaster news' behaviour

Theories by Hall (2001) and Dimmick, Chen & Li (2004) with respect to 'new' online audience behavior suggest that 1) the audience is replacing new media over old media in their 'disaster news' gathering and 2) they are in principle more satisfied with news gathered through the internet[171].

The data collected in this research show that this is not entirely the case (yet). With respect to the first assumption, television news in general retains the most important position, ranked as the first channel by two respondent groups in this research. However, trends seem to be changing and all groups support this statement. Especially social media and smartphones are pushing for a change in all groups. It seems that Dutch youngsters with a different cultural background already made this change more completely and are an example of the theoretical statements above. The second assumption of the statement, which concerns the satisfaction with news, will be discussed in paragraph 4.4.3.

The most important conclusions of chapter 3 were that next to direct considerations, such as 'making news' and security, crisis fatigue and connectedness appeared to be crucial with respect to the 'disaster media' – audience relationship. It is interesting to see that both concepts also recur in the audience analysis, with especially crisis fatigue listed as the generally most important explanation for a decrease in attention for a certain crisis. Dutch native youngsters and middle-aged people overwhelmingly chose crisis fatigue as the number one consideration with respect to a loss of attention. Although Dutch immigrant youngsters express the trustworthiness of Dutch 'disaster news' as a more important reason to stop watching, crisis fatigue is clearly present in all respondent groups.

With respect to connectedness it was interesting to see that all groups expressed a form of connectedness, but that native youngsters and native middle-aged expressed this differently compared to youngsters with another cultural background. The first two groups voiced their connectedness especially with respect to their pro-active behavior. All argued that a crisis that felt close to their personal lives (like for example Ukraine) made them more interested to acquire (extra) information. For the latter group, the connectedness was more visible in the fact that their foremost reason to not follow 'disaster news' was when the crisis felt "personally meaningless". This diversity in connectedness might be coherent with the earlier determination that, although connectedness is recognized by media makers, the diversity that is inherent to this concept is less understood. Especially not following a news item if it felt as 'personally meaningless' can support this theory. However, more (open) research could further deepen the knowledge on this diversity.

[170] Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen (2003):109
[171] Dimmick, J., Chen, Y., & Li, Z. (2004):31

4.4.3 Findings with respect to criticism and pro-activeness

Criticism and pro-activeness were explored with respect to the different Dutch subgroups and their handling of 'disaster news'. Exploring these two aspects emerged from theories by especially Jim Hall (2001). His theory, as more thoroughly explained in chapter 1, is based upon the idea that the growing emergence of the Internet brings people closer to 'disaster news' and thereby makes them more critical towards it[172]. The result of this process would then be a growing form of 'self-journalism' and a diminishing of the agenda setting role for journalists and editorial boards[173].

In general the data required in this research supports this theory. Comparing the audience based on age, it became clear that youngsters, who grew up in the Internet era, are more pro-active and critical than the generation before them (middle-aged). Therefore we could argue for a visible difference in online journalism based on age- and generation.

Hall (2001) furthermore suggests in his theory that pro-activeness comes before criticism implying a cause-effect relationship. The idea behind this is that people that are getting more pro-active through the use of Internet, automatically become more critical. To verify or falsify this second assumption by using my own findings, a cross-comparison was made between the amount of criticism and the amount of pro-activeness of each subgroup (figure 1).

The first observation we can make when looking at figure 1 is the fact that criticism and pro-active behavior are definitely related; the higher the criticism, the higher the amount of pro-activeness (or vice versa). However, it is not so easy to determine what comes first. Does a person/group become more critical after starting to acquire more information through the internet (as Hall argues) or is pro-active behavior a result of criticism towards 'disaster news'?

When comparing the data collected to the cause-effect theory by Hall (2001), the conclusion is that it cannot be verified with respect to these three subgroups. Although the pro-active behavior of Dutch middle-aged people always arose from a desire to acquire extra (background) information on a crisis that was personally important to the subgroup, it could not be verified if this eventually also makes them more critical towards the news. When looking at both groups of Dutch youngsters, the opposite in fact turned out to be true. The criticism towards the Dutch 'disaster news' was often directly mentioned as a reason for consulting the Internet or other sources, thereby reversing the cause-effect theory by Hall (2001).

This is not to say that the pro-active behavior by these subgroups could not be strengthening the criticism, it is actually very likely that it does. But what the conclusion of this cross-comparison and the supporting data should be is that although pro-active behavior and criticism are definitely related, the cause-effect relationship is not as one-sided as suggested by the academic work available.

[172] Hall (2001):34
[173] Ibid.

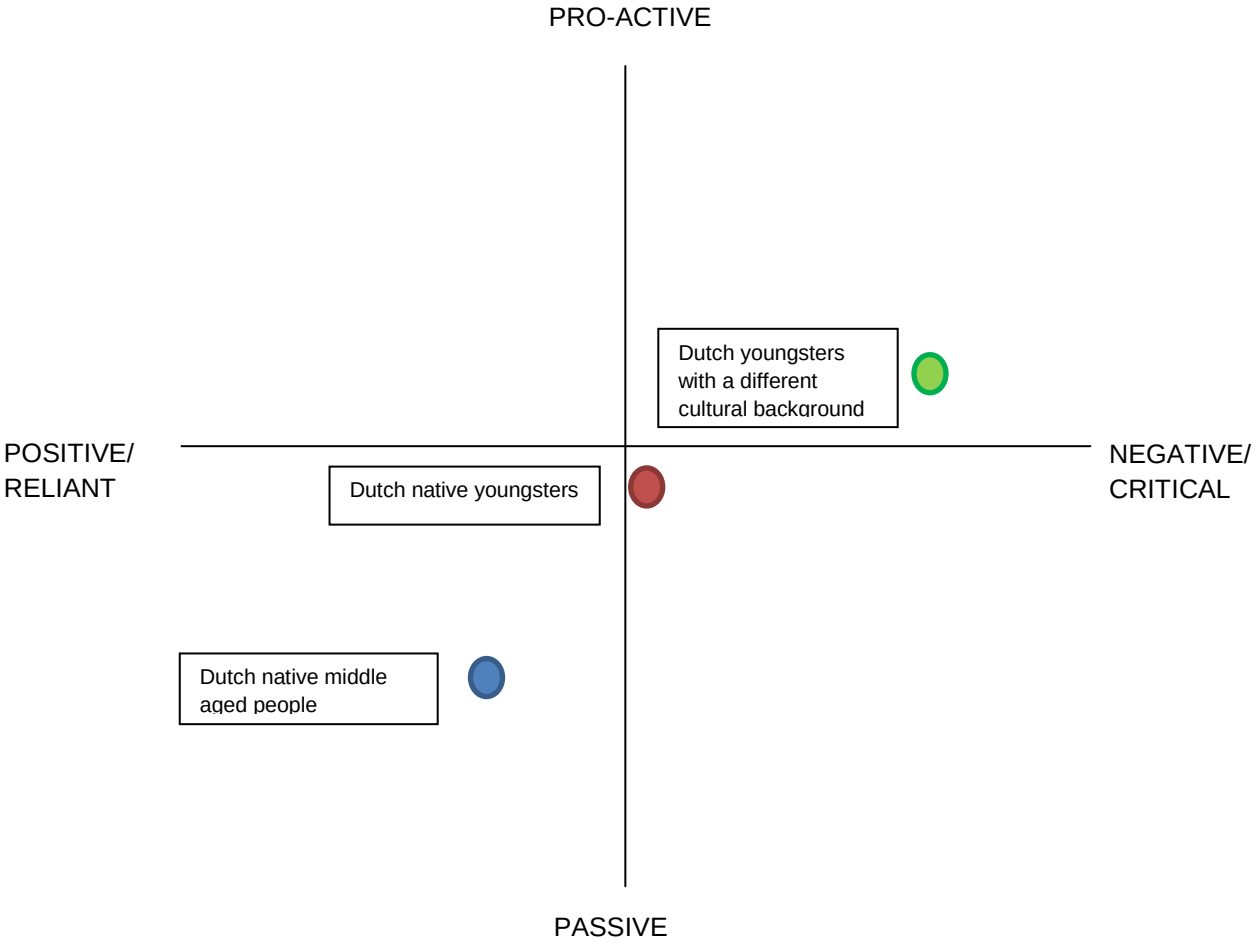

Figure 1: Cross comparison on the pro-activeness and criticism of the Dutch audience with respect to Dutch 'disaster news'.

Explanation of figure 1:

- The vertical axis represents the amount of expressed pro-active behavior in news gathering. The higher the group is placed on the vertical axis, the more pro-active they argue to be.
- The horizontal axis represents the attitude towards Dutch 'disaster news' with respect to criticism. This was explored through questioning the reliability and completeness of Dutch news programs. The more to the right the group is placed on the horizontal axis, the more critical towards Dutch 'disaster news' they argued to be.

5. The political crisis in Syria: A current example of the 'disaster media'- audience relationship?

When Syrian protests started in March 2011, influenced by the Arabic Spring (which signifies a series of other democratic uprisings in the region), protestors called for political change, an end to the ruling of the Ba'ath-party and more civil rights[174]. When in November 2011 demonstrations were brutally halted by the Syrian security forces, the violence deteriorated. Despite the forceful attacks of the army, the demonstrations continued. In the fall of 2011 the Free Syrian Army was established for armed support. The violence continues until this day with death rates over 150.000, from which more than one third are civilians[175]. Next to that, the conflict has developed from a civil war to a conflict where different religious and ethnic groups are using the power vacuum to violently pursue their own ideals and thereby creating "sectarian dimensions"[176].

Although the Syrian conflict has been covered by 'disaster news' makers in many Western countries for a long time, the attention seems to be declining. While the violence still continues and the humanitarian disaster is far from over, it is no central topic anymore. This makes it an interesting case for the research in question. What is the reason for less (central) coverage of a humanitarian disaster that still continues without an actual diminishing of the severe situation? Could this case be an example of the current trends in 'disaster media' and the relationship towards its audience?

5.1 The Syrian crisis in Western media: a 'discourse war'

Although the Syrian conflict has been displayed on the news in many Western countries almost every night, the qualitative value remained low for a long time due to safety concerns, strong media control by the Syrian regime and communications by the Syrian opposition. In his book on his life as a war reporter, in which media coverage on the Syrian conflict receives a central position, Jan Eikelboom argues that:

> Western media initially highlight the Syrian Uprising mainly from one side, the opposition. There is no alternative. The Syrian authorities keep the boundaries firmly closed for journalists[177].

When access became better for journalists, but at the same time more violent groups were partaking, the Syrian conflict became a great example of the quote by Jan Eikelboom when he was saying that "the truth is always the first victim in a conflict"[178]. As already mentioned, Eikelboom argues that war is not only fought with arms and bombs, but maybe even more through influencing the diverging stories on the conflict that circulate around the world. The best support is the backing of the public and this is something that all parties in the Syrian

[174] ABC News (2013)
[175] Reuters (2013)
[176] Ibid.
[177] Eikelboom (2014):19
[178] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 04-04-2014

conflict are well aware of[179]. Hence, next to the actual fighting on the ground, there is an 'imaging war', which is easily relatable to the "discursive struggle" theory of Laclau and Mouffe[180]. All actors in the conflict are striving for their story to become the dominant perspective around the world.

This public opinion struggle is also acknowledged by the Media Working Group Syria (MWS). As a volunteer research group they are trying to address shortcomings in the Western media coverage on the Syrian conflict. Although they agree on the fact that there are multiple players within the conflict that are trying to manipulate the public opinion to support their goals, they go further in arguing that the 'imaging war' is also fought by influential actors outside the direct conflict. They mention the Western media in itself, influenced by American foreign policy, as one of the most powerful actors surrounding the Syrian conflict and public opinion formation. The theory of the MWS is that "the United States is striving for the fall of the Syrian regime" [181] and is playing off Assad and the Syrian people against one another. The Western media is supposedly used to create the public support for this goal through their media coverage on the conflict. There are several examples they use to illustrate this claim. I will explicate two of them below.

The toxic gas attack in August of 2013 whereby many children were supposedly killed was committed by President Assad and his regime. At least, this was the story that was almost immediately communicated by respectively the entire Western media. As using chemical weapons was claimed a 'red-line' by American President Obama one year before, it drove international politics on the edge of military intervention. When claimed evidence based on United Nations research was said to support the accusations, it was Russia that halted the actual intervention at the last minute. Now, one year later, it is claimed by many that there is actually more evidence that the attack was committed by the rebels. Children that were abducted by the rebels, weeks before the attack, were identified by their relatives. The latter is hardly ever reported by Western media and the issue became silenced[182], something that raises questions. According to the MWS the answers are to be found in the public opinion struggle that is also being fought by the West (United States). A gas attack by Assad could create the public support for an intervention, while proved evidence on the guilt of the rebels created a situation in which the idea of the 'good cause' of the Syrian Freedom Fighters was being threatened, nullifying all public support for any intervention.

Another example relates to the framing of the above mentioned 'Syrian Freedom Fighters' and its impact on the imaging of the public. The MWS argues that they are framed as being 'Freedom Fighters' to create some sort of solidarity for them in the West, again supporting the above mentioned goals. "When they would cross the border with another country, they would immediately be called 'terrorists'"[183].

[179] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 04-04-2014
[180] Jørgensen & Philips (2002):6
[181] Media Working Group Syria, personal communication, 14-06-2014
[182] Media Working Group Syria, personal communication, 14-06-2014
[183] Ibid.

5.2 The Syrian crisis in Dutch 'disaster media'

Dutch media coverage on the Syrian conflict has also been qualitatively limited. Jan Eikelboom and his team were the first Dutch journalists that were allowed to visit Syria in January of 2012 when the conflict was already going on for more than a year. As already mentioned, this limited the news reporting and influenced the existing discourses and public opinion. When they were finally able to dive deeper into the conflict, there actually appeared to be too many diverging stories to cover.

With respect to the Dutch audience and their attitude and behavior towards the Syrian conflict, there are many factors of influence that are to a great extent relatable to the general findings in this research. The Syrian conflict is no 'hot topic' (anymore) and according to Eikelboom this has several reasons.

5.2.1. The victim

The Syrian crisis is caused by human hands instead of nature. Victims of the latter are generally valued by the Dutch audience as "far more 'easy' victims to support"[184]. And although there are still many helpless and innocent victims in the Syrian conflict, this definitely plays a role in the continuing of interest and support of the public. This understanding of what an audience perceives as a 'more easy victim to support' might be related to the theory by Höijer (2004), who argues that our creation of 'worthier' or 'easier' victims is a "cultural-cognitive construction"[185] resulting from our social, cultural and historical experiences and –surroundings. For most Dutch people, whether they be 'native' or have a different cultural background, humanitarian disasters are far away, meaning that we have no real time personal experience with them whatsoever. From this perspective a victim of a natural disaster can be valued more 'innocent' as there are no human causes involved. When viewed from the perspective of a war-prone victim this might be completely different using the argument that a victim of political violence is thrown in the cross-fire of two opposing parties it has no opinion about. Next to that, another argument might be that a political crisis is 'easier' to solve in comparison to a natural disaster, making the victims more unnecessary.

But although the way we valuate a victim or the violence in question is theoretically interpretable, the important point here is that our socially-, culturally- and historically- created viewpoint towards a conflict or disaster is of influence with respect to the (declining) attention it gets within 'disaster media'.

5.2.2. Crisis fatigue

The Syrian case study furthermore proves to be a good example of the crisis fatigue theory. Eikelboom argues that the "public opinion is Syria-tired" as the conflict seems to have no (happy) ending, is becoming too fuzzy and obscure to retain the public's attention[186] and

[184] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 04-04-2014
[185] Höijer (2004):516
[186] Eikelboom (2014) : 67

there is no more good guy to support (with all groups performing horrifying crimes)[187]. Combined with the emergence of other crises at the same time (Typhoon Haiyan on the Philippines and the political situation in Ukraine), the public attention for Syria declined every month. The audience felt tired and powerless by the hopeless situation, confused by a conflict they were not able to follow anyway and consequently focused on other crises that were 'easier' or felt closer by.

5.2.3. Connectedness

Also recurring and demonstrable in this case study, is the public connectedness towards a crisis or conflict. For most people in het Netherlands, the Syrian conflict is transformed into a confusing war between different extreme Muslim groups. According to Eikelboom, Muslim religion is relatively unknown to many and is often being related to forms of terrorism which creates a situation in which the groups in the conflict are feared and positioned as 'the other' by the majority of the Dutch public[188]. Although this might be different for the Dutch immigrant youngsters in the audience analysis or other groups in the Netherlands, it is plausible that Eikelboom is predominantly right. Combined with the occurrence of crises that were experienced as closer by and of influence to the public itself (which was tested in this research), it made the general attention for the Syrian conflict fade[189]. Especially the plane crash of MH17 in which many Dutch people were killed absorbed an enormous amount of 'disaster media' attention in the Netherlands. This is perhaps 'obvious' for most people, but the effects it has on the broadcasting time and visibility for other crises is perhaps not so widely understood.

5.3 The Syrian crisis and 'disaster media': linking theory

It is not very difficult trying to relate the Syrian case to academic theory. The function of this case study was to use a recent humanitarian disaster to determine if all that was described in the previous chapters also works out in the daily practice of 'disaster media'. Through the paragraphs above, it became clear that the Syrian case is a good example with respect to the findings of this research.

In my opinion the crisis fatigue theory, which appeared to be crucial with respect to the 'disaster media' – audience relationship, is the first concept that is without a doubt visible in the Syrian case. At the moment of writing this thesis the fighting and suffering still continues, but we do not see it on the news or in newspapers as frequent as we used to do: the fact that nothing 'new' happens, literally means 'no news'. Next to that, the hopeless, unclear and unbearable situation becomes too much for the audience in many ways. It is not only the tiredness, but also the fact that the whole situation becomes too blurry and too much for people to handle. It is often 'easier' to look away and not feel guilty every evening when turning on the television. In combination with other factors mentioned such as the occurrence of other (natural) disasters at the same time, the continuing political crisis in Syria nowadays scores relatively low on media visibility. Media makers clearly respond to this phenomenon to

[187] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 04-04-2014
[188] J. Eikelboom, personal communication, 06-05-2014
[189] Ibid.

a certain extent. Although news makers and journalists would not easily admit that the audience and their crisis fatigue are a decisive factor in their considerations, the Syrian case is a perfect example of the action-reaction relationship between audience and the development of 'disaster media'.

A conclusion that we can also draw from this case study that supports my empirical findings but that is not so much represented in the academic literature, is that of connectedness. Represented as a clear factor of importance in all empirical findings above, the ways in which an audience feels connected to a certain crisis appears to be extremely visible in the case of Syria. Although again the diversity in connectedness with respect to different groups within the Netherlands is not accounted for, the influence that the *perceived connectedness* has had in the Syrian case is evident. First, the humanitarian crisis is relatively distant (physically and emotionally) which could make it unappealing and uninteresting for the Dutch audience in general, especially in comparison to other crises in the world. Next to that, the majority of the Dutch audience turns out to be unable to identify themselves with the persons that are fighting or suffering. What I want to argue here is that in general the crisis is perceived by media makers to not come close to the earlier explained "life worlds"[190] of the Dutch audience.

Finally, paragraph 5.1 discussed the way in which the Syrian story might be created, presented and consumed in a much wider process that also involves forces outside the direct conflict. First of all, this can be related to the "discursive struggle"[191] theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, as explicated by Jørgensen & Philips (2002), which states that a story is constantly being transformed by different actors, but that eventually one story is presented as the truth through the "dominance of one particular perspective"[192]. Next to that, the Syrian case can also bring us back to the manufacturing consent theory which states that media is influenced by governments and the "cultural and political prisms"[193] through which journalists perceive global events. According to the MWS, the strive for public support (the so called 'imaging war') is not only fought on direct battle grounds but also in Western governments and through Western media. When taking this further it is arguable that Western foreign policy and the "cultural and political prisms"[194] that Chomsky and Herman (1994) are talking about may have also influenced the course of Dutch 'disaster reporting' on the Syrian case (see paragraph 5.1 on 'discourse).

[190] Husserl (1970)
[191] Jørgensen & Philips (2002):1
[192] Ibid.:7
[193] Chomsky & Herman (1994):1
[194] Ibid.

6. Conclusion: The Dutch 'disaster media' – audience relationship

> Lucky are the people of Yugoslavia and Somalia as the world's eyes rest on them. Condemned are the people of Juba for the world is denied access to the town and even does not seem to care anyway. It may be a blessing to die in front of a camera – then at least the world will get to know about it. But it is painful to die or be killed without anybody knowing it[195].

For the majority of authors, writing a conclusion is one of the most difficult things to do. Where to begin when you have done months of research and you are so entangled in every detail of the subject? You want to spill out all the information you have gathered to convince people of your findings. This time I choose to do it differently by not starting as an ending, but by taking you back to my original interest (and continuing curiosity in this subject). Therefore I started with the above quotation. Although it may not cover the subject of this research in its entirety, for me it shows in a powerful way how choices in the 'disaster media' world are related to the imaging, public opinion and eventually the humanitarian aid with respect to a certain conflict. This is where my initial interest in this subject started.

However, as already mentioned in my foreword, when I started doing this research I was somewhat stuck with this idea of a one way direction of crisis news; media makers influence the public's imaging and everything that results from that. I soon found out that by posing this question I implicated that media makers were the only influential actors in this relationship. Through academic readings, interviews, surveys and focus groups, I found out that this is absolutely not the case. Therefore, the first and most important conclusion of this research is that *many (discursive) aspects intersect with each other in the creation of the 'disaster news' we see on television every day.* In figure 2 and 3 it is clearly shown how thoughts on this subject changed during this research, from a predominantly one way influence towards a more complicated circular reasoning.

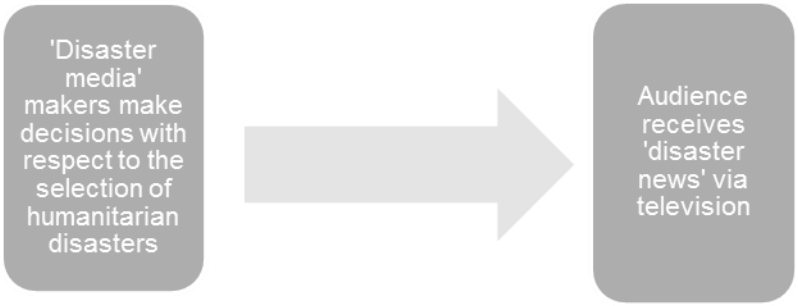

Figure 2: A one way reasoning model on the 'disaster media' – audience relationship

[195] Olsen, Carstensen & Høyen (2003):109

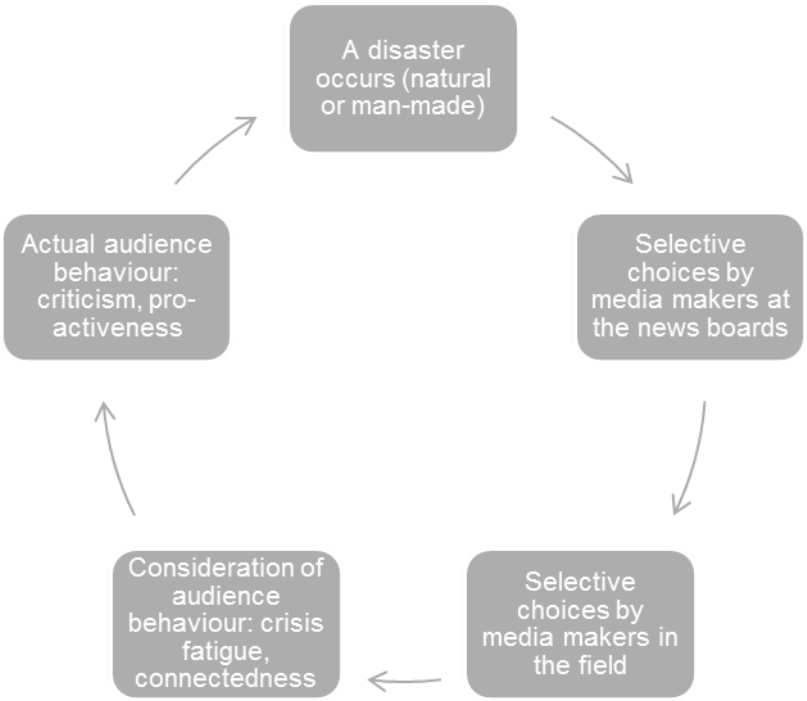

Figure 3: A more complex circular reasoning on the 'disaster media' – audience relationship

The figures above already give away some of my concluding findings which I will explicate further below. Throughout all chapters in this thesis a few findings were central and consequently they will form the 'red thread' in this conclusion. Framing, crisis fatigue, connectedness and (new) online audience behavior will be the four central concepts on which I will base my conclusions.

6.1 Framing

Although practical considerations such as security and working environments are always of importance with respect to selective considerations by 'disaster media' makers, there are some technical aspects involved in the assembling process that formed the beginning of an exploration of the 'disaster media' – audience relationship.

While we, as an audience, do not often stand still to wonder why media makers are showing us what they show, choices with respect to the images used and the story constructed appear to be somehow influenced by the audience. Through cultural and ethical preferences and behavior certain images are left out. Next to that, the discourse surrounding especially political, violent conflicts is a fragile process in which many actors, the audience included, are involved.

6.2 Crisis fatigue

While the influence of the audience on technical aspects is not so much recognized by the audience itself, behavioral considerations are. It is surprising to see that these findings recur both in the analysis of the Dutch 'disaster media' world as well as in the audience analysis.

This again supports the central idea of this thesis, namely that there is a relationship between ‘disaster media’ makers and the audience that might be influential in the emergence of the news we see and hear every day.

The first of these findings concerns the crisis fatigue theory, which basically states that the attention of the audience for humanitarian disasters in the media declines after a certain period of time. The attention could even transform into frustration and irritation towards a crisis. Both news programs consulted in this research experience and also consider crisis fatigue in their daily news making. They experience it in their daily working environment, are able to see it through viewing figures, but also act upon it through an effort in preventing the phenomenon from happening. Although news makers argue that journalistic considerations always come first, they both argue for broadcasts that contain only a certain amount of crises at the same time to prevent people from not watching at all. Crisis fatigue can be caused by several factors. To use the case study (the political crisis in Syria) in this thesis as an example, it can be caused by the length of a certain crisis, its indistinctness, its hopelessness or the absence of a clear good versus bad. Furthermore, the appearance of other crises and victims that are less complex (such as natural disasters) or that come closer to the personal lives of the audience (for example Ukraine) can cause crisis fatigue to occur. The latter touches upon the next conclusion of this research, namely the effect of the amount to which a certain crisis connects to us personally.

6.3 Connectedness

When confronted with a crisis that the audience can relate to, it is far more easy to attract and retain attention. As ‘disaster media’ makers argue, a fictitious calculation can actually be made when factors such as distance, shared culture and economic- or political values are concerned. The only thing that triumphs a shared connection to another country in this regard, is when there are Dutch victims involved or when a crisis has a direct effect on the country of the audience.

Paragraph 3.4 shows how connectedness can be explained as an expression of our biological desire to explore the world around us which is given substance by our personal lifeworld. Next to that, the paragraph discusses how connectedness should consequently imply audience diversity as it is shaped through cultural, social and personal experiences. Although ‘disaster media’ makers acknowledge the influence that general connectedness has on news composition, the audience diversity that could indicate different audience wishes and demands, which is in my opinion inherent to the concept of connectedness, is not confirmed nor considered.

6.4 ‘New’ online audience behavior

With respect to the audience analysis executed in this research, a special focus was placed upon so-called ‘new’ online behavior. With the emergence and growing importance of Internet, there are several studies that assume that the ‘disaster news’ behavior of the audience is changing, creating a more pro-active- and consequently a more critical

audience[196]. While this phenomenon and its effects were confirmed by 'disaster media' makers, I also wanted to determine if and how this revealed itself with respect to the audience. Therefore, three subgroups, differentiated alongside age and cultural background, were compared with respect to these two behavioral aspects: their pro-activeness and criticism towards Dutch 'disaster media'.

Through displaying the results of surveys and focus groups in a cross-comparison, I was able to determine that in general this 'new' online behavior is also visible in the Netherlands (see figure 1). It was very clear that all Dutch youngsters were at the same time more pro-active and more critical than the older subgroup (age 31-65). Although we can draw an upward graph in pro-activeness and criticism with respect to age, the fact that there is no data on future generations makes arguing for a trend somewhat difficult. Next to that, interviews with 'disaster media' makers who are experts in the field show that there are also signs of changing behavior, as a new generation may recognize the negative effects of news speed through Internet.

The cause-effect relationship between pro-activeness and criticism, as explicated by Jim Hall (2001) is not so easy to confirm. He argues that pro-activeness and a growth in online journalism consequently creates more criticism towards the news. Although the cross-comparison shows that criticism and pro-activeness are definitely related (both go up simultaneously), the causal effect may not be as one-sided as thought. Data in this research shows that youngsters, especially youngsters with a different cultural background, also argue the opposite, namely that their own criticism and distrust are a cause for more pro-active behavior.

My conclusion would therefore be that pro-activeness and criticism as 'new' online audience behavior are bilaterally related and reinforce each other simultaneously.

6.5 Final remarks and directions for future research

At the end of this thesis we could argue for two important findings: 1) there is a clear influential relationship between the Dutch 'disaster media' world and its diverse audience, and 2) there is a 'new' behavioral trend that may be changing the course of 'disaster journalism'. Both statements may be interesting for follow-up or future research.

The first conclusion is very interesting and far more complicated than we might think. It actually means that the common idea of a receiving audience that is reacting on what media present to them (figure 2) is not applicable. This is coherent with the theory of Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton (2001) who argue that the audience should receive a central "role in the construction of media realities"[197]. Next to practical factors and the importance of journalistic values, 'disaster media' makers are acting upon the audience they are trying to reach by presenting the things they feel the audience wants to hear about (or not). Examples of this influence are 1) framing according to preferences or values, 2) the prevention of crisis fatigue

[196] Hall (2001)
[197] Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton (2001):421

and 3) giving substance to perceived connectedness. It is thus a complex sort of circular reasoning which I tried to make more transparent and clear (figure 3).

But although media makers seem to have a good understanding of the audience, concepts are consistent with the results of the performed audience analysis, they do not seem to take audience diversity into clear consideration. Within this research an attempt was made to deepen the knowledge on audience behavior by exploring differences in age and cultural background. Although there are differentiations with respect to the used vehicles for news and preferred news forms, the main differences between audience groups are visible with respect to the second conclusion: 'new' online behavior represented by pro-activeness and criticism towards 'disaster news'. Next to that, diversity is an inherent characteristic of the concept of 'connectedness' as it is a personal emotion that is created by someone's socio-cultural background. By stating that there seems to be little consideration of audience diversity with respect to the composition of 'disaster news', I do not want to argue that the news could and should satisfy the needs of all audience groups (this is practically impossible). But by deepening and broadening the knowledge on audience diversity within the Netherlands, Dutch 'disaster news' could perhaps be more accessible to, and accepted by, the diverse Dutch audience.

An interesting subject for future research with respect to the first conclusion could be the effects of diminishing (or growing) attention for a certain crisis on the support it gets, something that has been shortly addressed as the 'CNN effect'. What are the actual (measured) consequences for humanitarian- as well as political aid? With respect to the second conclusion of this research, future research could focus more on the already mentioned effects of this behavior on news quality. How does internet and the growing speed of news put pressure on 'disaster media' makers to deliver faster and faster, creating a situation in which facts cannot always be checked and the quality of traditional 'disaster news' may be in serious danger.

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Appendix 1: Survey (in Dutch)

De relatie tussen Nederlandse 'crisis media' en het Nederlandse publiek

Hieronder staan 11 vragen. U kunt per vraag antwoorden aankruisen of u moet een eigen antwoord invullen. De enquête is anoniem. De antwoorden zullen vertrouwelijk behandeld worden en alleen gebruikt worden voor het desbetreffende onderzoek.

Hartelijk dank voor uw deelname.

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1. **Wat is uw leeftijd?**

2. **Wat is uw geslacht?**

- o Man
- o Vrouw

3. **Wat is uw land van herkomst/culturele achtergrond?**

4. **In hoeverre voelt u zicht op dit moment nog verbonden met uw land van herkomst/culturele achtergrond?**

- o Niet verbonden
- o Nauwelijks verbonden
- o Verbonden
- o Zeer verbonden
- o N.v.t.

5. **Op welke manier volgt u het internationale crisis nieuws? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

- o Televisie
- o Krant
- o Smartphone
- o Nieuwe media (facebook, twitter etc.)
- o Overige websites
- o Ik volg het crisis nieuws niet
- o Anders, namelijk:

6. **Wat is uw eerste reactie bij het zien van beelden van humanitaire crises? (max. twee antwoorden)**

- o Schrik
- o Afkeer
- o Goedkeuring
- o Schuld
- o Medelijden
- o Willen helpen

- o Verdriet
- o Boosheid
- o Anders, namelijk

7. Welk programma ziet u als <u>meest</u> betrouwbaar?

- o NOS journaal
- o Hart van Nederland
- o RTL Nieuws
- o Nieuwsuur
- o Anders, namelijk:

8. Welke nieuwsvorm spreekt u <u>het meeste</u> aan?

- o Korte, to-the-point informatie
- o Langere achtergrond analyses
- o Persoonlijke verhalen, eigen beelden
- o Het nieuws dat ik zelf op zoek

9. Wanneer verliest een crisis uw aandacht, 'zapt u weg' of kijkt u liever niet? (maximaal twee antwoorden mogelijk)

- o Wanneer de beelden te heftig zijn.
- o Wanneer dezelfde crisis te vaak in het nieuws komt.
- o Bij elke humanitaire crisis
- o Wanneer ik het nieuws niet betrouwbaar en/of waardevol vind.
- o Wanneer er een leuker ander programma op de televisie is.
- o Wanneer de crisis mij persoonlijk niks zegt.
- o Nooit

10. Hoe zou u de traditionele Nederlandse crisis-media beoordelen op volledigheid en betrouwbaarheid?

- o Zeer onbetrouwbaar en zeer onvolledig
- o Onbetrouwbaar en onvolledig
- o Neutraal
- o Betrouwbaar en volledig
- o Zeer betrouwbaar en zeer volledig

11. Heeft u naast het bekijken van het crisis nieuws weleens extra informatie opgezocht over een crisis uit het nieuws? Zo ja, welke crisis en waarom?

- o Ja, namelijk:

  omdat:

- o Nee