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A 1980s and 1990s Media History Manifesto

Abstract

This articles fires the starting shot to embrace 1980s and 1990s media histories and put them prominently on our research agenda. The 1980s and 1990s have been termed the 'wonder years,' when such media technologies as Teletext, the Walkman, the fax, and answering machine became part of everyday life. Moreover, these decades were pivotal, witnessing momentous societal developments that continue to affect us to this day, such as the advent of neoliberalism. Though media are an ideal prism to shed light on such developments, there is scant attention for this era in extant media-historical scholarship. Therefore, this article is an intervention that strives to foster media-historical research into the eighties and nineties. Taking stock of tendencies in media and media-historical scholarship, it highlights three general shortcomings of extant research that thwart a better understanding of this era. First, there is a lack of sociocultural contextualisation. Second, there is a tendency to focus on winners, rather than 'dead' or 'obsolete' media. Third, an overemphasis on 'newness' has led scholars to neglect important media. By means of concrete examples and case studies, particularly pertaining to the Netherlands, this article leads the way to future directions.

Keywords

Introduction

Decades have passed, but the 1980s and 1990s are still alive and kicking. Examples abound, especially in popular culture. In 2023, the first season of *That '90s Show* aired, with the second one on its way. A year earlier, Netflix released *Dirty Lines*, a show about the burgeoning telephone sex industry in the late 1980s in the Netherlands. What is more, over the past few years, no fewer than five Dutch television programmes have focused on the final two decades of the twentieth century.[1] In one way or another, all these shows also deal with media and technologies that were popular back then, such as video tapes and the Tamagotchi.

Most of these shows, as well as popular books about these decades, are outright nostalgic, impressionistic, and subjective.[2] Drawing on the memories of (famous) people, they overtly take a 'trip down memory lane.'[3] Of course, they do not necessarily intend to inform but rather to entertain us. Moreover, there is merit in them either way, if only for they draw the attention of the wider public to these decades, which, as I will argue, have largely been forgotten in media-historical research. All the same, they do not provide us with a reliable picture of this era.

This is problematic, because the eighties and nineties were pivotal decades. As the next section discusses in more detail, they were among the 'most transformative [...] of the twentieth century,' which 'in many ways laid the groundwork for our current age.'[4] Crucially, a host of media and communication technologies were introduced or became more prominently enmeshed in everyday life, such as the Walkman, Teletext, and the pager.[5] For this reason, these decades have been termed the 'wonder years.'[6]

How startling, then, to note that media researchers have largely neglected the 1980s and 1990s. There are of course notable exceptions, which I will sketch in the next section. However, the bottom-line is that there is a lack of media-historical inquiry into this era.

This lack is problematic and results in a gap of our sociocultural knowledge of the late twentieth century. After all, scholars have abundantly demonstrated that media histories are an apt prism through which to analyse 'a rich web of cultural practices and ideas' and the 'multiple anxieties about the changing nature of everyday life.'[7] Various seminal works highlighted the manner in which societal changes were both *engendered* and *reflected* by older media technologies, such as the telegraph, telephone, radio, and television.[8] Regarding the 1980s and 1990s, for example, the Walkman 'played its part in accentuating the a-social, atomising, individualising tendencies of our culture.'[9] There is, however, a dearth of similar histories that pertain to the latter era.

This article, then, is an intervention. It strives to foster media-historical research into the often-overlooked 1980s and 1990s, which, in turn, ought to shed light on this critical era. Incidentally, this endeavour is all the more urgent since media and the role they played in a wide array of sociocultural developments – ample examples will be provided throughout this article – are usually treated as a Cinderella in many 'general' cultural histories of this era.[10]

The structure is as follows. The first section briefly expounds on the premise of my intervention by sketching why the 1980s and 1990s and the media of these decades are worthy of more attention. The second section illustrates the lack of media-historical research into this era, predominantly by

means of a review of four media journals: *Media History*, *Convergence*, *New Media & Society* and *TMG–Journal for Media History,* the journal this article appears in. This state of the field, as it were, serves as a stepping stone to the main part of this article, which discusses three general shortcomings prevalent in extant media-historical research – not limited to the aforementioned journals and also including books – that thwart a better understanding of the 1980s and 1990s. First, much scholarship does not provide (enough) historical contextualisation of the sociocultural embeddedness of media. Second, there is a prevailing overemphasis on the 'newness' of media. Third, successful media are favoured over unsuccessful ones.

These sections will also point out how my critique overlaps with and builds on media archaeology. Though my endeavour clearly sympathizes with this approach, it also differs, at least gradually. Though certainly interested in obsolete and forgotten media, I, unlike many media archaeologists, do not necessarily focus on '[d]ead ends, losers and inventions that never made it into a material product,' i.e., on 'the quirky, the non-obvious apparatuses, practices and inventions.'[11] In fact, I highlight that the 1980s and 1990s were full of media that were *extremely successful* at the time, which may or may not have died or become obsolete since, that have been neglected in media-historical research.

In presenting the three shortcomings, I use concrete examples and case studies based on the aforementioned review, my domain knowledge, and a consultation of primary sources. These examples demonstrate possible fruitful venues for future research and show how such research could elucidate specific societal transformations such as burgeoning neoliberalism. This part predominantly focuses on the Netherlands, where *TMG—Journal for Media History* is based and where many of the sociocultural trends that characterise the 1980s and 1990s prominently came to the fore. However, this manifesto is explicitly aimed at media scholars interested in other geographical areas, too. After all, as will become clear, the lack of research into 1980s and 1990s media as well as the flaws of extant research appear to be a *global* phenomenon. I therefore hope that this manifesto will resonate with scholars around the globe – especially with media scholars and historians – and will put media histories of the 1980s and 1990s on the map more explicitly and programmatically.

Pivotal Decades and The 'Media Revolution'

Scholars agree that the 1980s and 1990s were critical decades in many ways. General histories of either of these decades underline that '[e]verywhere we look around and see its profound influence,'

and that they provided 'a clear starting point for contemporary life.'[12] Jonathan Davis for example describes how the 1980s 'played a profoundly significant role in shaping the contemporary world, and the legacy of the decade's key characteristics is still deeply entrenched.'[13] Notable characteristics were the spread of democracy and the end of the Cold War. Davis acknowledges that some monumental changes 'would not be fully formed until the 1990s.'[14] This particularly applies to the third feature he discerns: globalisation, or 'the growing interconnected nature of economics, politics, culture [...] and technological developments,' which is chiefly associated with the economic realm.[15] A new global network capitalism emerged, i.e., a world where (predominantly Western) money and companies moved around with increasing ease.[16]

This rise coincided with, and was made possible by, the growth of neoliberalism, a political, sociocultural, and economic force that since the early 1980s quickly became the hegemonic ideology in the West.[17] While some scholars have used different terms, such as 'capitalist realism,' to describe and often critique this development, there is a broad consensus as to its significance for all aspects of life.[18] The next sections grapple with (manifestations of) neoliberalism in more detail, but for now it is insightful to refer to Zygmunt Bauman's seminal *Liquid Modernity*. In this book, he describes the process of neoliberalisation as 'releasing the brakes,' which refers to 'deregulation, liberalization, "flexibilization," increased fluidity, unbridling the financial, real estate and labour markets.'[19] Other sociologists have pointed out how this release of the brakes has resulted in precarity, which has had both material and mental consequences. 'Instability is meant to be the normal,' Richard Sennett compellingly argued, which is accompanied by a narrow-minded focus on the present.[20] People were – and to this day are – made to believe and, through governmentality, have each other and themselves believe that flexibility equals autonomy, if not freedom, which is to be treasured. In reality, however, as Nikolas Rose contended, especially since the rise of neoliberalism, we are caught in an enterprise culture. 'Experts of subjectivity' such as the media, teachers, managers, and psychologists have turned all but everyone into an *enterprising self*. Under the guise of positive phrases such as 'freedom,' 'individuality' and 'choice,' powerful 'pedagogies of self-fulfilment' have created a – physically and mentally draining – situation in which people are constantly 'inspecting oneself, accounting for oneself, and working upon oneself in order realize one's potential, gain happiness [...].'[21] Not just individuals, but also organisations such as schools, hospitals, and families are to 'achieve economy, efficiency, excellence, and competitiveness' and are encouraged 'to conduct themselves with boldness and vigor, to calculate for their own advantage, to drive themselves hard,

and to accept risks in the pursuit of goals.'[22] The dire outcome of this is perhaps most powerfully captured by philosopher Byung-Chul Han in *The Burnout Society*: 'In this society of compulsion, everyone carries a work camp inside. This labor camp is defined by the fact that one is simultaneously prisoner and guard, victim and perpetrator. One exploits oneself [...] even without domination.'[23] In line with this, and underlining how apt Bauman's 'releasing the breaks' metaphor is, the late twentieth century saw an increase in people feeling rushed, and anxieties arose regarding the strains that the accelerated pace of modern life put on them.[24]

Media played a key role in this development. As sociologists such as Hartmut Rosa and Judy Wajcman have argued, new media technologies spurred this development, but at the same time were also used to cope with the consequences. People came to rely on them 'for the micro-coordination of everyday life, allowing for tighter and more efficient "real time" planning of activities'—in effect creating an acceleration cycle.[25] The fax, pager, PalmPilot, e-mail, and mobile phone are cases in point.[26]

It is beyond the purview of this article to describe these and other noteworthy developments that ensued in the 1980s and 1990s exhaustively. The above sketch nevertheless underlines the importance of the final decades of the twentieth. Especially so, since many of the trends that surfaced then, particularly the hegemony of neoliberalism, have continued to this day and over the past years have increasingly faced criticism.[27]

As stressed in the introduction, media are key to understand these developments better. What is more, many of these developments, at least partly, *owe to* media. For instance, the advent of new communication technologies such as the satellite helped bring about the rise of network capitalism. Though, as I will argue in more detail below, other media such as the fax should not be underestimated, the computer in conjunction with the early Internet was crucial: 'Computerized trading radically transformed global capital markets [...] [which] were operating around the clock, with trading taking place on a scale and at a pace impossible' before.[28] As with other societal developments of the 1980s and 1990s, it is impossible to give a complete overview of all the media that spurred or are typical of these developments. There are simply too many, which underscores the need for more specific empirical studies that detail the various and multifaceted intricacies at play. After all, over the course of these two decades so much changed – both *in the realm of* media, as well as *in society because of* media – that some scholars speak of a 'media revolution,' or 'digital revolution.'[29]

At the same time, it is important to stress that *digital* media should not be the exclusive focus of future research. If we want to get a better grasp on the late twentieth century, we need to acknowledge the importance of both then-new media (digital or not) and already existing media, often referred to as legacy media. Regarding the former, the personal computer is a prime example. Its advent was so momentous, that *Time* magazine in January 1983 did not elect a person of the year, but instead named the computer 'Machine of the Year.'[30] Regarding legacy media, to give but one example, television in the era at hand reached its zenith, culminating in the 1990s when 'television was not the same as life, but the relationship was closer than it had ever been before and would ever be again.'[31]

In sum, media are critical to improve our understanding of the 1980s and 1990s, which in themselves are pivotal decades. As one general cultural history summarises, both old and new media 'advanced to such an extent' that they 'altered the way of life for most [...] and perhaps even affected a significant shift in world view.'[32]

Before I elaborate on this in more detail, it is important to briefly reflect on the periodisation. Media archaeologist Siegfried Zielinski introduced the term *deep time*, which is sometimes understood as a plea to study media histories from a *longue durée* perspective, i.e., to span centuries rather than decades.[33] It certainly would make sense to place the 1980s and 1990s media histories that this article envisions alongside of and as themselves part of a longer-term perspective. At the same time, Zielinski rightfully stresses that, above all, we should uncover 'fractures or turning points,' i.e., 'dynamic moments in the media-archaeological record.'[34] Consequently, Jukka Kortti has rightly underscored that 'we [should not] drop the periodization in media history'.[35] I have argued that the final decades of the twentieth centuries provide such a turning point and, hence, appropriate timeframe.

That said, as important as the 1980s and 1990s are, I do not claim that *in every respect* they were *a clearly demarcated* era, much less one that started on January 1, 1980 (or any other day) and ended with 'Y2K.'[36] Evidently, certain developments commonly associated with the era started earlier (e.g., individualisation), whereas others continued well into the new millennium, some even until this day (e.g., the hegemony of neoliberalism).

Take some of the sentiments that appeared in the popular imaginary. It is a widely held perception that in many Western countries, the Netherlands included, the late 1970s and early 1980s were characterised by pessimism and nihilism.[37] The threat of nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union, in conjunction with a prolonged economic downturn, resulted in much doom and

gloom. Doom mongering was so prevalent, that a new Dutch word for this phenomenon was coined: 'doemdenken.' While the economic recession would leave its mark until the early 1990s, the last decade of the twentieth century is best remembered for the optimism ('days of wine and roses'[38]) following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the implosion of Soviet communism, and the subsequent economic boom, notwithstanding some 'bubble' bursting.[39] This sentiment surfaced in popular culture too, the upbeat Eurodance scene being a prime example.[40] Nevertheless, some scholars similarly remind us that 'declinism' continued to rear its head in the 1990s,[41] with an accompanying soundtrack provided by Grunge bands like Nirvana.[42] Vice versa, the hedonism habitually associated with the 1990s had its roots in the 1980s.[43]

In other words, much like scholars before me, I acknowledge that there are *continuities between* the preceding and/or succeeding decades, as well as *discontinuities within* the period under scrutiny. Similarly, despite the status of certain media as 'typical' of a particular decade or age (the 1980s, for instance, was often referred to as the 'Walkman decade'), most cannot be confined to one or even two decades.[44]

Second, I do not suggest that the decades 1980s and 1990s are *homogenous,* i.e., comprise developments that are all of the same ilk, nor that, third, all of the sociocultural developments discussed in this article were *universal*. As critical as the decades were and as crucial as media are to better understand them, researchers should do justice to the various complexities and particularities that emerge in proper historical inquiry. While neoliberalism, for example, became the defining ideology in the US, UK, the Netherlands, and other Western countries, this was not the case everywhere. Moreover, even within this group of countries, neoliberal ideas and policies came in different guises, as did other trends attributed to these decades.

Consider individualisation. As the quote about the Walkman in the introduction indicated, the late twentieth century is often associated with an acceleration of this trend, which already set in earlier. Other scholars nevertheless debate to what extent and how this *actually* transpired.[45] For instance, Davis argues that it indeed clearly surfaced, but in a complex and paradoxical manner, particularly when one takes in mind the 1980s, known for its mass demonstrations and other outbursts of collectivism. Research into media is ideally suited to add to this debate: the 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of new, often portable media (such as the Walkman, Discman, cell phone, and Game Boy; the pager was older but enjoyed unprecedent success in these decades, too), which enabled personalised, individualised experiences that had hitherto been impossible.[46] This, in turn,

spurred a debate over individualisation and related trends, such as consumerism.[47] These debates are worthy of more scholarly attention. What is required, then, is a growing number of researchers that offer concrete media-historical inquiries, grounded in empirical research, to shed light on sociocultural developments of (parts of) the era – developments that can differ regionally or nationally.

The Neglected Decades: Examining Research Gaps in Media Scholarship

My prior research into various 1980s and 1990s media, such as the Walkman, pager, and Game Boy, led to me to the premise of this article: there is a lack of research into such media. This section corroborates this premise by, first, examining the output of prominent academic media journals. It is then argued that these journals exemplify two characteristics of media research that sustain this dearth: presentism on the one hand, and a focus on legacy media accompanied by an interest in periods prior to the 1980s and 1990s on the other.

Some of the most well-known journals, with the highest impact factor, heavily favour research into contemporary media phenomena such as social media and the platform economy. *New Media & Society* and *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* are intriguing examples, because they contain the words 'new media' in their (sub)title. Most articles published in these journals apply a narrow definition of this term, encompassing digital and/or social media.[48] Though valid, this is remarkable. First, scholars such as Lisa Gitelman and others have long stressed that media 'were always already new.' In other words, we should also research 'old' new media, including those that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. Second, though the aims and scope of these journals make clear that these journals are mainly out to shed light on contemporary media, they also explicitly provide room for media-*historical* inquiries. *Convergence* aims to 'encourage and advance interdisciplinary modes of enquiry into the study of the histories, trajectories, impacts, practices, pleasures and creative potential' of 'converged' media.[49] *New Media & Society* explicitly mentions that it provides a platform for research into 'contemporary as well as historical developments'.[50] Nevertheless, the media research agenda of these journals is for the most part characterised by presentism.

What about journals with fundamentally historical identities and goals? More is to be expected of them in terms of paying proper attention to the 1980s and 1990s, which is why I will discuss these in more detail. Again, two journals will serve as an illustration. Both feature the words 'media history'

in their title. The prominent journal *Media History* is best characterised by its heavy emphasis on legacy media of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, i.e., magazines, newspapers, radio, television, and cinema. Therefore, it might not be surprising that other media, particularly those that emerged in the latter decades of the twentieth century, are noticeably absent. However, even regarding legacy media, articles that deal with the 1980s and 1990s are few and far between. Granted, out of the 300-odd articles that appeared in the past ten years (2013-2022), about a dozen cover (part of) these decades in a case study that spans a longer period of time – which also underlines the point made in the previous section about (dis)continuities between eras.[51] But very few zero in on the 1980s and 1990s, they rather focus on periods prior to this. The exceptions that *do* do this, can serve as inspiration to finally start doing the 1980s and 1990s and the pivotal events and developments of that era justice. One article for example demonstrates how magazine *Wired* added to a breach of the boundaries between work and leisure (a development, others have detailed in other outlets, which was also fuelled by the success of media such as the answering machine, pager and, later, cell phone).[52] Through the prism of an Irish publication geared towards gay men, another article discusses another key characteristic of the era at hand, the AIDS crisis.[53] A third and final example details how – in line with my earlier argument – media *spurred* monumental societal developments, i.e., compares the role that radio, television, and the printed press played in the *coup d'etat* in Spain (1981) and the opening of the Berlin Wall.[54]

The same diagnosis applies to the journal in which this article is published: *TMG–Journal for Media History*. Much like *Media History*, legacy media have dominated the output and there is a lack of attention for the era at hand. Again, there are only a few counterexamples, such as a special issue on the history of computer games.[55] Another special issue historicised the then-buzzword 'interactivity,' which included musings on various interactive media technologies of the 1980s and 1990s.[56] A final exception is the issue devoted to video histories, where several contributions highlighted the importance of video to understand the sociocultural context of the end of the twentieth century.[57]

What conclusions can be drawn from the examination of these journals? The output of journals such as *New Media & Society* and *Convergence* underscores that – as media historians Frank van Vree and John Nerone put as early as 1993 and 2005, respectively – there is an 'allergy to the past' that plagues media studies to this day.[58] The review of *Media History* and *TMG—Journal for Media History* further indicates that, as far as media historians are concerned, this allergy clearly acts up vis-à-vis the 1980s and 1990s. These journals showcase a distinct fondness for legacy media and undervalue these decades.

Now, it could be that media-historical work about the 1980s and 1990s has resulted in books rather than articles. Though uncommon, for books usually build upon one or more articles which have found their way into journals, there are examples of this, such as a cultural history of the Walkman.[59] For this reason, the remainder of this article – which is not confined to the output of the four aforementioned journals – also takes books into account. Alternatively, it might be that media-historical work pertaining to the late twentieth century has appeared more profusely in academic journals other than the four discussed here. Based on my domain expertise as a scholar who has worked in the field for well over a decade, this seems improbable. In short, then, it would appear that there is paucity of media research into the 1980s and 1990s, epitomized by the four aforementioned journals.

As mentioned in the introduction, there are notable exceptions to this—with which the next sections of this article will not grapple. In the past decades, specialized fields have emerged, focusing on media and media technologies from the 1980s and 1990s that continue to flourish. Example includes Mobile Media Studies – which 'predominantly focus on mobile phones (now: smartphones), which has gone at the expense of' other media such as pagers[60] –, Game Studies, and Internet Studies. These fields have created their own outlets, in which the decades at hand feature relatively frequently, since they formed the founding age of these media. That said, these fields, much like *New Media & Society*, *Convergence*, and, as others have argued, media research across-the-board, are characterized by presentism.[61] In these fields, too, the pool of scholars working on the history of these media is simply much smaller than that trying to understand the here-and-now.

It is worth highlighting that presentist work might, put positively, be a blessing in disguise for media historians. Today's present-focused media study might inform tomorrow's media history. Histories of the internet, for example, habitually set the stage by referring to the work and visions of early internet scholars.[62] They for instance draw from Sherry Turkle to recall that the rise of this new technology was accompanied by hopeful visions that it 'could transcend structural power relations like sexism and racism.'[63] One of my own research projects, in which I study hundreds of archived LGBTQ websites (2009-2022), is informed by early 'cyberqueer' scholars such as Nina Wakeford.[64] Their writings, moreover, often point to then-online resources that have since vanished from the Web. In that sense, they have become new primary sources that give us as close a peak into or at the original sources as possible.[65]

Still, media historians can only capitalise on and build upon research—whether presentist or not—if it exists in the first place. The paucity of studies focusing on 1980s and 1990s media makes

this a tall order, which might result in a vicious circle. Moreover, it does not help that media studies is a relatively young discipline that has rapidly expanded only since the late 1980s and particularly in the last two decades.[66] Consequently, especially given its presentist tendencies, the era at hand has chiefly fallen outside its scope. Another likely reason for the dearth is that there seems to be a bandwagon effect. It is perfectly understandable that (young) scholars interested in conducting media-historical research choose to work on media that are being used to this day—not just games and consoles, mobile / smartphones, and Internet-related phenomena, but also various legacy media. There is a critical mass of scholars working on each of these topics, which has led to institutionalisation that is helpful in terms of resources (such as finding a like-minded community and landing a research position and grants).[67] As a result, even a relatively recent phenomenon such as social media, which took off from the early 2000s, has already received more media-historical attention than many media that were popular in the 1980s and 1990s.[68] Finally, media history has traditionally focused on institutionalised media such as the newspaper, radio, and television. These studies, including the classics *When Old Technologies Were New* and *Make Room for TV,* usually focus on their 'newness' phase, too[69] (see also There is More to Media than 'Newness' below)—though there are certainly notable exceptions that deal with the era at hand, such as TV studies that have tackled the introduction of commercial television (see the next section).

Whatever the exact reasons, the conclusion is that at present, by and large, we face a clear research gap. This is particularly noticeable concerning now-obsolete or dead media. This is exemplified by the influential anthology *Communication in History: From Stone Age to Social Media*.[70] The final three parts are entitled 'Radio Days,' 'TV Times' and 'New Media and Old in the Digital Age,' which focuses on the Internet, the World Wide Web, and social media. One looks in vain for information on other media and communication technologies that were particularly popular in the 1980s and 1990s, such as the fax, Teletext, and the pager. Apparently, the perception prevails that these are inconsequential and may be overlooked without any negative implications, as if they were mere *in-between media*. This situation bears resemblance to the Great Man narrative that once suffused historical accounts, portraying purportedly great men as the main drivers of human history. For good reasons, 'historians have liberated history writing from the confines of the great man in history.'[71] Many a *media* history, however, continues to be dominated by what I dub *the Great Media narrative*. Much like media archaeologists, I argue that this canonical approach should be questioned or to the very least complemented.[72]

In the next sections, I will expand and deepen my argument. I will discuss three general problems of extant research. This discussion is not limited to the four aforementioned media journals and also includes books. Though these flaws are not exclusive to the media historiography of the 1980s and 1990s, they certainly thwart a better understanding of this critical era. It is worth highlighting that these sections do not exclusively grapple with (the lack of) research into media that emerged and/or were popular in these decades but have since disappeared; they also deal with media that emerged earlier, such as the cinema, television, and telephone. These sections predominantly focus on literature related to the Netherlands as a case study. However, consistent with the above and as underlined by my discussion of and reference to abundant 'international' literature below, my hypothesis is that this assessment also applies to media history *as a field*.

Media Histories Should be Cultural Histories

A first shortcoming of extant research is that media histories covering the 1980s and 1990s too rarely consider broader sociocultural dimensions. This is striking because as early as 1993, Frank van Vree contended that histories should embed media not only in institutional, but also in larger sociocultural contexts.[73] Not much later, Dutch media historian Huub Wijfjes added that the future of media history lies in its ability to reveal the roles media played in a political, social and – particularly – cultural sense.[74] To meet this objective, both scholars also proposed to approach media in relation to each other, rather than in isolation, to which I will return in the section Don't favour winners over dead or obsolete media.

Alas, too little has changed since. Most research still tends to approach media as isolated phenomena, rather than 'in conjunction with important historical developments.'[75] There are notable exceptions, such as a volume series – not surprisingly edited by Wijfjes – of which every book is aptly subtitled *A cultural history*. To date, books about the radio, newspaper, and television have appeared, with a book on the Internet pending.[76] All of these volumes also cover the 1980s and 1990s. Due to the rise of cable networks and satellite technology, this era was particularly important regarding television. Commercial television, allowed in the Netherlands only since 1989, signifies a key cultural development. For one, the new commercial stations aired talk shows and reality shows, which stimulated 'the emancipation of private emotions – uninhibitedly and self-consciously giving air to one's personal feelings and experiences in the public sphere.'[77] Although 'far-reaching

individualization' had already become the norm in the 1980s, the 1990s would be the decade of 'total individualism.'[78] Reality TV enabled ordinary people 'to stage a world that centred entirely around you,' which has prompted some to suggest this *inevitably* paved the way for social media.[79] Such grand claims are attractive to make, but warrant more (archival) research.

Furthermore, future research should explore how genres like reality TV and talk shows contributed to the shift toward a neoliberal hegemony in everyday life. Various scholars have demonstrated how reality shows present participants 'as self-responsible [competitive] enterprising authors of their own lives [...] without expectations of fair recompense.'[80] This is consistent with the prevailing view that neoliberalism is geared towards 'the extension and installation of competitive markets into all areas of life.'[81] However, most existing accounts have been written from a United States context, whereas 'actually existing neoliberalisms are variegated, adapted to the socio-political lie of the land.'[82] Scholars agree that since the 1980s neoliberalism became the defining, hegemonic ideology in the Netherlands, as was the case in the United States and United Kingdom.[83] A recent study details how a group of politicians, opinion makers, researchers, and officials successfully brought this shift about during the second half of the twentieth century.[84] They encouraged the government to actively push citizens to adapt to a market regime, i.e., to competition. Especially from the 1980s onward, this subsequently trickled down into all governmental policies, such as those related to sports, culture, education, health care, and housing. Neoliberalism, in short, started to affect *every facet of life*. It is important to note, however, that these insights are mostly generated by political historians. Less attention is paid to how neoliberalism advanced 'through culture, specifically through the promotion of an enterprise culture that works to impose competition as a norm across all arenas of social life.'[85] In other words, as Julie Wilson powerfully encapsulates, how neoliberalism has become 'the air we breathe, the water in which we swim.'[86] Media played a key role in this process, in creating the far-reaching and inescapable ecosystem in which we are now enmeshed. Here lies an urgent task for media historians.

If we return to television, there are, of course, accounts that touch upon the relationship between television and society at large during the last two decades of the twentieth century. They nevertheless mostly do so in passing. Consider the following example. During the 1980s, but more prominently in the 1990s, a fierce debate on immigration and (lack of) integration flared up, a considerable taboo up to that point.[87] A book on the first ten years of Dutch commercial television recalls that in 1993, the largest commercial broadcaster aired an advertisement to fight

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xenophobia: 'If you, too, think that all foreigners should leave the country, may we say goodbye to you as a viewer of RTL4?'[88] However, scant scholarly attention has been paid to the role television played in the growing popularity of 'new realism,' a term used to describe programming that advocates 'speaking truth to power,' criticising alleged political correctness of ruling elites who were unwilling to address or solve problems of the multicultural society.[89] Because this debate has continued to be a prime concern among both citizens and politicians (in July 2023, the issue even caused the fall of the Dutch government), it seems urgent that future research delves deeper into these and other questions.

Similar cultural-historical questions can be asked by researching *other* media, such as newspapers. After all, the *A cultural history* book series rightly stresses that newspapers did not merely report on wider societal and cultural changes, but also brought them about.[90] As did radio. However, to build on the example given before, the question how the neoliberal paradigm has come to hold sway has not yet been addressed, but only hinted at.[91] It would make sense, then, to study the role that newspapers and other media played in this process.

There Is More to Media Than 'Newness'

It is striking that much research into media *besides* newspapers, radio, and television has largely neglected the final decades of the twentieth century. There is a heavy emphasis on the moments when various media were introduced, rather than when they became accepted or 'renew[ed] themselves overtime.'[92] To make this point more palpable, histories of cinema and telephony provide telling examples.

Dutch film history has extensively grappled with the interwar years in particular, i.e. the era when movies became a mass medium.[93] As three film historians remarked in 2000, 'since the 1990s, film seems more ubiquitous and popular than ever.'[94] The 1980s and 1990s saw the academic institutionalisation of film studies in the Netherlands, but these very decades seem conspicuously absent in current and past scholarship.[95] This is regrettable, because compelling cultural histories can be told through the lens of movies and movie-going. It has, for instance, been argued that many popular Dutch movies from the 1970s centred around sex and 'were critical in changing [societal] views of sex.'[96] But what cultural histories can be told about the 1980s and 1990s? William J. Palmer, for instance, contends that all 'the major cultural issues of the nineties were present in one form or

another' in films, such as voyeurism, an obsession with fame and a 'postmodernist conception of reality.'[97] He provides a cultural history of the United States, focusing on concerns of Americans, but what would other national or transnational histories bring forth?

Additionally, widespread late twentieth-century practices related to media consumption have been neglected, too. Think, for instance, of video rental stores.[98] It is often claimed that pornography constituted the bulk of all video rentals.[99] 'My entire profit depended upon it,' a former Dutch video store owner recalled. He also noticed that video consumption soared when rental machines were introduced, enabling customers, for the first time, to consume porn anonymously.[100] This begs the question: how did past media help normalise porn and public conversations about sex, desire, and intimacy?[101] As video became part of the media ensemble in the privacy of one's own home, the anonymous consumption of porn likely changed the sexual landscape. This development also runs parallel to more general trends such as cocooning, by spending more time at home, often alone. These are some indications of the further growth of individualisation, or strategies to cope with the growing pace of everyday life – critical features of the late twentieth century.[102]

Another example is the home video, which became ubiquitous in the 1980s and 1990s due to the growing use of the camcorder.[103] This, too, is worthy of more scholarly attention.[104] It has been established that women, in force, entered the labour market during the 1990s. On average, Dutch people also started to work longer hours than before and were increasingly pressed for time.[105] However, in the same period, parents also devoted more time to their children.[106] Studying home videos could provide intriguing insights into these changing family dynamics.

Much like film history, the history of telephony has similarly focused on 'newness.' This is remarkable, given the fact that only in the 1980s did the majority of Dutch people get a landline telephone connection.[107] An authoritative study indeed concluded that the telephone gradually played an 'indispensable role in social traffic,' yet treats the 1980s and 1990s as a mere afterthought.[108] By prioritising the new over the old, the authors rather choose to discuss the rapid rise and cultural ramifications of mobile telephony at the end of the twentieth century. This is a missed opportunity and should serve as a reminder that there is more to media than its 'newness.' I will return to the history of the phone in the following section to further my argument from the perspective of 'dead' and now-obsolete media.

Don't Favour Winners Over Dead or Obsolete Media

This brings me to a third feature and shortcoming of extant media-historical studies. There is a heavy emphasis on the 'winners,' while 'dead media,' and related practices, are often glossed over. This is problematic because the latter are of critical culture-historical importance. The plea to study dead and obsolete media was initially brought into view by science fiction author and media futurologist Bruce Sterling in the mid-1990s and has since been a hallmark of media archaeology in particular.[109] Interestingly, the notions of dead media and media obsolescence are still discussed as recently as 2023: 'New media are born, many media are reborn and some media die, never to be resurrected. Birth, remediation and death are neither new nor unexpected – as documented by histories of pre-Internet technologies and their demise revealing both the mundane and spectacular pasts of what were once nascent and lively media, such as the telegraph, landline telephone and videotex systems.'[110] The question of the perpetual 'newness' of media has been pioneered by Lisa Gitelman and others.[111] Still, as mentioned before, this has not led to much attention for media from the 1980s and 1990s. This is particularly problematic because, as stressed in the introduction, these decades have been dubbed 'the wonder years,' during which many media technologies emerged or grew in popularity.

A notable example is the fax machine. As was the case in other western countries, in the 1980s Dutch companies embraced the device, and around 1990 'no self-respecting business could be found without one.'[112] The fax also found its way into the heart of politics. Reflecting on his time as vice prime minister and minister of Finance (1989-1994), Wim Kok recalled: 'Over time, electronic communication became more frequent. Not yet on computers, but by fax. [Prime minister] Lubbers also bought one, after I had talked him into it. This I sometimes regretted, because of his habit to send faxes on early Sunday mornings.'[113] The fax thus was an early symbol of the information age, as it was called at the time.[114] Through new media technologies, information spread more easily than ever before, also globally. This affected ordinary people too.[115] I vividly remember that when my father was abroad for work in the 1990s, I faxed him the newspaper pages with stock prices daily (which, again, underlines that media should be studied in relation to each other; see the next section). The 1990 movie Die Hard 2 perfectly encapsulates the indelible mark the device left on the era. When police detective John McClane sends a fax for the first time (not knowing which side of the paper should face upwards), he claims it is time 'to wake up and smell the 1990s.' Even after its popularity waned, the fax remained important for certain professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, and judges.[116]

Given its past popularity, there is surprisingly little research on the fax.[117] This is a shortcoming, for a media history of the fax machine could offer a window into key sociocultural developments of the late twentieth century. Driven by neoliberalism, during the 1980s and 1990s, the Netherlands gradually turned into a 'management state.'[118] Much like in the United States and the UK, politicians introduced business practices in the nooks and crannies of all domains of life. How did the fax – much like pagers and cell phones – contribute to this development?[119] Or how did this and other media contribute to the democratisation of stock trading in the 1990s?[120] The growing popularity of the mobile phone is said to have caused the rapid rise of the Dutch stock market index AEX during the summer of 1997. Many people took their brand-new cell phones on summer holiday and created the so-called 'camping boom' (*campinghausse*).[121] Fax machines, for their part, not only enabled quick and easy dissemination of stock information, as the anecdote above alluded to. They were also used for stock purchase orders, which further increased the ease and accessibility of stock trading.

Ideally, as mentioned before, such media-historical research projects should be conducted in relation to other media that played a key role in this development, such as Teletext.[122] This idea I share with media archaeology, which foregrounds 'the rejection of medium-specific historiographies in favour of intermedial connections, exchanges, and convergences.'[123] To give an example, in 1999, a weekly news magazine asked readers to share stories about what springs to mind when thinking of 'wealth.' One response read: 'Trading stocks is my hobby. Nothing beats making money with money. Daily, I read the financial pages of the newspaper, dissect the news and when I am home, the television is on, muted; Teletext pages containing stock info are my favourite.'[124] As this quote indicates, future media-historical research could focus on the rise of (alleged) greediness, hedonism, and consumerism. As a cultural history of the US chronicled, '[t]he 1980s had been called an "age of excess" but paled in comparison with the nineties.'[125] The profits that could be made on Dutch stock markets – at least until the bubble burst in 2000 – helped create a similar situation in the Netherlands. Could such a media history reveal sociocultural dynamics that differ from the US? Or is this another example of the purported Americanisation of (aspects of) life in the Netherlands?[126]

Another understudied case that highlights the importance of now-obsolete media, is the phone booth.[127] Phone booths gained a significant foothold in Dutch public life during the 1990s. In 1990, only around 6,000 public phone booths dotted the country, considerably less than in Belgium and the UK.[128] At the time, PTT had just been denationalised and was on its way to privatisation – typical of the neoliberal zeitgeist. Consequently, the company started to aggressively seek new customers and

revenues. The annual reports of the company indicate that this also entailed increasing the number of public phone booths. By the end of 1992, the number had doubled and in 1995 19,000 booths could be found.[129] Due to the rapid rise of mobile phones, the number would swiftly halt at 20,000. Though this number seems insignificant compared to the number of landline connections and mobile phones at the time, numbers alone do not speak to its cultural-historical importance. Here, it could be argued that the soaring number of public phone booths helped normalise the idea that phone calls can be made outside one's home, 'a kind of proto-wirelessness.'[130]

This normalisation, in turn, likely functioned as a stepping stone for the success of the mobile phone. Despite an initial outcry, a rapid embrace of mobile phone use in everyday life soon followed. Future research could test this working hypothesis. What points in this direction is that some mobile phone users initially preferred a booth, perhaps because of the stigma of public mobile phone usage. A humorous scene from a 1990s television programme shows these early dynamics surrounding telephony in public spaces. As the host arrives at a train station, he frantically searches for a phone booth to make a phone call. All booths are occupied, but a solution presents itself: 'It's always the same when you're in a hurry, but I know more than one trick,' after which he pulls out his mobile phone.[131] This example, again, underlines that future research into forgotten, dead or obsolete media should always be conducted in relation to other media at the time. Recent articles for example suggest that it was not just the phone booth, but rather an ensemble of media that helped attune people to the expectation of continuous reachability. In the 1980s and especially 1990s, the answering machine and pager became immensely popular. They 'helped normalize the idea that [...] [people] had to be reachable whenever, wherever' and 'compelled participation in new regimes of perpetual connection'—i.e., paved the way for mobile phones and Internet-based communication.[132]

Final Vistas

With this article I hope to have inspired media historians to embrace the 1980s and 1990s. I have give ample examples of the interplay between various media and important historical developments, such as globalisation, individualisation, consumerism, and the advent of neoliberalism. However, much more needs to be done to shed light on these developments and the, often lasting, ramifications. Media and media history have an important, if not essential, role to play in the matter.

In closing, I offer several vistas, i.e., put some final dots on the horizon. In addressing the three shortcomings discussed above, I combined a review of scholarship and popular publications and original research of my own with concrete historical cases, to carve out new directions. Here, I briefly discuss how we can rethink *sources* and *methods* to abet media-historical research into the 1980s and 1990s.

New sources need to be identified, collected, digitised, and above all included in archival institutions. The Netherlands, for example, has been a frontrunner when it comes to digitising sources and building digital research infrastructures, with such initiatives as Delpher and the CLARIAH Media Suite - best known, respectively, for their newspaper and radio and television collections - as the most prominent examples for media historians.[133] These two examples have opened many new avenues, e.g., to do the prominence of television in the late twentieth century justice. In addition, the Dutch National Library adopted the homepages of one of the first Dutch Internet Providers, XS4AL. This web collection was the first digital-born set of sources to be included on the Memory of World register by UNESCO in 2022, which in 2023 was followed by another digital-born collection, De Digitale Stad.[134] It goes without saying that these sources could potentially open early web cultures in the Netherlands and beyond for media-historical research. On the other hand, some other important sources are still absent. Take, for example, the immensely popular magazine *Club Nintendo,* first sold in various European countries in 1989. At the height of its popularity in the early 1990s, the magazine in the Netherlands had a whopping circulation of around 300,000. This, and other important magazines of the day, are yet to be included in the collection of the KB or any other archive.

Scholars also need to rethink suitable methodologies. Besides new digital methods, often grouped under the catch-all label Digital Humanities[135], we should not underestimate the use of established ones, such as oral histories or the study of material culture. Recent developments, such as those instigated by John Ellis and Nick Hall, for example point at 'hands-on' approaches of historical media.[136] Much can be done with this new methodological outlook. In the case of the Netherlands, for example, the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision keeps in its vaults many material traces of the media technologies of the twentieth century, such as stereo sets, camcorders, game consoles, televisions, and VCRs. What happens when we put these technologies back into the hands of historical actors? And what could methodologically be gained from experimenting with them ourselves, as researchers? Andreas Fickers and Annie van den Oever claim that the materiality and sensuousness of the historical object can benefit the researcher to 'find' the

historical user, but also reinvigorate the state of the field.[137] Scholars can furthermore learn from media ethnography and oral history to approach past media usage. What does a historical re-enactment of some aspects of everyday life in past media landscapes reveal? Strategies need to be developed according to the needs, possibilities, and constraints present at the locality in which this endeavour is undertaken.

Besides seeking new sources and methodologies, we should establish relevant partnerships with other stakeholders, such as museums, archives, and other cultural heritage institutions. As alluded to in the introduction, the 1980s and 1990s are increasingly intertwined with new memory practices, fuelled by nostalgia in popular culture. A concerted effort is needed to provide proper historical contextualisation to move beyond superficiality, as meaningful as nostalgia can be to some. I hope that this manifesto, in tandem with the special issue it is part of, has provided a suitable kickstart for examining 1980s and 1990s media histories.

Acknowledgments

Endnotes

1. One show, which had just commenced when I wrote this article, covered both decades (and the 2000s): "Het jaar van…" (SBS6, 2023). The others adopted a rigid 'decade divide.' Regarding the 1980s, see "Een programma over de jaren tachtig" (VPRO, 2022); " Het beste van… de jaren tachtig" (AVROTROS, 2021). Regarding the 1990s, see "Een programma over de jaren negentig" (VPRO, 2020); "Het beste van… de jaren negentig" (AVROTROS, 2023). All these shows can be watched on www.nlziet.nl. That these decades warrant reflection, was acknowledged at an earlier stage, e.g., by the show "Typisch 90" (Yorin, 2003).
2. For books regarding the Netherlands, see for example: Pam van der Veen and Albert Wiglema, *Wonderjaren: hoe technologie in de jaren tachtig en negentig ons dagelijks leven veranderde* (Amsterdam: Ambo|Anthos, 2017); Paul Brood, René Kok, and Erik Somers, eds., *Het jaren 80 boek* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2009); Ad Rooms, *De jaren 80: doemdenkers en positivo's* (Zwolle: WBOOKS, 2017); Bart Kin and Angelique Laan, *1980-1989*, Mijn Nederland in woord en beeld 5 (Schelluinen: House of Knowledge, 2011); Bart Kin and Angelique van

de Laan, *1990-1999*, Mijn Nederland in woord en beeld 7 (Schelluinen: House of Knowledge, 2011); Corinne van der Velden, *Negentig: een trip down memory lane met verhalen over TMF, Winner Taco, Big Brother, GTST, Cu2.nl, Nike Air Max, Paul van Loon, Party Animals en vele anderen* (Amsterdam: Atlas Contact, 2020).

3. The 2003 show referred to in the first footnote was criticised for being nostalgic by Paul Brill, "Bericht uit de oudheid," *de Volkskrant*, 29 January 2003. A newspaper review of "Het beste van de… jaren negentig" 'welcomed escapism and nostalgia,' but chided the format of this show (and most others), which had well-known Dutch people give ultra-short reactions to objects (such as the Tamagotchi) and tv clips deemed typical of the era: 'Lazy and without love.' Eva Peek, "Tussen lui en liefdeloos en diep indrukwekkend," *NRC Handelsblad*, 5 January 2023.

4. Respectively Jonathan Davis, *The Global 1980s: People, Power and Profit* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 1; David Friend, *Naughty Nineties: The Triumph of the American Libido* (New York: Twelve, 2017).

5. In the remainder of this article I will use the term 'media' in a broad sense. I regard media as 'processes of representation, articulation, translation, and standing-between,' which are usually channelled through, or mediated by, various media institutions and material, often interrelated technological objects that enable point-to-point or point-to-mass communication. David W. Park, Jefferson Pooley, and Peter Simonson, "History of Media Studies, in the Plural," *History of Media Studies* 1 (2021): 2, https://doi.org/10.32376/d895a0ea.a2cf5b66. See also J. Nerone, "Approaches to Media History," in *A Companion to Media Studies*, ed. Angharad N. Valdivia (Williston: John Wiley, 2005), 96–100.

6. Van der Veen and Wiglema, *Wonderjaren*. This book, however, is aimed at a general audience and barely scrapes the surface of the many media that it touches upon. Additionally, it openly acknowledges to perceive the past nostalgically.

7. Respectively Susan J. Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), xv; Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 3.

8. See, respectively, Daniel J. Czitrom, *Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Claude S. Fischer, *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone to 1940* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992); Douglas, *Inventing America Broadcasting*; Spigel, *Make Room for TV*.

9. Carl Gardner and Julie Sheppard, *Consuming Passion: The Rise of Retail Culture* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989). See also Jesper Verhoef, "The Epitome of Reprehensible Individualism: The Dutch Response to the Walkman, 1980–1995," *Convergence* 28, no. 5 (2022): 1303–19, https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211060297.

10. Of course, there are exceptions. Most cultural histories that grapple with the US in the 1990s thematise (and criticise) that the country turned into a Tabloid Nation, in which television in particular 'fostered a pervasive scandal culture.' Haynes Johnson, *The Best of Times: America in the Clinton Years* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), 119. At the same time, they barely, if at all, deal with the plethora of other media that were or became critical.

11. Respectively Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka, "Introduction: An Archaeology of Media Archaeology," in *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications*, ed. Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 3; Jussi Parikka, *What Is Media Archaeology?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 2.

12. Respectivley Graham Stewart, *Bang! A History of Britain in the 1980s* (London: Atlantic Books, 2013); W. Joseph Campbell, *1995: The Year The Future Began* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 1. Historians usually treat the two decades (or in the case of Campbell, a single year) separately. References to books about the 1990s can be found throughout these notes; examples of other books about the 1980s, which also stress how important this decade is to to grasp the contemporary age, are Bradford Martin, *The Other Eighties: A Secret History of America in the Age of Reagan* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011); Doug Rossinow, *The Reagan Era: A History of the 1980s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

13. Davis, *The Global 1980s*, 2.

14. Davis, 1.

15. Davis, 2.

16. For a useful, critical introduction to this development in various discursive formations, see Nicholas Carah and Eric Louw, *Media & Society: Production, Content & Participation* (London: SAGE, 2015).

17. See for example David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

18. See for example Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2009).

19. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), 5.

20. Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), 31.

21. Nikolas Rose, *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.

22. Rose, 154.

23. Byung-Chul Han, *The Burnout Society*, trans. Erik Butler (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 15.

24. For an overview of literature on these topics, see Jesper Verhoef, "The Rise of Chronic Reachability and the Accelerated, Flexible Society. The Social Construction of the Pager, 1987-1999," *Mobile Media & Communication* (advance online publication) (2023), https://doi.org/10.1177/20501579231219.

25. Judy Wajcman, "Life in the Fast Lane? Towards a Sociology of Technology and Time," *The British Journal of Sociology* 59, no. 1 (2008): 78, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00182.x; Hartmut Rosa and William E. Scheuerman, eds., *High-Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power and Modernity* (Pennsylvania, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

26. See for example Verhoef, "The Rise of Chronic Reachability"; Stephen R. Barley, Debra E. Meyerson, and Stine Grodal, "E-Mail as a Source and Symbol of Stress," *Organization Science* 22, no. 4 (2011): 887–906, https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0573; Rich Ling, *The Mobile Connection: The Cell Phone's Impact on Society* (San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufmann, 2004). See also David Morley, *Media, Modernity and Technology: The Geography of the New* (London: Routledge, 2006), 205–11.

27. In the Netherlands, for example, many politicians have acknowledged that neoliberal policies regarding the exact issues that Bauman raised in the aforementioned quote, have gone overboard. To give but one example, according to Eurostat, the Netherlands, by far, has more employees with a temporary – i.e., often precarious – position than any other European country (almost one out of every four). Maarten Schinkel, 'Nederland is steenrijk, zeer gelijk en toch onzeker.' *NRC Handelsblad*, 21 September 2023. For the (presumed) legacy of the 1990s in particular, see Rutger van der Hoeven and Mathieu Segers, "De betere wereld van toen. Herwaardering van de jaren negentig," *De Groene Amsterdammer*, May 3, 2018.

28. Johnson, *The Best of Times*, 19. For a history of '*general purpose* computers' up to 1995 about the Netherlands, see Adrienne van den Bogaard, ed., *De eeuw van de computer. De geschiedenis van de informatietechnologie in Nederland* (Deventer: Kluwer, 2008).

29. See for example Davis, *The Global 1980s*, chap. 9; Hanco Jürgens, *Na de val. Nederland na 1989* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014), 14; Bruce Sterling, "The Dead Media Project. A Modest Proposal and a Public Appeal," 1995, http://www.deadmedia.org/modest-proposal.html.

30. Davis, *The Global 1980s*, 129.

31. Chuck Klosterman, *The Nineties* (New York: Penguin Press, 2022), 251.

32. Marc Oxoby, *The 1990s* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), 7.

33. See for example Thomas Elsaesser, *Film History as Media Archaeology: Tracking Digital Cinema* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 56.

34. Siegfried Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means*, trans. Gloria Custance (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 7.

35. Jukka Kortti, "Temporalities and Theory in Media History," *Media History* 28, no. 3 (2022): 449, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2021.1940906.

36. Especially work that focuses on a single decade is criticised for this. See for example Jason Scott Smith, "The Strange History of the Decade: Modernity, Nostalgia, and the Perils of Periodization," *Journal of Social History* 32 (1998): 263–285. I deem this critique unfounded, as there are few studies that stick to a strict 'calendar approach.' Rather, much like *any* scholar – particularly (media) historians – studying *anything*, the vast majority of authors of decade studies choose meaningful moments as starting and closing points. For example, works that centre on the 1990s usually start with the fall of the Berlin Wall and end with the terrorist attacks of 9/11. However, political histories about the Netherlands – for good reasons – rather end with the meteoric rise of populist politician Pim Fortuyn in late 2001 and early 2002, ending in his murder and the subsequent electoral earthquake in May 2002. E.g., Piet de Rooy and Henk te Velde, *Met Kok: over veranderend Nederland*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2018).

37. Regarding the Netherlands, see Chapter 4 of Jouke Turpijn, *80's dilemma. Nederland in de jaren tachtig* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2011). See also Duco Hellema, *Nederland en de jaren zeventig* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2012).

38. William L. O'Neill, *A Bubble in Time: America During the Interwar Years, 1989–2001* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009), 313.

39. In 2000, Dutch prime minister Wim Kok, for example, stated that 'over the past decade, the mood in our country has become markedly more positive.' Quoted in De Rooy and Te Velde, *Met Kok*, 151. This sentiment was prevalent in other (Western) countries, too. In Germany, for instance, the 1990s were a hopeful, optimistic '*Alles wird gut*' [Everything will be fine] decade, when the country turned into a *Spaßgesellschaft* ('fun society'). See Joachim Hentschel, *Zu geil für diese Welt: Die 90er - Euphorie und Drama eines Jahrzehnts* (Munich: Piper, 2018).

40. Colin Kraan and Kevin Kraan, *No limit: De ultieme Eurodance hits uit de 90's* (Amsterdam: Mary Go Wild, 2018).

41. Regarding the Netherlands, see De Rooy and Te Velde, *Met Kok*. Regarding the United States, see for example O'Neill, *A Bubble in Time*, 34.

42. See for example Klosterman, *The Nineties*, 41–53.

43. See for example Jürgens, *Nederland na 1989*, 112; Joost Zwagerman, *Het wilde westen: Nederland 2001-2003* (Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 2003), 159.

44. Verhoef, "The Epitome of Reprehensible Individualism."

45. There is a sheer endless array of texts on this issue. Regarding the Netherlands, see for example Verhoef, 1304–6; Willem Jan Duyvendak and Menno Hurenkamp, eds., *Kiezen voor de kudde: lichte gemeenschappen en de nieuwe meerderheid* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 2004).

46. This trend is often referred to as 'mobile privatisation.' See for example Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, and Linda Janes, *Doing Cultural Studies. The Story of the Sony Walkman* (London: Sage, 1997). See also Verhoef, "The Epitome of Reprehensible Individualism." However, one could argue that using the term 'mobile privatisation' in this context is somewhat misguided, or at least stretching its original meaning. Describing the interwar and post-Second World War era, Raymond Williams used it to describe 'two apparently paradoxical yet deeply connected tendencies of modern urban industrial living: on the one hand mobility, on the other hand the more apparently self-sufficient family home.' New technologies and media enabled this: the former was made possible by the car and motorcycle, the latter by electric household appliances and new media such as the radio and television. Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1990), 18.

47. Jesper Verhoef, "Let's Not Be Cultural Pessimists: The Social Construction of Nintendo's Game Boy and the Need for Console-Specific Game Studies," *Game Studies* 23, no. 2 (2023), https://gamestudies.org/2302/articles/verhoef; Verhoef, "The Rise of Chronic Reachability."

48. See also, for example, Porismita Borah, "Emerging Communication Technology Research: Theoretical and Methodological Variables in the Last 16 Years and Future Directions," *New Media & Society* 19, no. 4 (2017): 616–36, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815621512; Jonathan Sterne, "Out with the Trash: On the Future of New Media," in *Residual Media*, ed. Charles R. Acland (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 16–31.

49. https://journals.sagepub.com/description/CON

50. https://journals.sagepub.com/description/NMS

51. See for example Gunn Enli et al., "From Fear of Television to Fear for Television: Five Political Debates about New Technologies," *Media History* 19, no. 2 (2013): 213–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2013.791420.

52. *Henrik Bødker,* '"Gadgets and Gurus': Wired Magazine and Innovation as a Masculine Lifestyle," Media History 23, no. 1 (2017): 67–79, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2016.1273103; Verhoef, "The Rise of

Chronic Reachability"; Josh Lauer, "The Telephone Answering Machine: Mediated Presence and the Participatory Condition*," New Media & Society* (advance online publication) (2023), https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231159350; Richard Ling*, Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012). See also Morley, *Media, Modernity and Technology*, chap. 7.

53. Páraic Kerrigan, "OUT-Ing AIDS: The Irish Civil Gay Rights Movement's Response to the AIDS Crisis (1984–1988)," *Media History* 25, no. 2 (2019): 244–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2017.1367652.

54. Fernando Ramos Arenas and Virginia Martín Jiménez, "Framing Political Change: A Comparative Analysis of the Role Played by Media in the Political Transitions of Spain (1981) and the German Democratic Republic (1989)," *Media History* 26, no. 2 (2020): 215–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2018.1482203.

55. See for example Ivo Blom and Connie Veugen, "Games & geschiedenis: computerspellen, context, en controverse. Een inleiding," *TMG–Journal for Media History* 7, no. 2 (2014): 5–8, https://doi.org/10.18146/tmg.196.

56. See for example Heike Weber, "Prestidigitations: Interfacing with Palm-Sized Media Gadgets," TMG–Journal for Media History 11, no. 2 (2008), https://doi.org/10.18146/tmg.562.

57. See for example Susan Aasman and Tom Slootweg, "Een zeer korte videogeschiedenis," *TMG–Journal for Media History* 20, no. 1 (2017): 115, https://doi.org/10.18146/2213-7653.2017.283; Bert Hogenkamp, "De opkomst, bloei en ondergang van het videojournaal," *TMG–Journal for Media History* 20, no. 1 (2017): 122–40, https://doi.org/10.18146/2213-7653.2017.284.

58. Frank van Vree, "Mediageschiedenis in Nederland: achtergronden en perspectieven," *Jaarboek mediageschiedenis* 5 (1993): 9–19; Nerone, "Approaches to Media History," 100. In this light, cynics might find it telling that in 2021 a new journal entitled *History of Media Studies* was launched, as if to underscore that media studies scholars are interested in *their own* history at best. See also David W. Park and Jefferson Pooley, eds., *The History of Media and Communication Research: Contested Memories* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008). To be clear, I deem this historical 'meta' endeavour laudable, and, moreover, would like to point out that the editors of this journal have long strived to further media-historical work proper, too. See for example David W. Park, Nicholas W. Jankowski, and Steve Jones, eds., *The Long History of New Media: Technology, Historiography, and Contextualizing Newness* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011).

59. Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow, *Personal Stereo* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

60. Verhoef, "The Rise of Chronic Reachability."

61. See for example Johan Fornäs, "Bridging Gaps: Ten Crosscurrents in Media Studies," *Media, Culture & Society* 30, no. 6 (2008): 899, https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443708096811; Huhtamo and Parikka, "Introduction." At the same time, to quote Fornas, these scholars – expressing clear hope – witnessed 'a renewed historical current that is becoming influential in media studies'. Writing a decade later, I am hesitant to share this hopeful view, as presentism once again seems to reign supreme.

62. See for example Fred Turner, "Can We Write a Cultural History of the Internet? If so, How?," *Internet Histories* 1, no. 1–2 (2017): 39–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/24701475.2017.1307540.

63. Alice E. Marwick, "A Cultural History of Web 2.0," in *Communication in History: Stone Age Symbols to Social Media*, ed. Peter Urquhart and Paul Heyer, 7th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018), 313.

64. See for example Nina Wakeford, "New Technologies and 'Cyber-Queer' Research," in *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, ed. Diane Richardson and Steven Seidman (London: SAGE, 2002), 115–44.

65. This point is also highlighted in the insightful work of Avery Dame-Griff, *The Two Revolutions: A History of the Transgender Internet* (New York: New York University Press, 2023), 19–21.

66. Lisa Parks, "Field Mapping: What Is the 'Media' of Media Studies?," *Television & New Media* 21, no. 6 (2020): 643, https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476420919701. This appears to be a global phenomenon, which is also reflected in a growth in the number of media studies programmes. Regarding the USA, see Lisa Parks and Kelly Wagman, "Charting the Growth of Media Studies in US Higher Education: An Analysis of Federal Data from 1984-2017 – Global Media Technologies and Cultures Lab," *Global Media Technologies & Cultures Lab* (blog), accessed January 4, 2024, http://globalmedia.mit.edu/2019/11/25/charting-the-growth-of-media-studies-in-us-higher-education-1984-2017/. Regarding the UK, see P. Golding, "Media Studies in the UK," *Publizistik* 64, no. 4 (2019): 503–15, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11616-019-00518-x. Regarding the Netherlands, see H.B.M. Wijfjes and J.C.H. Blom, eds., *Mediageschiedenis: kansen en perspectieven. Eindrapport van de Commissie ter Bevordering van Mediahistorisch Onderzoek (CBMO) van de Sociaal-Wetenschappelijke Raad* (Amsterdam: KNAW, 1995). Not coincidentally, the two precursors of the journal *TMG—Journal for Media History* (*GBG-Nieuws* and *Jaarboek Mediageschiedenis*) were established in the late 1980s.

67. A similar claim has been made by Andreas Fickers and Pascal Griset, *Communicating Europe. Technologies, Information, Events*, Making Europe: Technologies and Transformations, 1850-2000 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 359. Reflecting on "newness," they write that '"newness" has also found its way into science, where researching the new secures more attention than the painstaking reconstructions of everyday life.'

68. For a brief overview of historical work on social media, see Niels Brügger, "Web History and Social Media," in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media*, ed. Jean Burgess, Alice E. Marwick, and Thomas Poell (London: SAGE Publications, 2018), 196–212; see also Anne Helmond and Fernando N. van der Vlist, "Social Media and Platform Historiography: Challenges and Opportunities," *TMG–Journal for Media History* 22, no. 1 (2019): 6–34, https://doi.org/10.18146/tmg.434.

69. Turner, "Can We Write a Cultural History of the Internet?," 44.

70. Peter Urquhart and Paul Heyer, eds., *Communication in History: Stone Age Symbols to Social Media*, 7th edition (New York: Routledge, 2019).

71. Chukwuemeka Nnachi Oko-Otu and Chukwudi Godwin Chidume, "Objectivity and the Great Man Theory in Historiography," *Cogito* 13, no. 3 (2021): 137.

72. See for example Huhtamo and Parikka, "Introduction," 3.

73. Van Vree, "Mediageschiedenis in Nederland," specifically 9.

74. Huub Wijfjes, "De toekomst van de mediageschiedenis," *Groniek* 135 (1996): 142–43. Similarly, some media archaeologists have stressed that 'media archaeology is not just a way to collect 'dead media' for a curiosity cabinet, but an analytical tool to approach the hidden corners of cultural history.' Kortti, "Temporalities and Theory in Media History," 444.

75. Wijfjes and Blom, *Mediageschiedenis*, 15. See also Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

76. Huub Wijfjes, ed., *De radio: een cultuurgeschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2019); Huub Wijfjes, ed., *De televisie: een cultuurgeschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2021); Huub Wijfjes and Frank Harbers, eds., *De krant: een cultuurgeschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2021).

77. Wijfjes, ed., *De televisie*, 350.

78. Respectively Verhoef, "The Epitome of Reprehensible Individualism," 1306; Ken Jebsen, "Die angebliche Individualität in den Neunzigern," in *Die 90er. Alles wird sich ändern, wenn wir groß sind*, ed. Kerstin Topp and Marco Seiffert (Berlin: Parthas, 2004), 73. In reality, people *collectively* wanted to be different, and therefore did not differ much from others at all. See for example Duyvendak and Hurenkamp, *Kiezen voor de kudde*.

79. Doortje Smithuijsen, *Gouden bergen: Portret van de digitale generatie* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2020), 96. See also Van der Velden, *Negentig*, 199.

80. Guy Redden, "Is Reality TV Neoliberal?," *Television & New Media* 19, no. 5 (2018): 399, https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476417728377. Redden offers an insightful overview of the relationship between reality

TV and neoliberalism. For an account of the relationship between talk shows and neoliberalism, see Janice Peck, *The Age of Oprah: Cultural Icon for the Neoliberal Era* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2008).

81. Kean Birch, "Neoliberalism: The Whys and Wherefores … and Future Directions," *Sociology Compass* 9, no. 7 (2015): 572, https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12277.

82. Redden, "Is Reality TV Neoliberal?," 403. See also Julie Wilson, *Neoliberalism* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 33.

83. See for example Hellema, *Nederland en de jaren zeventig*; Piet de Rooy, *Ons stipje op de waereldkaart: de politieke cultuur van Nederland in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2014), 286–91; Turpijn, *80's dilemma*, 122.

84. Bram Mellink and Merijn Oudenampsen, *Neoliberalisme. Een Nederlandse geschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2022).

85. Wilson, *Neoliberalism*, 17

86. Wilson, *Neoliberalism*, 224.

87. E.g., Bart Top, "Tabee taboes? Een overzicht van de discussies," in *Media en allochtonen: Journalistiek in de multiculturele samenleving*, ed. Garjan Sterk and Bart Top (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 2000).

88. Peter Contant, *De tv-oorlog: De keerzijde van tien jaar commerciële televisie in Nederland* (Utrecht: Kosmos-Z&K, 2000), 78.

89. Andrea Leurdijk, *Televisiejournalistiek over de multiculturele samenleving* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1999). See also Baukje Prins, *Voorbij de onschuld: Het debat over de multiculturele samenleving* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 2000). For an overview of the literature on this topic, see Andrea Meuzelaar, "The Emergence and Persistence of Racialised Stereotypes on Dutch Television: Tracing the History of Representation of Muslim Immigrants along the Archival Grain" 10, no. 20 (2021): 18, footnote 4, https://doi.org/10.18146/view.268.

90. Wijfjes and Harbers, ed., *De krant*.

91. See for example Annet Mooij, *Dag in, dag uit: een journalistieke geschiedenis van de Volkskrant vanaf 1980* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2011), 192; Jesper Verhoef, "De Krant: Een Cultuurgeschiedenis," *TMG–Journal for Media History* 24, no. 1–2 (2021): 4, https://doi.org/10.18146/tmg.804.

92. Benjamin Peters, "And Lead Us Not into Thinking the New Is New: A Bibliographic Case for New Media History," *New Media & Society* 11, no. 1–2 (2009): 23, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444808099572. Others have made this point, too. See for example Gabriele Balbi, "Old and New Media. Theorizing Their Relationship in Media Historiography," in *Theorien Des Medienwandels*, ed. Susanne Kinnebrock, Christian

Schwarzenegger, and Thomas Birkner (Köln: Halem, 2015), 231–49; David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old* (London: Profile Books, 2006).

93. For an overview of literature regarding this era, see Jesper Verhoef, *Opzien tegen modernisering. Denkbeelden over Amerika en Nederlandse identiteit in het publieke debat over media, 1919-1989* (Delft: Eburon, 2017). See also Peter Verstraten, *Humour and Irony in Dutch Post-War Fiction Film* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 15–19.

94. Thomas Elsaesser, Pepita Hesselberth, and Renée de Graaf, eds., *Hollywood op straat: Film en televisie in de hedendaagse mediacultuur* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers AUP, 2000), 9.

95. Peter Bosma, "Nederlandstalige Film Studies – de beginjaren," accessed 26 July 2023, https://peterbosma. info/nederlandstalige-film-studies-de-beginjaren/.

96. Hans Schoots, *Van Fanfare tot Spetters: Een cultuurgeschiedenis van de jaren zestig en zeventig* (Amsterdam: Lubberhuizen: Filmmuseum, 2004), 98.

97. W. Palmer, *The Films of the Nineties: The Decade of Spin* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 17 and 219.

98. See for example Aasman and Slootweg, "Een zeer korte videogeschiedenis"; Tobias Haupts, *Die Videothek: Zur Geschichte und medialen Praxis einer kulturellen Institution* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2014).

99. Palmer, *The Films of the Nineties*, 167; Chris Pappas, "Sex Sells, but What Else Does It Do?: The American Porn Industry," in *Handbook of the New Sexuality Studies*, ed. Steven Seidman, Nancy L. Fischer, and Chet Meeks (New York: Routledge, 2007), 323..

100. 'Een programma over de jaren negentig'.

101. Van der Velden, *Negentig*, 81–95; Friend, *Naughty Nineties*.

102. For an overview of literature on (alleged) individualisation and the acceleration of life in the late twentieth century, particularly concerning the Netherlands, see Verhoef, "The Epitome of Reprehensible Individualism"; Verhoef, "The Rise of Chronic Reachability.".

103. 'Almost every meaningful moment of the nineties was captured on videotape, along with thousands upon thousands of trivial moments that meant nothing at all.' Klosterman, *The Nineties*. See also Susan Aasman, Andreas Fickers and Joseph Wachelder, ed., *Materializing Memories: Dispositifs, Generations, Amateurs* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

104. See for example Tim van der Heijden, "Hybrid Histories: Technologies of Memory and the Cultural Dynamics of Home Movies, 1895-2005" (PhD diss., Maastricht, Maastricht University, 2018); Tom Slootweg, "Resistance, Disruption and Belonging: Electronic Video in Three Amateur Modes" (PhD diss., Groningen, University of Groningen, 2018).

105. Verhoef, "The Rise of Chronic Reachability."

106. Koen Breedveld and Andries van den Broek, ed., *Trends in de tijd: Een schets van recente ontwikkelingen in tijdsbesteding en tijdsordening* (Den Haag: SCP, 2001).

107. W.O. de Wit and J. Hermans, "De vele gezichten van de telefoon," in *Techniek in Nederland in de twintigste eeuw. Deel V: Transport en communicatie*, ed. J.W. Schot and W.O. de Wit (Zutphen: Walburg pers, 2002), 168. Similarly, the 1985 annual report of PTT Telecom for example indicated that in each of the five years prior, hundreds of thousands of citizens annually requested a telephone connection (this number does not include people who had already had one, but were moving).

108. De Wit and Hermans, 200.

109. Sterling, "The Dead Media Project."

110. Bjørn Nansen et al., "Media, Mortality and Necro-Technologies: Eulogies for Dead Media," *New Media & Society* 25, no. 8 (2023): 2164, https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211027959.

111. With regard to media newness, see for example Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); Balbi, "Old and New Media. Theorizing Their Relationship in Media Historiography"; Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old*; Peters, "And Lead Us Not Into"; Park, Jankowski, and Jones, *The Long History of New Media*.

112. Han Lörzing, *Jaren van verandering: Nederland tussen 1945 en 2014* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak & Van Gennep, 2014), 104.

113. De Rooy and Te Velde, *Met Kok*, 51.

114. See for example Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996).

115. In 1998, about a fifth of the population still had a fax machine. Liset van Dijk et al., *Digitalisering van de leefwereld* (Den Haag: SCP, 2000), 190.

116. A.J. Dolmans, "Apparatuur in de praktijk," in *Zo werkt het in de huisartsenpraktijk*, ed. A.J. Dolmans, Basiswerk AG (Houten: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum, 2009), 131–41; P. Langbroek and M. Tjaden, "ICT in de strafrechtketen: De ontwikkeling en complicatie van nieuwe systemen bij het Openbaar Ministerie," *Proces* 1 (2008): 2–8.

117. One of the few examples is Jonathan Coopersmith, *Faxed: The Rise and Fall of the Fax Machine* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).

118. See for example Jouke de Vries, *Paars en de managementstaat: het eerste kabinet-Kok (1994-1998)* (Leuven: Garant, 2002); Ronald Kroeze and Sjoerd Keulen, "Managerpolitiek. Waarom historici oog voor management moeten hebben," *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 127, no. 2 (2012): 97–112, https://doi.org/10.18352/bmgn-lchr.8078.

119. See also Morley, *Media, Modernity and Technology*, chapter 7.

120. Most literature on the Netherlands mentions this burgeoning popularity in mere passing. See for instance: Jos van der Lans and Herman Vuijsje, *Lage landen, hoge sprongen: Nederland in de twintigste eeuw*, 3rd ed. (Wormer: Immerc, 2003), 178–79. In other Western countries, the interest of ordinary people in trading stocks spiked, too. Martin Brüning, "Gier und Größenwahn am Aktienmarkt in den Neunzigern," in *Die 90er: Alles wird sich ändern, wenn wir groβ sind*, ed. Kerstin Topp and Marco Seiffert (Berlin: Parthas, 2004), 27–31. See also Chapter 11 of Johnson, *The Best of Times*.

121. Maarten Schinkel, "Van campinghausse naar Korea-crisis: Een jaar op de markten," *NRC Handelsblad*, 30 December 1997.

122. One of the few studies into Teletext is provided by Hallvard Moe and Hilde Van Den Bulck, eds., *Teletext in Europe: From the Analog to the Digital Era* (Göteborg: Nordicom, 2016). See also Fickers and Griset, *Communicating Europe. Technologies, Information, Events*, chap. 7.

123. Erkki Huhtamo and Doron Galili, "The Pasts and Prospects of Media Archaeology," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 18, no. 4 (2020): 334, https://doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2021.2016195.

124. "Hoe rijk is uw leven? Deel II," *Vrij Nederland* 33, 21 August 1999.

125. O'Neill, *A Bubble in Time*, 314.

126. Jesper Verhoef, "Putting the Netherlands in Perspective: The Identification of Alleged American and Dutch Traits in Dutch Travel Accounts of America, 1948–1971," *Dutch Crossing* 47, no. 2 (2023): 140–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/03096564.2022.2161714; Melvin Wevers and Jesper Verhoef, "Coca-Cola: An Icon of the American Way of Life. An Iterative Text Mining Workflow for Analyzing Advertisements in Dutch Twentieth-Century Newspapers," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (2017); Jesper Verhoef, "Anti-Modern National Identity Formation. Dutch Depictions of America in Public Debates about Film Fandom, 1919-1939," *Powerlines: An Interdisciplinary Online Journal of American Studies* 3, no. 1 (2015); Verhoef, *Opzien tegen modernisering*, 2017.

127. See for example Ariana Kelly, *Phone Booth* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

128. *Leidsch Dagblad*, 20 April 1990.

129. KPN Telecom, *Jaarverslag 1990-1995*. Den Haag: KPN.

130. John M. Picker, 'The Telephone Booth: Fixed Mobility and the Evolution of Sonic Space', in *The Auditory Culture Reader*, ed. Michael Bull and Les Back, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 200.

131. "'Het beste van… de jaren negentig', episode nr. 3, 18 January 2023. Alas, this episode did not provide information as to the title of the original show, nor to the exact date it had been aired.

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132. Respectively Lauer, "The Telephone Answering Machine"; Verhoef, "The Rise of Chronic Reachability."

133. See delpher.nl and mediasuite.clariah.nl. Regarding digitised ads, see Jesper Verhoef, "The Cultural-Historical Value of and Problems with Digitized Advertisements. Historical Newspapers and the Portable Radio, 1950-1969," *Tijdschrift Voor Tijdschriftstudies* 38 (2015): 51–60, https://doi.org/10.18352/ts.344.

134. See https://www.unesco.org/en/memory-world/register?hub=1081

135. For examples of how to apply a host of Digital Humanities techniques – ranging from topic modeling, tf/idf and n-grams to corpus-linguistics – to advance the fields of media- and cultural-historical research, see Jesper Verhoef, "Opzien tegen modernisering. Denkbeelden over Amerika en Nederlandse identiteit in het publieke debat over media, 1919-1989" (PhD diss., Utrecht, Utrecht University, 2017); Wevers and Verhoef, "Coca-Cola: An Icon of the American Way of Life. An Iterative Text Mining Workflow for Analyzing Advertisements in Dutch Twentieth-Century Newspapers."

136. See for example John Ellis and Nick Hall, ed., *Hands on Media History: A New Methodology in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2020); Andreas Fickers and Annie van den Oever, *Doing Experimental Media Archaeology: Theory* (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2022); Tim van der Heijden and Aleksander Kolkowski, *Doing Experimental Media Archaeology: Practice* (Oldenburg: De Gruyter, 2022).

137. Fickers and Van den Oever, *Doing Experimental Media Archaeology*, 30.

Biography

Jesper Verhoef is a historian and media scholar at Erasmus University Rotterdam. He has researched a wide array of media – including cinema, the portable radio, Walkman, pager, and Nintendo's Game Boy and other handhelds – and associated practices to analyse critical sociocultural, historical developments such as Americanisation, individualisation, consumerism, and the advent of neoliberalism. His research has appeared in *Convergence*; *Mobile Media & Communication*; *Game Studies*; *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, and elsewhere.