

MUSEUM AND PUBLIC

The public and the approach to the public in Dutch museums

- renewed analysis of existing data on public
- renewed questioning of educational staff

Rijswijk , august 1989

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Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture

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- renewed questioning of educational staff

Harry Ganzeboom
Folkert Haanstra

Rijswijk, August 1989.

CREDITS

A study under the auspices of the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture carried out by:

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Foreword

Research in The Netherlands into the composition of the museum-going public is of relatively recent date. It began hesitantly in the 60s after some pioneering work by Van der Hoek (1954, Haags Gemeentemuseum) and after a second piece of research by Varkevisser and Van der Zee (1962, Tropenmuseum).

At the time of their publication, monographic art brochures such as Jeroen Bosch (Den Bosch 1967) and Rembrandt (Amsterdam 1969) and the national presentation of the museum phenomenon entitled Musement (Utrecht 1969) prompted those involved to translate into action their inquisitiveness regarding the make-up of the museum-going public. In 1969 the Intomart agency made several official studies of the visitors to Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum.

From the early 70s both museums and municipal and government bodies showed increased interest in research into the constitution of the (museum-going) public and into the effect produced on it by a visit to the museum. In particular, the ICOM Committee for Education and Cultural Action began work on this type of research, which is mainly carried out by sociologists and psychologists.

Roundabout 1980, professional and scientific institutes began to offer many more courses at tertiary level in museum-related subjects and in other forms of cultural study. Research followed in consequence. A remarkable phenomenon in all this is that the museum was one of the few cultural establishments which managed not only to retain public favour over the past few decades but even succeeded in increasing the number of those availing themselves of its facilities.

Within the framework of the theme entitled Museums: Generators of Culture, the Committee for Education and Cultural Action made a substantial contribution to the 15th ICOM General Conference. In particular it was the work of the educational departments of museums that contributed to understanding and knowledge of culture. And in the present period when such institutions are becoming more independent, they are the ones who maintain the closest contact with the public, taking for granted the need both to apply market-oriented working methods and to define target groups.

The study presented here is set against this background. Based on divergent opinions, museum professionals had varied notions regarding the make-up of the Dutch museum-going public. The Netherlands has long been at the forefront of museum education. The ICOM-Committee for Education and Cultural Action reckoned that the time had come to assess the effects of so many years of educational striving with the public in mind. In order to gain a clear impression of developments spanning a longer time scale, the choice was made for a large retrospective rather than prospective study.

The planning for the research was submitted in 1988 and was approved by the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture - which commissioned the research - in October of the same year. The ensuing nine months saw the fusing of the two partial studies into the present report. The two studies differed enormously as to their nature and were both relatively complex, containing both new and retrospective elements.

The following questions constituted the basis for the studies:

1. What is the source of the present-day increase in public interest in museums?
2. Is the cause to be sought exclusively in external factors?
3. What changes occurred in the way museums presented themselves to the public?
4. Has this contributed to a rise in the number of visits to museums?

These questions have now been largely answered, though the nature of the material and the scientific caution of the researchers means that the outcome is not always unambiguous.

Lack of time - the ICOM congress was to be held as the study was coming to an end - made it impossible to draw conclusions regarding certain desirable spin-offs. To quote one example, a study of people attending stage productions, which was being carried out concurrently with the study described here, is still awaiting a definitive conclusion.

Research into participation in cultural affairs, such as is represented by a visit to a museum, is based on varied assumptions and methods, a factor which does not facilitate new analysis of existing data. It is satisfying to note that there has been progress made in the development of a standard which can make possible problem-free future international exchange of results of research. It is expected that in the near future a standard list of questions will be available with standard possibilities for extension.

It is partly thanks to the spontaneous offers of help from many people that it was possible to publish this study in so short a time. Staff of the CBS (central statistical office of The Netherlands) and of the Intomart Qualitatief agency provided previously unpublished material, members of the Nederlandse Museumvereniging (Dutch museums association) were generous in their contribution of expert knowledge regarding their own and others' institutions. Museums themselves made available a great deal of information from their archives and educational staff subjected themselves to long periods of (repeat) questioning. A great deal of footwork was also done by Dagmar Bukuru-Hempenius and Edith Paanakker, both of them graduates of the Reinwardt Academy: both via the telephone and by personal visits they accomplished such tasks as the reconstruction of the situation per museum as established by earlier studies.

In addition, the study would have had difficulty making progress had it not been for the efforts of Jos de Haan and Wilfred Uunk, sociology students in Utrecht, who organised the material, continually reminded museums and experts of promises made, carried out countless calculations and maintained a strict administration of everything involved.

The steering committee read texts, were not adverse to discussions, criticised graphs, maintained a tight grip on basic assumptions - in brief, gladly shared responsibility for the final result. Members of the committee were:

- Drs. Claartje Bunnik and Dr. Vladimir Bina, representing the principal and financial sponsor, the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture;

- Drs. Pieter van der Heijden and Drs. Jan Sas, representing the ICOM Committee for Education and Cultural Action, who took the original initiative;

- Prof. Dr. R. Wippler, representing the Vakgroep Empirische-Theoretische Sociologie of the University of Utrecht.

They all bowed without complaint to the authority of a chairman who, as the original commission put it, had to stand above partisan interests. It is satisfying to note that partly thanks to the experience of the authors, much was accomplished in a short time.

Rik Vos
Steering Committee Chairman

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Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION AND ELUCIDATION OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

There is a great deal of public interest in museums in The Netherlands. The number of visits (1) paid to Dutch museums has increased gradually from a 1950 figure of 2.6 million to 19.8 million in 1987 (2), with a short period of stagnation in the 1980s. There were approximately 14.5 million museum visits recorded between 1980 and 1983. Recent years have shown a sharp rise (fig. 1.1).

The increase in the museum-going public coincides with a considerable growth in the number of museums - from 243 in 1950 to 652 in 1987 (3) - and in the "occupation level". In 1950 each museum attracted an average of 6,500 visitors, a figure that had risen to a good 30,000 by 1986. When compared with related cultural sectors where "cultural outing" behaviour is noted - places such as theatres, concert halls and cinemas - the museums have enjoyed considerable and longer-lived interest on the part of the public. When exception is made of libraries, other cultural sectors are seen to have experienced a falling off in interest (CBS, 1985).

Over the years the potential museum visitors - the people interested in visiting museums - have increased considerably. A visit to a museum is often cited as preferred activity (especially) among people with a higher education, a social category that has increased greatly over the years. Even if there were no changes in the social make-up of the museum-going public, this should lead to an increase in the number of visits, but comparison with cultural sectors such as theatre, music and film indicates that this reasoning is less obviously valid than would at first appear: no increase in public interest has been noted in the sectors mentioned. And thus there must be some factor(s) at work other than (merely) the growth in size of the potential public.

There is an obvious dual explanation: the new mass media (TV and video) do not compete directly with the museum. Indeed they appear to instil a certain familiarity and pre-knowledge which has the effect of encouraging people to visit museums. In addition, differing demands are made on people's time by museums and stage productions: people go to the theatre or concert on a particular evening, generally a busy period anyway, while a visit to a museum or exhibition is not tied to any particular day or time of day. An extension of this is that museums benefit from the increase in tourist trade, both foreign and home-grown.

(1) We distinguish between museum visits and museum visitors. Clearly 20 million visits must be ascribed to a much smaller group of individuals. Increase in the number of visits does not directly imply a growth in the number of visitors involved.

(2) (CBS, 1985, 1986, 1988). The CBS gives the provisional figure of 20.3 million visits for 1988.

(3) (CBS, 1985, 1986, 1988).

FIG. 1.1. ## (see: appendices)

Another possible causatory factor in the increase in visits to museums is that museums are presenting a more varied and more accessible product because of the increase in the number of museums over the years. New collections and new museums appear to exist or to have come into existence as non-art museums. Information as to which sort of museum has grown most strongly in recent years can be derived from CBS figures (1986; table 1.2) which classify the museums as to type (4) and year of opening. According to this information, existing art museums have been extended to include collections of a different nature and objects of a different type which, when compared to art objects, draw visitors from a much broader social spectrum. Table 1.2 provides no definitive conclusion: a proportional increase in the number of non-art museums as compared to art museums does not necessarily lead to the former taking a larger share of visitors or visits. (See next chapter.)

TABLE 1.2 ## (see: appendices)

In addition, it could also be the case that there has not really been any increase in the museum-going public - or at least that it is not as great as it might appear, but is a product of the deceptive nature of the statistics. Institutions such as zoos and semi-amusement parks which, in contrast to previous practice, are now reckoned among museums, could have a part to play here. What growth in public interest is left if these new categories are excluded from the calculations? And do the traditional museums have a share in the increase in public interest? It is not possible to explain the whole of the increase in public interest in this way, but these are factors which should be taken into account.

It would be an injustice to the museums if we were to ascribe their obvious success exclusively to external factors, or the treat the success as a deceptive appearance. Many museums have made explicit efforts to attract as great and as heterogenous an audience as possible, using the following methods:

- Intensive advertising for the museums' "product" via the mass media (the 'Nederland Museumland' campaign of 1988).
- Customer-binding types of reduced admission (yearly subscription to museums).
- Systematic approaches to young people (the cultural passport for youth), cooperation with the teaching profession.
- An active policy with regard to exhibitions in order to increase the number of people potentially interested and to make the museum more attractive.
- Educational activities in the museum with presentation targeted on the audience.
- Activities explicitly designed to lower the threshold, such as taking art from the museum "onto the street".

(4) The CBS draws a distinction between "figurative art museums" and "mixed museums". We have merged these two types. It so happens that the "mixed" category includes museums with the oldest and best known art collections, such as Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum.

The public task of museums is part of the effort to spread culture, an attitude that has dominated Dutch cultural policy since the 50s. Groups of people participating in cultural activities usually show a one-sided social make-up: there is heavy over-representation of higher income groups, professionals and especially people with a higher education. The cultural groups - such as museum-goers and concert-goers - show a great deal of overlap.

The discovery that diverse policy efforts in the cultural sector appear to continue to reach the same groups with a higher social status in other respects led to the effort to spread culture. The effort was supported by specific practical policies: the government participated mainly by subsidising admission charges while the museum world deployed the educational activities already alluded to.

The results of the culture spread policy are mostly assessed negatively (Beyers, 1988), though the outcomes of studies are scarce and difficult to interpret. It is precisely the lower status groups who would appear to have abandoned theatre and cinema, a process which seems to go together with the increase in the exclusive nature of the audience (Ganzeboom, 1984). The museum-going public that has shown such a dramatic increase serves to fuel such an assumption, as does the development in museum organisation and the means employed to make museums more accessible to a wide audience. If the assumption is correct, the Dutch museums can serve as an example to other cultural sectors.

Against this background, the following questions form the basis of our research:

- What has caused the rise in interest in museums?
- Which social groups have been added to the museum-going public?
- Has participation by traditionally culturally inactive groups kept pace with the increase in the museum-going public?

1.2 Government statistics, audience research and population studies

Up to the present day, information on museum visits has been gleaned from government statistics and derived from audience and population research.

(a) Government statistical material is constituted by CBS data regarding size and nature of museums and numbers of visitors, collected by means of a questionnaire distributed to museum authorities; it is possible to reconstitute audience figures from this information but not the make-up of the audience.

(b) Audience research - questioning museum-goers as to their social background, interests and suchlike - has been long and often carried out in the museum world. Van der Hoek's study of museum-goers (Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1956) is well known, especially the "free Saturdays" which (despite everything) apparently consisted of people "from the better neighbourhoods"

and "(...) the group of economically stronger and better educated people". We have assembled studies on more than 180 groupings of visitors to museums and exhibitions, studies varying from simple extended essays to professional marketing studies. Most of them turned out to be amenable to re-analysis: we processed data on 142 audience groups.

Audience research provides no insight into the non-audience and is thus unsuitable for providing an explanation of the one-sided social make-up of audience groupings. Comparison with statistical data on the total population goes no further than age, sex and civil status; education, employment and income can be compared, but it is no easy task to determine the correct standards of comparison. This means that such comparisons are rare in audience research (Inter/View, 1969, Bettenhausen-Verbeij, 1977). It is totally impossible to use these methods to throw any light on the far-reaching background factors behind the social make-up of audience groupings.

The great advantage shown by audience research as compared to population studies consists in the certainty that those questioned do in fact belong to the museum-going or exhibition-going public and that the type of "product" offered by the museum is known beforehand. Comparative examination of audience research studies is very useful for anyone wishing to make statements regarding the relationship between type, presentation and approach to the audience on the one hand, and the nature of the audience on the other. In our research, comparative audience studies occupy a central place.

(c) Population studies - carried out on the total population of a region or country - provide a great deal of information, though this is of more recent date and there is less of it than can be derived from audience research. Since 1974, the CBS and the Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau has assembled information on museum-going and on the social make-up of the museum-going groupings in terms of time spent (1975 - 1980 - 1985), life style (1974 - 1977 - 1980 - 1983 - 1986) and use of provisions (1979 - 1983 - 1987).

Information derived from population research facilitates the comparison between audience and non-audience. 40% to 50% of the population engage in museum-going. Cross-section sampling of the population makes it possible to compare museum-goers and non-museum-goers as regards social background and as regards the possible nature of over-representation of higher social groupings within the museum-going public.

Information obtained from population studies is more amenable to comparative study than that derived from audience research - though it too exhibits specific weaknesses. Thus the nature of the museum visited is often difficult to determine, the same being true of the relationship between what the museum has to offer and the make-up of audience groupings, especially since museum-going often figures in population studies as part of a broader set of questions on extremely varied population characteristics, no place being made for details. The periodic CBS studies simply ask a question referring to "visit to museums

and/or exhibitions"; a few other studies (e.g. Stoppelenburg, 1979; Aanvulling Voorzieningengebruikonderzoek - supplement to study of use of public facilities) do note details of type, though not to the point where subjects are questioned as to the establishments actually visited.

Where population studies are involved, we have to depend on statements made by those questioned, the objection here being that to a certain extent "socially desirable" answers may be given because participation in cultural activities is a valued form of behaviour in our society, especially in higher status groupings. In this regard, those questioned can present a "more favourable" image of themselves than is the actual case.

1.3 Factors determining museum-going

What picture of the make-up of the museum-going audience groupings is provided by the present study? What are the principal factors determining whether people become museum-goers (and so remain) and what preferences do they reveal in this? The decisive factor appears in every case to be education; to a lesser extent we can speak of over-representation of higher income groups, of higher professional groups and of young people. People with a higher education have on average a higher professional status and a higher income than the average person and are, on average, younger. A second factor would appear to be training and socialisation outside school, especially as far as older people are concerned.

The social composition of the museum-going public (and of other cultural audience groupings) can be mainly explained by the information and status threshold factors (Ganzeboom, 1983a, 1983b).

Information thresholds

Knowledge and the capacity to comprehend are requirements for the enjoyment of art and culture. These two factors are shared unequally between people with higher and people with lower standards of education because of the difference in training in processing cultural information and, in consequence, because of a differentiated educational system based on general cognitive skills. People with a cultural home background are the most active, independent of educational status.

Status thresholds

In addition to cultural knowledge and skills, status thresholds play a major role in museum-going - which is a form of behaviour often practised in the company of others, or at least is shown interest in the company of others. Expressions of taste - of which museum-going is the concrete result - are factors par excellence giving rise to feelings of sympathy and antipathy in social intercourse; it is a way of obtaining (or not) social regard. Compared with the total population, museum-goers are relatively well able to absorb cultural information; they belong to a social network in which museum-going is regarded as normal and worth the effort.

The wide differences in what the various museums have to offer can be explained by means of information and status thresholds. Great cultural skill is required for the relatively complex information presented by some museums; this can be expressed in terms of classical as opposed to modern representative art or cultural-historical as opposed to artistic-historical exhibitions.

However what the museum has to offer can also be distinguished according to the extent to which it enables the visitor to increase social status. Museums do, in fact, make a distinction between objects which have always appealed to higher status groupings and others "belonging to the common folk", derived from the world of the average members of a population. Cultural-historical objects especially represent strong symbols of the one status group or the other. Sometimes social thresholds are literally swept away: the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague went out into the neighbourhoods with its Kunstkar (art cart) (Regouin et al., 1977), the Lijnbaancentrum placed modern art right next to a popular department store (Welters, 1975). Educational museum activities can be interpreted in terms of this type of lowering of social thresholds.

1.4 Elucidation of aims and problems of the present study

Our aim is not that of assembling a large quantity of new information regarding the museum-going public but rather to integrate already existing insights and results derived from earlier studies to produce an overall view. We thought that re-analyses and comparative studies would be likely to provide a truer image of the museum-going public than could be obtained by new wide-ranging research. Below are listed the existing sources that we used:

- a. Government statistical material, principally information derived from the annual CBS questionnaires concerning the increase in the number of museums and the rise of public interest in various sectors. We were able to use this information to characterise the development in the museums available to the public in the last few decades and to determine the extent to which one can speak of a policy of culture spread on the part of new museums linked to a proportionate supply of simple information, relatively close to the world inhabited by the average citizen.
- b. A re-analysis of existing population studies regarding museum-going, which provides insight into the social background of the Dutch museum-going public with reference to the whole population. Using this research material we attempted to examine whether it is true or not that lower status groups visit museums more often than in times past.
- c. A (re-)questioning of educational staff in a limited number of museums. We studied current opinions regarding the approach that should be made to the public and compared these to comparable research data of ten years ago. The question was: how in recent years did museums concretise

assumptions regarding the way the public should be approached and how did this deviate from assumptions current in earlier days?

- d. Finally we initiated a re-analysis of existing audience studies. Reports resulting from studies of 142 groupings of the public visiting Dutch museums and exhibitions were found to be amenable to re-analysis. They have a special value in a systematic comparison with characteristics of the institutes in question, and especially they provide some insight into social profiles of museum-going groupings in relationship to the nature of the museum and its collection: do works of art attract a more selectively constituted audience than other objects, and what influence is exercised by the approach made by the museum to its public?

Chapter 2:

HISTORICAL GROWTH OF MUSEUM "SUPPLY" AND MUSEUM-GOING PUBLIC

2.1. The CBS data: results and remarks

Information derived from the annual CBS study of all Dutch museums, in which museum visits are recorded per museum for the reporting year, is the most general source of information regarding the size of the museum-going public. The figures provided by the CBS for museum visits is divided up by the museum authorities in the list of questions on the basis of estimates as follows:

- (a) paying/non-paying visitors
- (b) season ticket holders (annual)/other
- (c) visits to incidental exhibitions/permanent displays.

The museum authorities are also asked to provide estimates of the percentage of foreign visitors. The CBS produces regular reports - usually annual - concerning all this information in specific reports (CBS, 1986, 1987, 1988), which include other sources, particularly large population studies (AVO). In addition, the figures referring to museum-going and numbers of museums are included in general CBS publications such as the Statistisch Zakboek (the statistical pocket book) and the old established annual series. The annual Museum Questionnaires also cover areas included under exhibition policy and developments in staffing, and thus also cover a much broader field than mere museum-going statistics.

Results

The principal results derived from the CBS studies are reproduced in fig. 1.1. Table 2.1 shows in figures the steady growth of the museum-going public in The Netherlands over the last 40 years. The development is not entirely rectilinear: growth in public interest (1) showed relatively strong stagnation especially at the beginning of the 80s, whereas in the past few years the museum audience has increased rapidly. We first examine the figures recorded for visitors in order to explain the growth. Can we really speak of an increase and do we need to show caution when speaking of a pattern of growth?

TABLE 2.1 ## (see appendices)

Remarks

The records of the number of museum visits would seem at first sight to constitute a relatively objective tool. But as in other cases of registration of numbers, problems of interpretation arise. In various imaginable situations the growth noted in Statistiek Musea is merely apparent, and does not agree with actual developments. Three points are of importance here:

- possible distortions arising from response behaviour
- the current definition of a museum
- effects brought about by improved methods of recording

(1) This stagnation recently led Carasso (1987) to predict "a sombre outlook for the future". This prediction has been seen to be groundless, at least in the case of the numbers of visits.

When using lists of questions and estimates, we have to fall back on the cooperation (response behaviour) of institutions. Information not returned and - deliberate or not - faulty reporting distort the results of any research. In the case of the CBS Statistiek Musea this is scarcely so: at 96% the response rate is unusually high (CBS, 1968: p. 13). It would seem that museum staff are more than ready to cooperate in recording and research, which is in line with our experience. The CBS attempts to correct non-response by means of supplementary estimates in order to obviate excessive fluctuations. Any distortion introduced by the museums themselves is not accounted for, but given the assumption that they maintain proper records of cash receipts and include these in their annual report, any such figures they supply of this nature constitute relatively "hard" information.

A more important factor than the influence of response behaviour would seem to be the way in which the CBS counts institutions labelled as "museums". The last CBS Museum Questionnaire (CBS Museumenquête) (1987) involved cooperation by 615 institutions noted as "museums", far fewer than are contained in the guide book entitled "Nederland Museumland 1989" (MJK/Sdu, 1989) or than appear on the mailing list maintained by the Dutch museum association (Nederlandse Museumvereniging). What is the relationship between the CBS definition and other definitions of a museum? To what extent is there an underestimation of the museum-going public which is otherwise defined and to what extent has this underestimation gradually changed?

Another question is the growth of institutions within the CBS definition itself. The growth in the audience is derived partly from existing institutions which have been attracting their own public for some time but which appear for the first time in Statistiek and are added to the figures thanks to a broadening of the definition of "museum", due either to a slight policy change on the part of the institutions in question (2) or because museum-like departments have been added. We can only speak of real audience increase when a genuinely new museum-going public is recorded as visiting newly registered institutions for the first time.

As an example of establishments included in the CBS statistics we name the zoos, which in the past have never been included under the heading of museum but, according to the latest ICOM definition definitely belong to that category. To clarify the discussion we state that a not inconsiderable proportion of the growth in public interest can be referred back to the counting of a public that was already included. In such a case, there is no way that we can speak of real "growth".

TABLE 2.2 ## (see: appendices)

(2) Recognition as "museum" is not an empty question: it is linked to such things as the amount of VAT levied on the institution in question (Maurits, 1987).

2.2 The CBS definitions: what is included and what is left out?

Which institutions does the CBS include in its definition of a museum and which does it exclude? By way of elucidation, we compared the guide book "Nederland Museumland 1989" (MJK, 1988) with the CBS list of museums; in 1987 the CBS listed 615 museums, while "Nederland Museumland" included 816. The CBS definition is clear: "An institution with one or more collections which, in its entirety or to a large extent, is permanently exhibited to the public and can be viewed either on payment of admission charges or free of charge at set times (and on request if needs be)" (Sociaal-Culturele Berichten, 1988-10). When asked by telephone, "Nederland Museumland" could provide no basic explicit description - which was a great advantage in the present case since the guide book also includes "fringe" institutions and thus provides some insight into what the CBS considers to belong to the "museum" category.

The ICOM definition of "museum" - "(...) a non-profit-making, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment" (ICOM Statutes, Section III, Article 3) - is at first sight more limited than the CBS definition, principally because of the inclusion of the "non-profit-making" requirement. The CBS does not exclude profit-making establishments.

The differences between the CBS and "Nederland Museumland" can practically all be derived from what the latter includes and what the CBS rejects as registered museum. In a few exceptional, quantitatively unimportant cases, the CBS regards as a museum an institution not included in "Nederland Museumland". "Nederland Museumland" goes further than the CBS in the following instances:

- a. Zoos: All 14 Dutch zoos and related establishments (Apenheul, Dolphinarium) are listed in "Nederland Museumland". The CBS records only the number of visits to the Noorder Dierenpark in Emmen, a zoo which has several museum-type departments, the best known being the Biochron. Every visit to this zoo is regarded as a visit to a museum, even though far from every visitor goes there for the Biochron. With its 1.3 million visitors annually the Noorder Dierenpark even counts as the largest "museum" in The Netherlands.
- b. Gardens are completely excluded from the CBS "museum" category. "Nederland Museumland" includes 27 of such establishments in its list.
- c. Visitors centres attached to nature parks are also excluded by the CBS, while "Nederland Museumland" includes 28 of them.
- d. Smaller establishments. The categories a, b and c account for 69 institutions, approximately 30% of those not registered by the CBS. These are mostly institutions difficult to characterise, usually small-scale, such as the Heringa-State mansion in Marssum (Friesland), the Noordbroek Strijkijzermuseum (Groningen), the Klokkengieterijmuseum in Vries (Drenthe), Museum d'Olde Radio in Diever (Drenthe),

the Zeemuseum Miramar in Frederiksoord (Drenthe), the Speelgoedmuseum in Wesepe (Overijssel), the Van Vuurpijl tot Spaceshuttle ("Holland's smallest museum" in Lelystad, the AMEV Verzekeringmuseum in Utrecht and the Carnavalsmuseum in Thorn (Limburg). Some are not included in the CBS list because they are only open incidentally or on request.

- e. Fringe museums. Some institutions included in "Nederland Museumland" fall outside the CBS definition because they do not fulfil the conditions for registration. The most remarkable are the popular Madurodam (The Hague) and the Delta Expo (Werkeiland Neeltje Jans near Haamstede).

The most important differences between the CBS and "Nederland Museumland" do not stem from a failure on the part of the CBS to include every museum but rather from questions of definition. The CBS maintains a definition in terms of "lifeless objects", while the implicit basic assumption in "Nederland Museumland", in accord with the ICOM definition, includes flora and fauna and in some cases recognises a wider grey area than does the CBS between "museum" and "amusement park".

We have no intention of passing judgement on the situation but merely point out that the CBS definition does at least have the advantage that registered museums (in principle) were also regarded as such 30 years ago; the count is not artificially raised by a broadening of definitions, which render so difficult any study of developments in public interest.

The CBS counts (3) are sometimes susceptible to two explanations, and the narrow definition is widened. An obvious example is the total number of visitors to the Noorder Dierenpark being regarded as referring to the Biochron and every visit to the Hoge Veluwe National park being reckoned as a visit to the Kröller-Müller Museum which, with 351,540 visits in 1987, ranks among the largest institutions. In comparable cases (the Banketbakkersmuseum in the Flevohof) an "estimate" is made of the number of actual museum visits to the institution; in the cases mentioned, this would have the effect of increasing the accuracy of the count.

Finally there are categories of museum visit limited in size which neither the CBS nor "Nederland Museumland" take account of. This refers mainly to visits to art galleries and exhibitions of a changeable or one-off type (Nieuwe Kerk, Beurs van Berlage).

Larger in extent are visits made by Dutch people to foreign museums, though the conclusion that can be drawn after comparison between the Tijdsbestedingsonderzoek (study of leisure time activities) and the Aanvullend Voorzieningen Onderzoek (study of supplementary provisions) is that a maximum of 12% of Dutch people claiming to have visited a museum abroad but never to have done so in Holland is a slight overestimation. A figure of 21% is given by the CBS for visits by foreigners to Dutch museums, this being based on estimates supplied by the museums themselves.

(3) With thanks to CBS staff members T. Jonkers and A. Korpel-Wysk who pointed out these details to us.

This makes the crossing of national borders an important phenomenon in the field of museum-going which cannot be left out of the reckoning, as is the case with other forms of cultural activity. This is especially important in the interpretation of trends in cultural interest as manifested by the Dutch population on the basis of figures for museum-going: it is possible that these trends should be ignored because they are accounted for by museum-going foreign visitors. The CBS (1968) deals explicitly with the question and draws the conclusion that such cannot be the case: incoming tourist trade is not proportionate to the rise in museum-going.

2.3 Nature of the growth: is there an additional factor?

The CBS file of Dutch museums has grown by 292 (+47%) since 1965. Even within the CBS definition this gives rise to the question as to the category of institution responsible for the rise and what part of the increase in public interest they should be credited with. Are such museums really new, or are there existing establishments on the list which have been drawing their own audience for some time but have only recently been included in the statistics?

We processed anew the CBS data derived from the 1987 Museum Questionnaire (Museumenquête). The statistics include the date of establishment of each museum as well as the year in which it was first included in the list. We couple this information to the number of visits to museums in 1987. Table 2.2 provides some insight into the categories of museum which were included during the seven CBS time periods (4) classified as to type of collection.

TABLE 2.2 ## (see: appendices)

In table 2.2. - a re-processing of table 1.2 - it is not the growth but the situation per time period that is classified as to type. We are thus enabled to draw an important conclusion regarding developments in the museum world: in contrast to what was assumed in the introduction, the recent rise in the number of Dutch museums has not been disproportionately large in the category of non-art museums. In the past, art museums had a greater share in the total than at present, but the biggest shift had already occurred before 1965. Before 1900 art museums constituted 48% of the total. Since 1965 their share has not dropped in any spectacular fashion: from 20% to 15%.

TABLE 2.3 ## (see: appendices)

The assumed disproportionate development between art museums and non-art museums comes to the fore in table 2.3, where we examine the number of museums not per category but per size of their public groupings, based on the number of visits to the museums in question in the 1987 reporting year.

(4) Of course, museums have disappeared in this period, though it is difficult to determine which ones and when. At any rate, a relatively small number are involved in comparison to the growth. The data presented here assume that in practice such disappearances can be ignored.

The table shows that the "oldest museums" category (established before 1965) recorded 11.3 million visits; museums founded between 1965 and 1979 had 5.6 million and those starting up after 1980 had 2.9 million. The figures for visits per museum category are 43,000, 27,000 and 19,000 for these three time periods respectively. The newer museums therefore belong on average to the category of smaller establishments.

More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that the newly established art museums contribute considerably less to the number of visits than the older museums "in their generation". The conclusion can be drawn after comparison of the spread of the number of visits across the various types. The art museums established before 1965 account for 44% of visits in their generation, while the newest museums (opened in 1980) still only account for 7%. The exception constituted by natural history museums, which would appear to account for 44% of museum-goers, reposes entirely on the figures derived from visitors to the Biochron/Noorder Dierenpark. The impression nonetheless remains that the newly opened non-art museums account for a disproportionate share of the growth in public interest.

2.4 Growth: is it really all that new?

The CBS records the date of establishment and the date of inclusion in the statistics for each museum. The difference between the two dates shows how many establishments in fact already existed before being included in the statistics. Out of a total of 615, there are 46 of this type, with 1.7 million visits (1987), spread over the last 20 years, far less than overall growth in the period. It is a question of some importance whether this fact provides a reliable indication of overestimation of growth. The Noorder Dierenpark, which had its own public before it became a museum (in the sense of the CBS definition not before 1980), is a remarkable member of this category. Since it is difficult to check on how many of such cases there are, we can do little else but voice the suspicion that the category of establishments already existing and only later included in the statistics is not large enough to explain the overall growth in the museum-going public.

2.5 Growth per type

By taking into account only the establishments with a longer history, we are able to see whether or not the growth is real. Have they too benefited from growing interest in museums and to what extent does this apply to the traditional art museums? Such questions can be answered by a series of figures for visits over the years as recorded by the museums in question. We compared CBS figures referring to all larger museums which were in place before 1965, with a lower limit of 50,000 visitors in 1987. A total of 53 museums satisfied these criteria, half of them belonging to the art/mixed museum category, with a total of 10.5 million visitors in 1987 (table 2.4 and figure 2.5). In view of the limited representation of the remaining non-art museums, a comparative study of the other museums - mainly historical - would be of little significance.

TABLE 2.4 ## (see: appendices)
FIGURE 2.5 ## (see: appendices)

The percentage given in table 2.4 for the total growth in the number of visitors is calculated on the basis of the statistical model for the rise illustrated in figure 2.5. It is not based exclusively on a contrast between the first and last years, but on an estimate of the total rise, including interim observations. The public attracted to the 53 museums in question showed a growth of 178% in the period referred to. For art museums the growth was no more than 141%, with the sharpest rise to be found before 1971. In the case of the non-art museums the annual growth figure was more consistent and the total growth was greater than that shown by the art museums, at a level of 200%.

These differences enable us to draw the conclusions that even as regards the older established institutions, we can speak of a general growth in the museum-going public, the growth is disproportionately large in the case of the non-art museums and the art museums have benefited from it all. The increase in public interest cannot thus be ascribed one-sidedly to one particular category of museum.

2.6 Remarks and conclusions

Remarks

The accessibility of museums (see chapter 5) is determined by the complexity of the information on offer and, closely allied to this, by references made to everyday life: simple collections appeal to a relatively wide public while complex collections draw on an upper stratum of well educated art lovers. The distinction usually made between art museum and non-art museum runs parallel to the distinction in accessibility: the museum "supply" in The Netherlands would appear to have increased particularly at the lower end of the scale of accessibility. The museum-going public should be gradually weaned out of the circles of the less well educated. This subject is dealt with in the next chapter.

In this chapter the museums are separated into types with a somewhat uneven pace of development; it is a source of dissatisfaction that this distinction as to type is not maintained consistently in the CBS statistics. The statisticians should take this as an indication that the Statistiek Musea should make much more use of the distinction between types of museum.

As far as concerns the share of the different types of museum - especially the art museums - in the growth of the museum-going public over the years, we have seen that the older and larger museums have as a whole contributed less to the growth in public interest than the non-art museums. These latter in the newer museum category have accounted for a relatively large proportion of the museum-going public.

Conclusions

- a. The CBS is guided by a relatively conservative definition of the notion of museum. Categories appearing in possible wider definitions, such as that maintained by ICOM, include zoos, gardens, visitors centres and galleries. The conservative nature of the CBS definition makes the CBS figures easily comparable over the years. The somewhat smaller establishments appear not to have been included in the statistics.
- b. The CBS probably somewhat overestimates the total number of museum visits - within its own definition - as also the increase in visits over the past 15 years, since this is also accounted for by existing establishments and by those included in Statistiek Musea only after a period of time. Nonetheless the greater proportion of the growth can be classified as "real".
- c. As far as the differences in development between the types is concerned, the assumed growth of the non-art museums would seem to be not particularly spectacular, at least not when the number of establishments is taken into account. The recently established art museums are mainly smaller institutions with a smaller public than the earlier established art museums.
- d. The development in the size of the museum audience claimed by the 53 larger museums shows that the growth has occurred over the whole spectrum, though it has been considerably stronger in the non-art museums than in the art museums.

Chapter 3: POPULATION STUDIES: FACTORS DETERMINING MUSEUM-GOING

3.1 Factors determining museum-going

As with other forms of participation in cultural affairs, museum-going is not as frequent a leisure time activity in all population groupings. Paragraph 1.3 detailed information and status thresholds as an explanation of the over-representation of the better educated, professionals and higher income groups and the youth in the museum-going public. Both factors, especially the former, play a more pronounced role in museum-going than in theatre-going and attendance at concerts. Traditional status-endowing factors such as clothing and entourage are more to the fore in traditional theatre-going than in museum-going and visits to exhibitions of figurative art.

Two further factors of importance in cultural activities are time available and proportion of income available (Ganzeboom, 1989), which vary from museum-going on the one hand, and theatre and concert-going on the other: a museum is visited at a time determined by the visitor and there is no predetermined duration of time involved, whereas theatre and concert are at set times - usually in the evening, when there is strong competition from television - and the performance lasts a pre-determined length of time. Pressure of time is thus much less decisive in the case of museum-going. It also shows certain advantages on the financial side: even the most expensive museums and exhibitions in Holland in 1989 benefit from innumerable reductions and do not usually charge an admission price greater than 10,00 guilders, which comes nowhere near the admission charge to a play or a concert. These factors clarify the undeniable rise in the popularity of museums and the stagnation in the number of people attending theatre productions or concerts.

Comparison of three studies made over a period of 10 years enabled us to analyse the changes stated by national population studies to have occurred in the social profile of museum-goers. It was possible to check on the influence of global social background factors (education, profession, income, age, family situation), but it did not prove possible to involve more characteristics that would clarify the content. Unfortunately, the national studies used (which contain museum-going only as such) do not permit any further differentiation to be made as to the nature of the museum visited. Wide divergences in different types of museums are analysed in chapter 5.

3.2 Variables

An historical comparison was made of data derived from the Tijdsbestedingsonderzoek (TBO, Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (et al.), 1975, 1980 and 1985) in which the same question was asked each time:

"How often do you visit museums/exhibitions?"

Those questioned could choose from the following answers:

- never
- once a year
- once every 6 months
- once every 4 or 5 months
- once every 2 or 3 months
- at least once a month
- two or three times per month
- more than two or three times a month

Since the type of questioning in the TBOs remained equal to quantified categories over a period of 10 years, these studies are an improvement on other sources, even though the style of questioning is not of the best. Thus the TBOs make no mention of a definite period of time ("during the last year") or event ("when did you last visit a museum?"). The question on museum-going provides no insight in general into the spread over type of museum (art museum as opposed to non-art museum), nor as regards museum-going abroad. Also questions regarding other characteristics as posed in the TBOs are pretty much identical. We employed the following characteristics in our analysis:

- Age

Previous studies showed that the presence of a youngest child aged between 0 and 12 years determines to a large extent how much time and opportunity is available (to parents) for going out to cultural activities. We used this characteristic to test whether museum-going is indeed less sensitive to questions of time than theatre-going, which could provide an explanation of the differences in the growth of public interest.

- Education

For the purposes of this characteristic, we developed a sixfold system of categories, ranging from "only elementary school" to "scientific education".

- Profession

Six professional categories - "profession" refers to present or former profession - were arranged according to cultural activity. Agricultural work was bottom of the list, followed by unskilled and skilled worker, self-employed tradespeople, low and middle-rank employees and higher professions. Since unemployed spouses and children still living with parents were accorded the profession of the working head of household, more than 90% of the group studied obtained a valid profession score which, coupled with income level, can serve as an indication of the socio-economic capacity of the household to which subjects questioned belonged.

- Income

Unfortunately the 1985 TBO contains no detailed information on this point, since it makes no more than a distinction between income categories as related to health insurance, which gave figures of approx. 66% of people being insured directly for health care (monthly premiums deducted directly from salary) and 33% being voluntarily insured; this corresponds to the limits set for incomes above and below the health insurance fund level in the Dutch health care financing system. Since the more detailed information on income levels derived from the other two studies are based on differential coding, these were also reduced to the same dual differentiation (1).

TABLE 3.1 ## (see: appendices)

Table 3.1 gives the averages - and their spread - for the age, education, profession and household income and age of youngest child characteristics, as also for museum-going and visits to stage productions. They show clearly the development which occurred in the Dutch population between 1975 and 1985.

- The age divisions shifted in the direction of older people; it should be noted that we limited ourselves to the population aged between 21 and 64;
- The number of people with a youngest child aged between 0 and 12 fell by approximately a quarter;
- Education rose by almost one point on a scale of 1 to 6;
- Profession rose by three-quarters of a point on a scale of 1 to 6;
- The number of people in the highest income bracket rose, though strictly speaking this does not necessarily correspond with a trend in the population, since this division depends on the method employed for dividing up the income levels in the first two TBOs. The actual changes in income levels of the Dutch population between 1975 and 1985 agree with the pattern shown in table 3.1; between 1975 and 1980 the rise continued, but later this levelled out to give a pretty stable average.

The results contained in table 3.1 as regards the categories of "never" "incidental" (from once a year) and "frequent" (from once every 2 or 3 months) show that the number of museum-goers in the Dutch population over the years in question rose from 40% to 51%. The growth occurred in the "incidental visitors" and "frequent visitors" categories. The increased number of visitors confirms in itself that the rise in the number of museum-goers noted by Statistiek Musea (see chapter 2) can be at least partly attributed to a real increase in participation of the Dutch population, in Holland or elsewhere. The (slight) growth in theatre-going is less closely connected to the growth in the number of those showing interest.

(1) It should be noted that this reduction to two income categories for TBO 1975 and TBO 1980 does not have a great deal of effect on the conclusions drawn concerning the working of this factor.

TABLE 3.2 ## (see: appendices)

3.3 Analysis

Since the actual percentage of museum-goers and theatre-goers in the population groupings included in table 3.2 does not run regularly over years and social background characteristics, a phenomenon partly ascribable to sample fluctuations in groups split into small numbers, we are interested in finding a coefficient which will pull it all together. Table 3.2 provides two such coefficients per background variable:

- Correlation (r): this indicates the average differences between the social groups;
- Regression (β): this indicates the average differences between the social groups, corrected for the mutual relationship between the background variables.

Regression coefficients are actually more interesting than correlation coefficients, since they explain the mutual relations between the effects of background variables. We can thus, for instance, use them to determine the extent to which the differences noted between profession and income groups arise from differences linked to differences in education, which are actually related to profession and income.

We draw the following conclusions from table 3.2:

- Museum-going differs greatly between social status groups, divided up according to education, profession and income. The influence of education is by far the greatest and cannot be related back to the differences created by profession and income. The real significance of profession and income as far as museum-going is concerned is relatively minor, even when account is taken of education and other factors.
- The influence of education, profession and income has not changed systematically over the 10-year period under review; one can say at least that the differences between groups distinguished as to educational background have not diminished but have even increased, while the differences between the two income categories are on the decrease.
- Museum-going differs more than somewhat from age group to age group: in 1975 young people especially visited museums (much) more frequently than the oldest group, while the participation of older people in 1985 happens to be somewhat higher.
- Whether a family contains young children or not is of some influence on museum and theatre-going. The latter was not significantly higher than the former in 1980 and 1985; in 1975 the differences for museum-going were even higher than for theatre-going. This contradicts the assumption that theatre-going is so much more sensitive to demands on people's time than is museum-going.

3.4 Conclusions

Our general analysis of museum-going confirms the results obtained from population studies: the great difference in museum-going between (especially) those with higher and lower educational backgrounds has increased over the years rather than diminished. The smaller difference between groups distinguished as to profession and income is gradually declining (as far as income is concerned). Differences based on profession can be wholly extrapolated from differences in income and education between the different groups of professions. Differences in education play the principal role; when we speak of inequality in museum-going, we should keep this principally in mind. The education factor is also paid special attention in the next chapters.

In chapter 2 we showed that visits to museums have increased especially as regards the more simple types of museum. Since they draw on an audience with lower educational standards (see chapter 5), the differences between groups distinguished as to educational background should gradually diminish. Our analysis of population studies causes us to draw a different conclusion, which can have various causes. In chapter 2 it has already been shown that there is no unambiguous relationship between the measurement of museum-going according to the cash register and according to the Tijdsbestedingsonderzoek, both of which relate to different groups. Museum-going engaged in by Dutch people abroad and by foreign visitors in Holland has its part to play. The possibility that museum-going occurs without being reported by visitors is perhaps even more important. In the case of the Biochron/Noorder Dierenpark, those questioned probably never even think of mentioning a day out at the zoo with the kids when asked about "visits to museums and exhibitions". It could help if a tighter form of questioning were used, including some reference to the type of museum meant.

Chapter 4:

RE-INVESTIGATION OF EDUCATIONAL WORKERS: OPINIONS AND ACTIVITIES 1979-1989

4.1 Introduction

"If one wishes to increase the accessibility of the museum collections in order to allow the museum to function in a socially better manner, then attention must be paid primarily to the area of presentation. In this connection the principal requirement is not only that the educational work of the museum be recognised, but also that a clear place must be found for it."

This extract is from the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Works (CRM) white paper 'Towards a New Museum Policy' (1976). The recognition by government of educational work in museums -- an "historical moment in the history of the subject..." (Overduin, [1983]) -- led to a variety of reactions. The governors of the Nederlandse Museumvereniging (Dutch Museum Association; NMV), for instance, detected in the paper an overevaluation of the educational work and feared that this would overshadow the 'other fundamental tasks' of the museum (NMV, 1977). A number of members, most of them educational workers, did not share this fear and in their official reaction thanked the Minister for his recognition of the relationship between collection and presentation, and for his observation of a relationship between the museum world, education and other socio-cultural provisions.

In the 1970s, certainly noted as an era of high educational activity, the number of museum educational services grew and new and often striking educational activities came into being, such as thematic or district exhibitions or school information packs. Nonetheless, at the end of the decade, one half of the museums still did nothing, and a quarter did little in the way of educational work; the guided tour was still the most often used means of education and the pleaded-for equality of position of curators and educators had been achieved to only a limited degree (Daamen & Haanstra, 1980). Fierce discussions were kindled about the objectives of and means available for educational work between the proponents and the opponents of a strengthening of public-oriented museum work, as well as between the educationalists themselves.

The first half of the 1980s saw a continuing increase in the educational activities of the museums; in 1983, in comparison with five years previously, museums had become "quite a lot more active in the organisation of a wide range of informative and educational activities" (CBS, 1985), despite the fact that the discussion on the whys and wherefores seemed to have declined. The museum world encountered a new set of problems and circumstances, such as cost cutting, decentralisation and independence.

Finally, in the museums of modern art, the year 1987 saw the vogue word 'education' entirely displaced by 'public relations'. The main objective now seemed to be attracting the public, rather than educating it (Willink, 1987).

In order to compare the opinions that are now current in the museum world on the approach to the public and the associated activities with the situation of a decade ago, an investigation of 1979/1980 was duplicated, in which staff from 21 museums were interviewed (Holman, 1980).

4.2 Questioning

On the basis of comments from museum staff, Holman discerned three main lines of opinion about educational work:

- a. The subject-specific or scientific approach, directed towards scientists, artists and interested laymen, having as its goal the elucidation of the collection or speciality by means of information.
- b. The thematic approach, whereby the themes or principles of the speciality are elucidated, with the collection functioning as a medium.
- c. The social-emancipatory approach, in which the collection once again functions as a medium, but the themes do not originate primarily in the specific character of the collection. The goal is often more far-reaching and is frequently socially engagé. This 'responsive' concept of the museum (Vaessen, 1986), which is the most closely associated with the social welfare ideology of the 1970s as well as being the most far removed from the strict interpretation of the museum's task of describing objects, was from the very beginning the most heavily criticised. The question is whether this approach has been maintained in the 1980's.

The subject-specific and the thematic approaches to the public were in accordance with the traditional concepts of cultural diffusion; one wished to introduce the public to and allow it to participate in established forms of cultural expression. Museums that chose the social-emancipatory approach questioned this concept of cultural diffusion. They used a broader concept of the term 'culture', one that included the expression of popular culture. These museums operated both for and with a non-traditional museum-going public. They wished explicitly to reach new groups. One of the means by which they did this was a structural collaboration with socio-cultural institutions. The adherents of the subject-specific approach did not entirely share such missionary zeal.

In the 1970s, those persons and services that were oriented towards the public had to gain a position vis à vis the more traditional object-oriented departments, such as acquisition, conservation and management. Adherents of the thematic and the social-emancipatory trends, in particular, wanted a greater say in the form and content of presentations, as well as in the collection policy, whereby such terms as 'public acquisition' and 'didactic' criteria became modish when considering collections. The adherents of the subject-specific approach did not desire such influence; they regarded the collected and displayed objects as the basis of their accompanying activities. Research is being done to find out whether the influence of those involved in public guidance has increased.

Holman and we ourselves retain the global division of publicly directed tasks from the white paper 'Towards a New Museum Policy': "Museum presentation understood as exhibition space may be viewed as 'passive presentation' against 'active presentation' in the educational sense. Information, however, is specifically externally directed, in particular to attracting the public" (p. 48).

A decade ago it was observed that the activities of educational staff were principally directed towards the active guidance of visiting groups and to a limited extent to the passive presentation for the individual visitor. Has the traditional, much criticised guided tour been maintained, or have technological developments been adopted to any great extent as presentational media?

According to recent publications on the appearance of museums, their attraction of the public -- their third task -- has received much attention, but is this so strong that one may speak of a shift from education to attraction and of an integration of educational departments with public relations departments? Do museums still want to reach another public, or do they above all want a greater public?

4.3 Design and execution

After the appearance of 'Towards a New Museum Policy' the NMV and the Ministry of the CRM commissioned an investigation into public-oriented museum activities by the Kohnstamm Institute of the University of Amsterdam. The project comprised three parts: the evaluation of an educational school project at the Centraal Museum Utrecht (Haanstra, 1979); the creation of a national inventory of educational work in Dutch museums (Daamen & Haanstra, 1980); and an analysis of opinions on the public-oriented activity of museums (Holman, 1980).

The last analysis was conducted on the basis of a total of 24 interviews with educational staff members, directors and curators belonging to 21 educationally active museums of various sizes and collections. Three institutions were regarded as exhibition services and not as museums.

We interviewed staff from these 21 museums once again; at ten of them we spoke to the same staff member as had been interviewed previously, while at the remainder the current staff were queried about their public-oriented activities. Two museums appeared to have been completely or partially closed; in one case an interview nevertheless took place, while in the other a replacement museum was sought.

The subjects to be interviewed received in advance a summary -- the section on opinions -- of the Museum Investigation Project and a report of the 1979 interview with the museum or person in question. The interview reports have been sent for comment to the interviewees. The new interviews have been collected in a separate report. [1] Questions on such characteristics as the

[1] 'Opinions on the Public Approach of Museums' (Haanstra, 1989).

collection, the number of staff, the number of visitors and the educational budget from the Kohnstamm Institute's national inquiry (1979) were once again posed in writing.

The interviews were particularly concerned with:

- The current opinion about the public-oriented activities of the museum in comparison with that of a decade ago;
- the place of these activities in respect of other activities of the museum, such as collection, conservation and maintenance;
- activities in the area of public guidance, now and ten years ago, divided into (a) 'passive' presentation and viewing information, (b) 'active' forms of guidance, and (c) public relations, information, marketing and sponsorship;
- the composition of the public, the attempts to attract a greater or a different public and the degree to which this is directed to the individual or the group visitor;
- collaborative efforts in the area of public-oriented activities.

After classification of the numerous qualitative details from the interviews, using the division of opinion into three categories cited above (Holman, 1980), complemented by more recent research (Vaessen, 1986), the results were first of all blocked in per museum/interview before the museums were compared with each other. Each interviewee was accorded the same importance. Finally, various clusters of museums were compared, among others art museums with those having another type of collection.

4.4 Opinions

How far can the opinions on the guidance of the public still be related to the three trends that Holman discerned ten years ago? One must bear in mind that one is dealing with specifically ideological approaches and that in practice intermediate forms are possible, while a variety of approaches to the public may occur within a single museum.

4.4.1 The social-emancipatory approach

If, a decade ago, the Lijnbaancentrum (Rotterdam), The Museum voor Volkenkunde (Rotterdam), the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague, the Buro Kunstzinnige Vorming Delft and the Tentoonstellingsdienst Noord-Holland belonged to the social-emancipatory trend, when they were re-interviewed it appeared that this approach had virtually disappeared, at least in its original form.

The Lijnbaancentrum has closed down. Valk, quondam head of the exhibition service of the Rotterdamse Kunststichting, speaking about the goals of ten years ago (including 'the development of the senses' and the 'development of maturity, solidarity and tolerance'), now says:

"An exhibition must above all be a form of expression with explicitly evocative, or even theatrical pictorial qualities. But it is also the medium, the functional carrier of a message or,

better, a vision, an opinion. The municipal cultural policy of the 1970s placed heavy emphasis on the development of people towards more social engagement, feeling for their fellow man and that sort of thing. The climate of that time naturally also influenced us, even if the ideal was stronger than the fashion. In many city districts there was a struggle with intolerance towards minorities. Exhibitions about Surinamers, Moluccans, Indonesians and homosexuals, put together in collaboration with representatives from these groups, did have a function."

Faber, co-ordinator of the Public Service of the Museum voor Volkenkunde at Rotterdam, comments on the current opinion:

"The real social-emancipatory approach of ten years ago towards the educational work of our museum can no longer be found here. Our policy is much less directly social or political in direction. You can see the same turn-round in the educational services of other ethnology museums. Here we want to encourage an interest in and an appreciation of non-Western cultures, and to emphasise the positive values of these cultures, whether in the form of ideas, religion, or music. This interest and appreciation forms as it were the foundation that must be laid if you want to go any further. The majority of our visitors come only once or sometimes twice. It's unrealistic to think that you can alter their whole thought pattern on that basis; what you can do with the exhibitions is leave behind the memory of a positive experience. Maybe this is a modest goal in comparison with earlier years, but it is one that we profess most wholeheartedly."

Overduin who, ten years ago, was head of the Educational Service of the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague emphasised that at that time a variety of approaches were in use. The "Kunstkar" (Art Car) and exhibitions on the working class in the Hague were clear representatives of the emancipatory approach. Overduin modified this approach in later years. In his posthumously published book 'The Museum as an Obsession' he writes: "Maybe the educator viewed his task too seriously. Irony and self mockery were not his strongest suit; he rather had a strong moral conviction and a regard for that which had to be learned, a tendency to simplification" (Overduin, 1988, pp. 21-22). The policy of the current director, Fuchs, is in contrast to the approach to the public that Overduin represented, according to the current head of the educational service, Mrs Jonker.

The Buro Kunstzinnige Vorming Delft and the Tentoonstellingsdienst of the Culturele Raad Noord-Holland are not museums. The Bureau operates as, among other things, an educational service for the museums of Delft. The guidance activities of the museums are at present limited to the educational sector. The Tentoonstellingsdienst has, since 1964, organised travelling exhibitions and educational projects in North Holland and provides external services to local cultural institutions.

Mrs Van Bebbber of the Buro Kunstzinnige Vorming, on the attitudes then and now, says: "I find the attitude I expressed in the previous interview very dated now. The social goal was the primary one, that was a fashion in artistic education. Nowadays,

art is not only a medium, but also an end in itself. That is no longer a dirty word.

You cannot say that we have lost sight of our original goals during these developments. We still make intensive use of the ideas and experience gained then, but we don't have to focus exclusively on those ideas. In those days one sought a justification for one's work as well as clear choices. Nowadays it's more 'on the one hand ... on the other'".

For the Tentoonstellingsdienst, too, the goal of consciousness raising is no longer the prime one. Creating an interest in the fine arts and, in particular in education, the provision of information about the techniques and the media of the fine arts are now the main goals. Mrs Kikkert: "Ten years ago the accent was very strongly on 'pictorial education' and the stimulation of a critical visual attitude. We still maintain this approach, but we are also increasingly occupied with exhibitions that are directed towards the fine arts and which deal with the techniques and the materials. Themes such as painting, graphic arts and clay can easily fit into the schools."

4.4.2 The thematic approach

Of the museums that Holman regarded as belonging to the thematic trend -- The Amsterdams Historisch Museum, The Veluws Museum voor Oudheden, The Gemeentelijk Natuurhistorisch Streekmuseum West-Terschelling, The Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (Leiden), The Museum voor het Onderwijs (The Hague), The Evoluon (Eindhoven), The Provinciaal Museum (Assen), The Centraal Museum (Utrecht) and the Gemeentemuseum (Arnhem) -- it is the museums housing historical, natural history and ethnological collections that still maintain the same approach. Those housing art collections maintain it only partially.

Wagenaar, scientific staff member of the Amsterdams Historisch Museum and a person who is involved in many educational activities, still finds that the museum's approach is thematic. He does, however, detect differences of accentuation:

"I regard the task of an historical museum, or of a general museum with an historical section, as the creation of a picture of a changing society. In the 1970s we paid a lot of attention to the socio-economic area, nowadays there is a wider cultural and historical approach. Pictures are used in this way in the exhibitions, but you do have to beware of a literal explanation of artistic interpretation."

The Director of the Veluws Museum, Hilckmann, also still regards the thematic approach as appropriate. This finds its expression in the 'magazine' style of the exhibits. "You can view and read about each item independently; the artifacts are used more as an illustration. One section of the public still wants the classical information-per-item and we have to accommodate them to some extent." Furthermore: "The idealistic slogans of ten years ago ('museums in the front line', 'raise children to become guardians of their own living environment') do remain true in a global sense; they are just translated into more practical terms, nowadays." Hilckmann draws attention to a much more businesslike

approach in the museums, one in which education certainly has a part, but is not the main point of departure.

The Gemeentelijk Natuurhistorisch Streekmuseum is nowadays called the Centrum voor Natuur en Landschap Terschelling, a combination of museum, visitors' centre and marine aquarium. The basis of the presentation remains in principle unaltered but more use is made of technological innovations, computers in particular.

The Evoluon will shortly be closed and does not conduct any active public policy any longer; for this reason the Noorder Dierenpark became involved in the investigation, since it comprises, among others, three museums with a thematic objective: the Biochron, the Volkenkundig Museum and the Natuurhistorisch Museum. On this subject Hiddingh, a member of the directorate, says:

"There is no permanent collection. In simple terms what our museums do is, first of all to think up a broad picture and then go out and look for relevant objects; in the Volkenkundig Museum, for instance, about peoples that live close to the nature that surrounds them. We show how the people adapt without doing too much violence to the environment. We choose a people for which we think we can lay our hands on enough artifacts, either by purchase or loan. After about three years the exhibition changes and we offer the artifacts for sale once again, to other museums for instance.

The exhibitions are not particularly concerned with an explanation per object: the story as a whole takes pride of place. In the Biochron (from the Greek: bios = life and chronos = time) we try to bring to life what has happened to the Earth during various ages so that it has more appeal and so that the animals will be viewed with new eyes."

Van Wengen, head of the Educational Service of the Volkenkundig Museum, says about his current approach: "I still feel strongly involved with the thematic approach: the objects are regarded not so much as objets d'art but rather as representatives of a culture. They have to be placed in context. Each exhibition must tell a story, must have a theme. We sometimes also adopt a more subject-specific approach. For instance we can arrange a guided tour of Buddhist artifacts for a group of interested people."

The Drents Museum houses a prehistorical, an historical and an art collection, among others. Brakke, head of the presentation, education and public relations department, states:

"The presentation is thematic wherever possible. That often takes a lot of thinking out, but it does offer the public the best grip on the subject. The new prehistorical presentation will also be treated thematically, in contrast to what most museums do, with themes such as stone and working with stone, burial and settlement."

The presentation of the Museum voor het onderwijs -- now located in a new building beside the Gemeentemuseum and rechristened the Museon -- is and always has been thematic. Goud, an educational official: "Some subjects in the museum are presented as complete entities. We don't impose anything on the visitors. If they want to skip a subject and pick up the thread further on, they are

free to do so.

"The themes are the main thing, the artifacts serve only as illustration. For instance, the Industrial Revolution collection has many early mass produced goods. There are no placards beside the vacuum cleaner and the gramophone with its records that we got from Queen Wilhelmina stating 'Kindly donated by the Royal Household' or some such. That is not where the emphasis lies."

The Centraal Museum has been expanded with a new wing devoted to the modern art collection and the Rietveld-Schröder house. The thematic approach of a decade ago served principally for advanced educational projects. Schopping, head of the Education and Information Department, talking about the current approach, says: "Our approach comprises the subject-specific -- we generally stay very close to the objects -- as well as the thematic approaches, the latter in particular in the historical section. In exhibitions on cultural history the artifacts have more of a documentary character and serve more as illustration. The thematic and the emancipatory approach ('the critical view of pictorial material') have indeed floated around the educational school projects. In contrast to ordinary exhibitions one actually went out in search of material. (...) In general there are fewer exhibitions for the educational sector in art museums; a pall has been cast on thematic exhibitions (mourning through the ages, the act of love and everything in between). The trend is now more towards a sophisticated art display centred around big names and having an aesthetic direction with a chic catalogue. (...) You have to follow that in order to appeal to the public. That's also valid for the educational work. (...) There's no place any more for the educational worker in sandals who, in the context of civic reconstruction, lends his services to the painting of a critical mural by the Cockadoodledoo Art Cooperative. The educational élan hasn't disappeared, but we're not missionaries."

The Gemeentemuseum of Arnhem has directed its policy more towards modern art. Mrs Van den Bergh, head of the Communications Department:

"In the 1984-1988 white paper it was stated that the museum had a primary function of conveying knowledge. Furthermore, the policy of the museum was viewed against the background of the four identities that Vaessen [2] discerned. The goals of the museum comprise elements of all approaches, but the avant-garde opinion received the most weight (in particular the policy with regard to modern experimental art), together with the responsive approach, which is more socially-directed and emancipatory. Examples of the responsive approach are exhibitions on Aletta Jacobs and One Hundred Years of Fighting for Pensions. I'd also cite Romantic Love, a thematic exhibition of paintings from the late 18th and 19th Centuries, presented within the context -- that of Dutch middle class ideology -- of the time they were created."

[2] Namely, the classical, autonomous, responsive and the avant-garde museum approaches (Vaessen, 1986)

4.4.3 The subject-specific approach

Ten years ago museums that were regarded as being subject-specific in their approach included the Rijksmuseum and the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum (Rotterdam), The Mauritshuis (The Hague), the Commanderie van Sint-Jan (Nijmegen), and the Dutch Openluchtmuseum (Arnhem). The great art museums still retain their subject-specific approach. The Van Gogh Museum, which a decade ago was not counted due to the dismissal of the then director, can now also be reckoned as belonging to this view.

Van der Hoek, head of the Education Section of the Rijksmuseum, states: "A main task of the Rijksmuseum is to make the museum collection accessible. Preparation for visits and their guidance are the most important means by which the Education Section can realise this task. (...) All my foreign colleagues ask: 'What's your programme?' We don't have a programme, the Rijksmuseum has a programme with which and within which we operate. Neither do we create any 'educational exhibitions'. The Rijksmuseum creates exhibitions, it's our job to bring the information in an exhibition (and the knowledge of the curators) over to the public."

Bertheux, head of the Communications Department of the Stedelijk Museum, was involved with educational projects in the 1970s at the Centraal Museum:

"It appeared to be possible to get the public involved with art by means other than the art itself. Art has developed so that the emphasis now lies very strongly on the content of a painting. There was an emphasis placed on conceptual points of view which were very strictly bound to the unique character of pictorial statements. Among the art historians, museum staff and artists themselves there is an increasing amount of criticism of such comparisons with other matters. For instance, if one was dealing with colour in de Stijl, then from that moment it could be detected in architecture and in fashion... . It seemed to be a way to bring people closer to de Stijl. To some extent these were simplifications. Nowadays one attempts to remain as close as possible to the art and the artist's viewpoint so as to bring something across. (...) I think that educational work has grown up somewhat: try to stay as close as possible to the viewpoint of the art and relate it as austere as possible, without the exaggerated sentimentality of the fifties and without the paternalistic accents of the following years."

Beenker, head of the Communications Department of the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum:

"The provision of background information increases what the visitors notice in their viewing. But it's always a delicate balance. You mustn't offer too much, or they will only see what you hand out. There has to be a place for a personal point of view. That is most particularly true for modern art. I am no champion of educational guided tours of the works of young artists. One is dealing in such circumstances with new art, and it must come over as new. You can't tell the public what they must see in it. You can make use of existing information, such as a reading table with articles and reviews that can contribute to the formulation of an

opinion. Neither am I an advocate of providing no information at all because the work -- as some museum directors as well as some artists maintain -- must speak entirely for itself. They go on about it for hours, days and months.

We aren't so reserved about older art. Opinions have become crystallised and a lot of research has been done, so you can offer more pertinent information, about symbolism for instance.

If exhibitions are organised because of the didactic thesis, then you are turning the business on its head. I've never been too happy with special educational exhibits. Thematic projects in particular do not do justice to the art. It is for this reason, and because of the wish in the 1970s that educational goals should govern the museum's policy, that the resistance to educational services originated.

The idea that art will become accepted through education is old hat. Art itself is nowadays an accepted phenomenon in a wide circle. Work that is oriented towards the public is not charitableness stemming from some tender feeling for the underprivileged in society. It's a professional organisation of their attention."

The Mauritshuis and the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh both have a small staff. Educational work is a part-time task of one of the scientific staff members.

Van Tilborgh (of the Van Gogh Museum): "I endeavour to convey information about art in an infectious manner. For us, apart from the art historical approach, an important point of approach is that of aesthetics. Such questions as 'Why can you say that something is well painted?' and 'How does an artist develop his sense of design?' can be answered in a fairly factual manner. You can explain something about how you can 'read' art without its becoming a wandering, metaphysical artistic discourse.

The educational approach of the 1960s and '70s, under the first director of the Van Gogh Museum, Meijer, but above all in the Gemeentemuseum of The Hague under Henk Overduin, has become a lot less emphatic; I don't think it has contributed to a larger nor to a different public. You stop using that approach with the advent of plastic cups in the museum. But in this sort of museum art is the key. Just explain what there is about it that's jolly and interesting."

Mrs van Leeuwen of the Mauritshuis relates that, directly after the opening of the renovated museum, educational activities were undertaken, but that there are now other priorities. She views education "as an extension of the normal art historical work. (...) Educationally speaking the times were comic, with all kinds of jokes for the children and so on. It still has that reputation, but I think many people moved away from that. It also happened because, before then, the stereotype opinion of the museum was that it was dusty and boring, and the image had to be brightened up with comic situations. That's not necessary any longer because visiting museums is nowadays a popular leisure activity. Cultural enjoyment has become common property."

The Commanderie of Sint-Jan and the Openluchtmuseum, according to Holman's classification, are doubtful cases since both subject-oriented as well as thematic elements were present. According to Van Golberdinge, head of the Education Department of the former

institution and renowned for his educational exhibitions, the various viewpoints are still represented. He states: "In educational exhibitions we usually attempt to illuminate a broad subject area, painting for instance, or sculpture or photography. That comes close to a specialist subject approach. Sometimes, too, exhibitions are more thematic in their nature; on a few occasions one could call them social-emancipatory. Thus the exhibition on 'Children in the Third Reich' was accompanied by notes on fascism then and now. The idea wasn't to give a lesson about the collection. That is also related to the nature of our collection: the modern art collection only started in 1974. The curator followed a personal inclination in his purchases. There is no collection that represents the important trends; that's a difficult basis for an art historical guide. In the great museums, such as the Rijksmuseum and the Stedelijk, the educational service is in a totally different position."

The staff of the Educational Department of the Dutch Openluchtmuseum, Mrs Van de Sande and Mrs Den Braven, maintain the specialised subject point of view: "Everything that you do in the presentations must be related to the collection. We think that the objects must be taken as a point of departure, not that you first tell your tale and only then look for a relevant object. Of course you can arrange themes around available material. The social-emancipatory approach does not form the basis of the museum's policy. Certain subjects, such as those that are relevant to the environment, do come into consideration, but consciousness raising is not a goal of itself. We are not an information service. (...)

We would not rush to differentiate between an educational and a non-educational exhibition. Every exhibition is in principle an educational one; that's how a museum comes over and how it makes a statement. The one does it better than the other. Not every exhibition requires the same intensive guidance." The Openluchtmuseum, in their opinion, in general does require an educational accompaniment: "A lot of our objects gain their importance from their context and from the underlying narrative."

The three views on the guidance of the public from a decade ago have become reduced to the specialist scientific approach and the thematic. The social-emancipatory approach was not the primary objective of any of the museums investigated.

The Museum voor Volkenkunde (Rotterdam), the Buro Kunstzinnige Vorming Delft and the Tentoonstellingsdienst Noord-Holland now belong to the thematic approach, and the Gemeentemuseum of The Hague to the specialist subject trend.

As the educational work became ever further removed from the museum's pure task of providing information about artifacts, so did the criticism increase (Vaessen, 1986, p. 215). The social-emancipatory approach, in such circumstances, also experienced the greatest resistance. The fact that it has virtually disappeared is an expression of the trend towards a greater emphasis being placed on the character of the museum in the guidance it gives to the public. An investigation among the new generation of educational staff (Veenstra, 1989) has yielded a comparable conclusion.

4.5 The position of the public-oriented work in the museums

In the inquiry and the round of interviews conducted ten years ago a number of quantitative details surfaced, such as staff numbers, their rank, facilities and budgets, as well as such qualitative information as involvement in the decision making process, in particular in the acquisition policy and the presentation of permanent displays and exhibitions.

Re-interviews and questionnaires can only enable a limited comparison to be made with such quantitative details. Most of those questioned gave us to understand that the budgetary cuts had not had a major impact on the educational work; the budgets for educational work had remained roughly constant for the previous three years, in some cases they had marginally increased. Only in a few museums had the educational budget been drastically curtailed. The growth in numbers of educational staff in Dutch museums had not been less than the growth in scientific staff members (CBS, 1986, 1988).

In the 1970s the numbers of educational museum staff grew rapidly, which had consequences for the museums: "It is not surprising that, whenever a separate educational department is created, they will do everything in their power to gain the facilities that they regard as being necessary for the execution of their work, and to strengthen their position within the museum" (Vaessen, 1986, p.124). The educational services wanted their activities to be viewed not as additional to but as an integral part of the work of the museum and they therefore also wanted an involvement with the planning of the displays and with the purchase and acquisition policy.

Those who were primarily responsible for the educational work often shared (Daamen & Haanstra, 1980) the decisions about the material that accompanies viewing, but to a much lesser degree about what gets presented, and more about temporary exhibitions than about the permanent collection. The influence on the purchasing policy was limited. It is difficult to draw uniform conclusions since "being involved in decision making" when one is in a minority position vis à vis the curators can boil down to a very limited influence. Above all, staff members, particularly in small and medium sized museums, can have a multiplicity of functions. The director of a small museum who "does the lot" or the sole curator who does educational work "on the side" can only with difficulty answer questions on the influence of such matters.

Holman concluded that the educational workers who belonged to the specialist subject school did not wish to have any influence on the purchase and collection policy; within the thematic and the social-emancipatory approach such desires were more or less alive and pleas were entered for didactic criteria in the acquisition of artifacts, so that a judgement could be made as to how far an object could contribute to a clarification of certain themes in the presentations.

Do the interviewees have more influence now on the presentation and collection policy than they enjoyed a decade ago? We shall quote a number of opinions, first of all from three members of staff of great art museums with a subject specific approach.

Van der Hoek of the Rijksmuseum: "In recent years the fight has been for equality in regard to other departments. We are no longer a service (such as the maintenance service or the photographic service), but rather a department, just like the collection department. Neither do we speak any longer of a scientific department or an educational department, since we are just as scientific.

Another sign is that our printed matter, just like that of the rest of the museum, is designed by Dumbar, and not just stencilled and photocopied. It looks like the usual status symbols, but it's a sign of equality.

Our influence on the presentation has increased. There is no longer a single exhibition that is presented without us. 'Education' has a permanent place on the exhibition committee. Our manner of word processing, the celebrated 'educanese', has been accepted. All the texts are produced by us in collaboration and in close agreement with our colleagues in the collection departments.

We can also be responsible for a hanging in the gallery. If we say 'We would really like the pictures arranged in a different sequence, which would make for a more logical presentation', then it can be done. But we don't arrange our own exhibitions and we don't have any influence on the collection policy. The museum acquires things because they fit in with the collection and not because you can do nice things with them for schoolchildren. We are very much subordinate to the collection."

Bertheux, Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam, on the costs of various public guidance activities: "The Bulletin costs about 115,000 guilders of which we hope to get about 80,000 back from subscriptions and sales. The shortfall of 35,000 guilders is comparable to the cost of a fine exhibition, so the question arises: 'What's the benefit?' We have to argue the importance out; the economic details are clear. A curator would rather have a beautiful catalogue than a placard to hang up."

Mrs Jonker, Gemeentemuseum of the Hague: "In his interview of 1979, Overduin remarked that attention was confined only to the collection and not to the public if they didn't have a representative within the museum.

I notice in the staff meetings that I'm there on behalf of the public. When Fuchs announced that the museum would close for a few months, I saw my colleagues' faces light up -- "Aha! My collection!" -- I said "How awful for the public." The reaction was "Oh blast! There's them, too!" There's no enthusiasm any more among the curators to work on information for the public. All of a sudden that's not so necessary any more. That's a rare sensation for me."

Van Wengen, Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde: "An old complaint was that educational work was not involved in the setting up of an exhibition. It's a positive development that changes have occurred in this area, in part due to the influence of developments in other museums; we are now involved in the creation of texts which, until a few years ago, was the sole right of the curator. It certainly means an expansion of our job, while the number of employees has declined. Involvement with exhibitions also means that you can build in a certain framework

to which you can attach the accompanying information, in the form of exercises, for instance. The educational service exerts little direct influence on the purchasing policy in most museums."

Van de Sande and Den Braven of the Communications Section of the Openluchtmuseum: "It began here with public relations and information with education coming in later. Education is becoming increasingly integrated into the scientific department, and you now have a division between a broadly-based presentational department and a separate public relations department.

We don't have any influence on the purchase and collection policy, even though a few articles are from time to time purchased within the framework of the presentation policy for possible use in educational work.

A project group is formed for each exhibition. For large exhibitions we are consulted in the early stages, but with the smaller ones it all depends on the time available and on the curator. We try to ensure that all the texts in the museum pass through our department, but that doesn't happen all the time. We can also propose subjects for exhibitions."

Schopping, head of the Department of Education and Information of the Centraal Museum: "The fact that we do not play a role in every exhibition is related to the frequency with which they are currently held. At present there are at least six per year, which is too many for us to be intensively involved with every one. Besides that, it depends on the willingness of the relevant curator to allow our input. We are often involved from the very beginning, or we offer ourselves. Sometimes we are brought in at a later stage, and sometimes not. We edit a lot of the texts, but not all of them. (...) We also create exhibitions ourselves, and the degree of accompanying explanation also varies. I'm an art historian. Sometimes I find it quite pleasant to organise a normal exhibition, without all those frills."

Mrs Van den Bergh of the Gemeentemuseum of Arnhem: "Head of the Communications Department is a curator's post. Therefore I am a staff member and I also have an influence on the total policy of the museum. The museum has a small staff. The purchasing policy is in the hands of one curator, but purchases are discussed by the staff and checked by the municipal supervisory committee. (...) The Communications Department writes texts itself, or else is involved in advance in the creation of the texts, as well as in the editorial phase."

Wagenaar, of the Amsterdams Historisch Museum: "There are few lines of demarcation in this museum. Since the Municipal Museum Service was split up into a Modern Museum Service and an Historical Museum Service a pool of scientific staff has been created here. They collaborate on the whole range of museum tasks, of which the publicly directed activities form an important part. Different emphases are placed on their activities, according to their education and interests. Some of them have no feeling for educational work. The integration of tasks can sometimes work less efficiently, but you don't get trapped into specialisation and it works fruitfully."

Faber, head of the Public Service of the Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam: "There is a consultation between the director and the three department co-ordinators. I represent the educational service in this. All matters of policy are discussed there, including purchase proposals. The purchasing policy originates with the scientific department, the educational service does not have any influence on it. (...)

The place of the education service within the organisation is different than it was ten years ago. My impression is that then it was a fairly independent part that developed its own activities, a sort of appendage to the museum. The public service is now an integral and equal part of the museum. Projects that are undertaken nowadays, mainly exhibitions, are prepared by a project group in which the public service is represented from the beginning. Thus, from the very start, there's a more subject-oriented, as well as a more public-oriented perspective."

Brakke of the Drents Museum: "In comparison with ten years ago the tasks of the museum are executed in a more policy-oriented manner and they're less dependent on the preferences and antipathies of individual staff members. Exhibitions are the work of project groups, with use being made of external expertise. In principle, theme and content get the same attention as presentation and communication. (...) Everyone in the museum has to spend sufficient time on the public function, and that applies as much to the subject that you're offering as to the way it's packaged."

Goud of the Museon: "The museum was founded 85 years ago by educators who wanted to support and complement school lessons with museum lessons. The museum has never known a separate educational service and there's no separation here between curators and educational staff. The various activities are intertwined here. The Museon is an educational institution and all the activities are educational."

The re-interviews revealed that, in comparison with a decade ago, the influence on 'passive presentation' has increased in many museums, but has remained limited in the great art museums. In a number of museums -- the Amsterdams Historisch Museum, the Gemeentemuseum Arnhem, The Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam, the Drents Museum and the Museon -- the object-oriented and the public-oriented tasks are of equal weight and are integrated, according to the interviewees.

A greater attention to presentation and accompaniments to viewing means that educational workers often have less time for the active guidance of groups of visitors.

There seems to have been no increase of influence on the purchasing policy; there is no struggle for this, even among those who adhere to the thematic approach. Some institutions stand aside from this discussion, just as ten years ago, since they do not possess a collection and buy only for the presentation (Centrum voor Natuur en Landschap Terschelling, the Noorder Dierenpark, The Tentoonstellingsdienst of the Culturele Raad Noord-Holland).

'Education' sounds limited to many, and too scholastic, and seems for the greater part to have been replaced by such terms as 'public guidance', 'knowledge diffusion', 'communication' and 'presentation'.

Questions were also posed in the interviews on the impression of the current position of the public guidance in general, compared with ten years ago. First we allow those workers to speak who regard educational work as being accepted in museums.

Van Wengen: "One can speak of a positive re-evaluation of educational staff. In the majority of museums the battle for a recognised position has been fought. I was in the thick of that battle here. In the beginning we were regarded as a sort of auxiliary, blundering along behind. Nice guys with a magic lantern. The fact that I had a university degree, just like the curators, didn't make much difference."

Van Golberdinge from Nijmegen; "In the 1970s there was a clear idealism around the educational work in museums. It had to be fought for, then, and ideas had to be developed. The educational section of the museum association comprised ten or fifteen people in those days, now there's 200. The provision of information in museums has become common property and is more integrated now. Our director also writes texts, now, which he didn't do ten years ago, not to the same extent. Even if there's no educational service, many museums have adapted their displays. They're generally much more public friendly. The educational work has had an influence on this changed concept of the museum."

Schopping of the Centraal Museum: "An important development in a number of museums is a redivision of responsibilities. On the one hand you have the curators, who do the scientific work, and on the other you have the presentation department, which is responsible for the creation and the setting up of exhibitions and all that goes with it. In such a department, where the results of the scientific work are presented, the educational work will become integrated."

Van de Sande and Den Braven from Arnhem: "We don't view educational work as just the preparation of an accompanying brochure, acting as tour guides, creating a children's programme, and so on. It's important that, as an educational worker, you're involved with the whole presentation of the museum. In Holland, in comparison with other countries, that's happened to a far greater degree. In comparison with ten years ago, education has become emancipated."

Museums also look very different nowadays. Much more attention is paid to an attractive presentation for the public, to signposting and to the availability of information. The curators, too, have become more public friendly in their presentation. In future the roles of curator and educational worker, both of them involved with the content of a collection, may become closer. Integration and acceptance will be smoother if, like us, the educational staff have a scientific education."

Kok of the Centrum voor Natuur en Landschap Terschelling: "There has been a battle in many museums between the 'introverts', who found the visitors a nuisance ('because I'll have to leave my insects') and the 'extraverts'. Those who steep themselves in certain subjects and build up a body of knowledge are not always in a position to convey it to the visitors; you need others for that. The communication between the two must be good. A much better balance has been achieved in many museums in this regard. (...)

"Ten or so years ago museums changed to a more consumer-oriented, modern presentation, less fear of media and a more balanced attitude to photos, screens and showcases. This sort of presentation has gradually taken root."

Mrs Van Bebbber of the Buro Kunstzinnige Vorming Delft: "A lot's changed in the museums. In days gone by I feel there was a strange separation between educational exhibitions and the other presentations. That's less necessary now. It's no longer possible for any museum not to think about target groups, promotion, presentation and guidance."

Brakke of the Drents Museum: "For many museums it's generally true that it's no longer necessary to discuss whether public-oriented work is necessary. It's an integral part of the whole. We do have to become more professional. In particular, there are too few people theorising about the public functioning of museums."

Finally, let us quote four interviewees who think that educational work has been weakened in comparison with ten years ago.

Mrs Jonker of the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague: "There is a general trend towards the suppression of education. The high point was ten years ago. There was money and there were plans. As a result of the budgetary cuts, which in the Gemeentemuseum were very severe, it's much smaller scale nowadays. A lot does indeed remain, but the great educational examples have gone. I believe that the suppression of education has happened in many other museums, but here it's clearly reached a low point."

Hilckmann of the Veluws Museum: "Education in the museum is now based on a different premise. Once it was an important goal for its own sake, now it's a segment of the policy. I too was influenced by the great examples of Van Wengen, Spruit and Overduin. Now only Van Wengen is left as a sort of left over prophet in the educational desert. But I'm exaggerating. In part my own idealism was tempered by opportunism. Everything that you needed money for you called educational, even the buckets and brooms that you bought. After all, you always need money, and it was all right if you labelled it educational."

Mrs Van Leeuwen of the Mauritshuis; "The magic words nowadays are public relations and management, in the 1970s it was education. In various museums the educational services have been put in the dunce's corner and the rest of the staff aren't so interested in it any more. It's more of a general feeling, but I don't believe that you can translate it into budgetary terms, since that appears to be doing all right."

Van der Hoek of the Rijksmuseum: "The mistake of the present time is the choice in favour of conservation and administration to the detriment of presentation. There's not enough money and the museums (the directors, the ministry) now give preference to conservation and administration. They argue that if they don't do it, then a gap will occur in the collection. But you can replace the word 'collection' by 'public': if we don't do anything for the public, then soon we shall have a generation that doesn't know how to relate to a collection. Museums have always been in the hands of the collectors, who have led the public round by the nose. If the educational services haven't gained a high enough status, then maybe they've got the worst of it, but if you have a real place in the museum and quality, then you're not pushed aside so much."

The dominant opinion is that educational work is accepted in the majority of museums. The fight for recognition, not such a burning issue now as it was in the 1970s, is in great measure over. The educational worker is no longer a stranger in the fold, but has become an ordinary (adjusted?) member of the museum staff. Even in museums with no special staff for public-oriented activities, many of the curators and directors have become more public friendly.

A minority of the interviewees find that the balance has been tipped in favour of object-oriented activities or to marketing and public relations where, in their opinion, opportunism and fashion predominate.

4.6 Activities that are oriented to the public

In the white paper 'Towards a New Museum Policy' three activities were discerned that were oriented towards the public: 'passive presentation' -- the setting up of exhibitions and the guidance of viewers; 'active presentation' -- direct educational direction, particularly for groups of visitors; and promotion to the public.

In our repeat investigation we retain Holman's distinction, even though the difference between passive and active is not always uniform. Some people then prefer to distinguish between guidance that is present in the presentation, that which is 'built in', and that which is added.

A decade ago the view was that the guidance activities of educational staff were directed principally to the group visitor and only to a limited extent to the individual (Holman, 1980, p. 68). Are accompaniments to the exhibits now more directed to the individual visitor? And what means are used to approach the public?

It appeared, from the national inventory made ten years ago (Daamen & Haanstra, 1980), that those museums with a thematic approach made more use of sound, video and film as 'passive' accompanying media than did those museums with a subject specific approach. As a result of technological developments, do the museums now make widespread use of new presentational media, and have the traditional, but much criticised media, such as the guided tour, died out?

Finally we discuss to what degree in the museums investigated the passive and active guidance of the public have been displaced by attracting the public.

4.6.1 The passive presentation

Increased attention is being paid by the educational workers to passive presentation, as it is to the guidance of the individual visitor.

Beenkers of the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum: "Structured, written information has priority for the guidance of the individual visitor. We must have a general brochure for the museum as well as the various departments. Our intention is to set down in writing the knowledge of the Communications Department staff in the area of verbal tour guidance."

The educational workers of the Openluchtmuseum: "Our activities are certainly not primarily directed at the group visitor, but are rather directed towards the presentation as a whole and to the individual visitor. A large part of our time is taken up with texts."

Faber of the Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam: "In practice the public service spends a lot of time on the (collaborative) preparation of exhibitions. As a consequence, most attention is paid to the individual visitor and less, as in years gone by, to the group visit."

Textual description

In 1980, Holman concluded that "There is a variety of opinions about the texts that accompany the presentations. The factors that play a role in this are their length, degree of difficulty, layout, and so on."

In his vision of the future, Overduin (1984) foresaw that an end would come to the discussion about educational media. There was too much talked about the how and not enough about the why. Questions such as "How do I do a slide show", or "How do I write my texts" have in the meantime been "described in handy little books, that are updated once every five years" (Jongejans, Jongbloed & Elbers, 1988). Research has given us an increasing knowledge, in the Rijksmuseum, for instance, and the Centraal Museum, of how the public react to the provision of information. Nevertheless, the discussion continues.

Van der Hoek of the Rijksmuseum: "An important guidance job in the museum is the production of texts for temporary exhibitions. Our textual presentation was very strict: 40 keystrokes to a line, a caesura after three lines. Research has shown that the public value the texts. There are at present a few developments in the presentation of texts. The approach is already less rigid in the Print Gallery. The reading environment is different there than in the other galleries, since the works hang or are placed in showcases."

Hiddigh of the Noorder Dierenpark: "We set a lot of store by the texts. We use the same kind of text both in the zoo and the museums: short (but that's what they'd all say) and understandable. Anyone 12 years old must be able to read it. But

still you often make it too difficult. I could easily show you a few places where the text is too difficult, but I can't find a single place in the zoo or in the exhibitions where the text is too simple."

Van Tilborgh of the Vincent van Gogh Museum: "I believe that you have to write texts that also appeal to the somewhat better educated. It mustn't be too childish. Those texts that I don't want to read myself are no good. I'm sceptical about the educational guidance in the Rijksmuseum. They have the habit, as it were, of talking down to you somewhat. They keep to these strict rules about only one statement per line, short lines, etc., so that a sort of poetry occurs. The premise is that, if it were done otherwise, the masses wouldn't understand it. I estimate the public's powers of comprehension a bit higher, and maybe I ask that they take a bit more trouble. That's not a plea for textual specialists, it has to be clear and understandable."

Faber of the Museum voor Volkenkunde in Rotterdam: "One tries to limit the number of texts in exhibitions. I don't maintain that a good text can only be a short one, and must only convey the essence. Some exhibitions require a more literary or even a poetic tone. It's difficult to use only simple terms against a religious or a philosophical background. At least, not without losing the sense; it's there all right, but in such a lumpen manner that it just puts me off. I'm against the simple: even if not everyone can follow it, I wouldn't take it back just like that."

Wagenaar of the Amsterdams Historisch Museum: "Our texts still use a division into (a) heading, (b) narrative and (c) commentary on the artifacts. There's a certain redundancy in (b) and (c) so as to ensure that people who just look at the objects don't get information out of context. People who mainly read the narrative on the accompanying placards are in the minority. An important segment are guided by the objects and walk round quite selectively from object to object. You have to adjust your presentation to take account of that. You have to stay ahead of the visitor by demanding his attention for certain objects, the key pieces, and then tailor your subject to them. That's the job, that's the art of exhibiting."

Brakke of the Drents Museum: "The written texts vary per exhibition and per aim. The History Department possesses about 80 A4 pages of typewritten textual commentary, which are not intended to be read in one go. The texts stay there for seven to eight years, people can come back more than once. You don't fire off such heavy guns in terms of textual and other accompanying material in a temporary exhibition devoted to one artist. We also do beautiful, serene art exhibitions with brief texts and sometimes an interview with the artist on video, just about the background to his work."

Mrs Jonker of the Gemeentemuseum of The Hague: "The individual visitor was signposted with gallery texts, audiovisual media and so on. That has changed, since the new board is against it. So, in a recent Penck exhibition there wasn't a single accompanying text. There was an extensive catalogue, but that cost 65

guilders. We felt ourselves obliged, as an educational service, to provide some background information. A leaflet was then prepared; that's the minimum that you can do. Accompanying text and photos 'on the wall' have now gone to the devil. In my view information doesn't have to be forced on people, but if you're interested then you have to be able to get the information. A lot of people want that."

Bertheux of the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam: "Text placards are not always common. The previous director, De Wilde, had a great aversion to them. With Beeren it's less so. They are mainly used in large historical exhibitions such as 'Holland in Design', 'Oscar Schlemmer' and 'Malevich', the last two of which were intended to reach the general public. In such cases you want to stretch out a hand to someone who is badly informed." The 'Horn of Plenty' exhibition of 16 New York artists, Koons among them, which was held early in 1989, had no accompanying texts in the gallery.

Mrs Pieters, also from the Communications Department of the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum: "That picture of a pig by Koons caused quite a stir. If you hang up a placard next to it with 'it's like this', then you take a lot of the effect away. Art is after all allowed to be confusing! I don't regard it as part of my job to explain art that's just been created from A to Z. The element of surprise plays a role here too. Artists who are more removed in time lend themselves more to educational commentary. (...) The justification for the exhibition was in the catalogue and there are many ways in which that can be found in it. It was also treated in detail in the Stedelijk Museum Bulletin. You can buy the Bulletin for 2.50 guilders. If you put leaflets in the gallery you run the risk that too much gets taken away without payment."

Beenker of the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum: "The exhibition must not be interrupted by panels of text. There is certainly a single placard at the start of the display that gives a characterisation of what's on display, a sort of justification."

We may conclude that opinions on the use of texts are also divided nowadays, too. The general view is: simple, clear, not too long and not too much, but not always simple (Van Gogh Museum, Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam), sometimes, indeed, long and prolix (Drents Museum), and sometimes absolutely nothing, at least not on the walls of the exhibition. The last attitude is valid in particular for modern art (Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam, Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum of Rotterdam, Gemeentemuseum of The Hague).

The use of texts for guidance is not limited to descriptions next to artifacts or to placards. Forms that are frequently used are catalogues, abridged museum guides and 'gallery leaflets' to take away or, as in the Mauritshuis, to put back in place. Mrs Van Leeuwen of the Mauritshuis: "There is no ordinary descriptive material, apart from brass plates on the pictures. Besides them, there is a rack in each gallery where you can find cards with information on them, but that's the same as placarding. We chose that method deliberately. Our strength lies in our beautiful 17th

century building. We would like to hang a lot of paintings. It would be a shame to clutter the chic building by hanging texts and explanations on its walls, for reasons both of lack of space as well as taste. People like the cards a lot because they can hold them in their hands, rather than having to stoop over in front of the pictures. Besides, placards could cause jams because it's too cramped here. The public uses the cards so intensively that they are not fit for use after six months. That's why I now get them plastic coated by another process."

Other forms of textual guidance are reading tables with documentation, museum routes -- which may be thematic -- and periodic museum publications (Bulletin, Newsletter) containing information about exhibitions, both on subscription and for individual sale. A problem with the 'permanent collection' is that this is an extremely relative term. If the displays are changed frequently without any influence from the educational service, then texts are no longer relevant. Thus, in the Centraal Museum, the gallery leaflets do not convey any information about objects, but rather about styles and personalities.

Audiovisual media, computers, and 'hands on' displays

The resistance to texts and other rigid forms of guidance is greatest in relation to art, particularly modern art. The fear of simplification and marginalisation and of disturbing the viewing pleasure play a role here. In the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum temporary exhibitions are, if possible, accompanied by documentation and by relevant films or video programmes. "A problem with video presentations is that there are few suitable rooms. An air of attentive quiet must pervade the exhibition galleries. The continuous chattering of a video is disturbing." Ten years ago, too, Holman detected a reserve in the giving of guidance, particularly for modern art; Vaessen deals with it extensively, too. It therefore seems to be an exaggeration to say that pure aesthetic displays and 'sophisticated' and 'serene' art exhibitions are 'allowed once more', as some of the interviewees state. Such presentations were never absent.

Various educational workers in ethnological, historical or natural history museums, much more willing than their colleagues in the art museums to use 'whistles and bells' in their presentations, do attach a value to the use of a variety of media.

Goud of the Museon says: "You come to see things in a museum, not to read stories." Faber of the Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam: "The presentation gets a lot of attention here. We regard an exhibition as a sort of narrative, with a start and a finish. But it's not an open book. The emphasis must lie on what the visitor could not realise by other means.

The viewer must be somewhat tempted by the artifacts and the way that they are arranged and placed in context. The visual aspect is important. We work with colour and lighting effects, as well as with other media such as scent (in a spice exhibition), sound and music."

Brakke of the Drents Museum: "We make a lot of use of visual information transfer: cartoons, exploded drawings and quick fire slide shows. Not a fifteen minute slide show with thirty pictures and a stupid text delivered by the lady from the office. You can't do that any more. People have got used to a certain quality in the media. So a slide show has to last about eight or nine minutes, with three or even six projectors and a professional voice over. (...)

We use Walkmans in the style galleries. A sort of auditory game leads you round the objects. What we hadn't expected is that it's the older people who think it's great."

Technological developments over the last ten years have introduced new media to the museums, such as video, computers and video disks. The use of computers in the museums investigated seems to be directed mainly to the automation of administration and the maintenance of the collections; there are few examples of applications in the presentations. Experiments are not confined to the larger museums.

Hickmann of the Veluws Museum: "We make a lot more use of audiovisual media nowadays: a slide show introduction to the museum, two videos and a game computer. You can provide more information this way than you can with objects alone, and you can keep the visitors in the museum longer. (...) We are working on the possibility of providing information on demand via a computer for certain objects, where you can get a printout if you want. We want to extend these media; the public value them."

Kok of the Centrum voor Natuur en Landschap Terschelling: "I'm extremely interested in the use of media to convey knowledge. We've often been at the forefront in this area, among others in our multiple screen projections.

The way subsidies are organised in this country is that the first one to the table gets the lion's share. Pilot projects are the most in demand, and small museums fit well into the budgetary norms. Such opportunistic reasons place us in the front rank. In a later phase they no longer look for a nice little museum, but for wider distribution and cost benefit. That's when the medium and large museums get in on the act and then it's soon over. (...)

We've been automating for a number of years. In 1985 we had the first computer application in an exposition, a simulation model of the permanent energy installation at the Mariners' College on Terschelling, with a windmill and a solar collector array. Visitors could input the school's energy consumption as well as the weather conditions and direct things so that the school didn't require any external energy, or could even supply energy to the grid. We use the computer in the new presentation, among other things, for simulating the tidal ebb and flow around the island of Terschelling, for information on birds and their song or sound, and in a weather station with current and past values on the screen. There are plans for discovery and simulation games ('food chains' and 'this is how we pollute the North Sea') and for a biotope data exchange. Essential texts will also be available in a variety of languages with more on-demand printouts.

It's all about making the narrative available in an attractive manner, but ordinary keyboards and the mouse are not suitable for public purposes, because it takes too long for people to master their use. We're arrogant enough, therefore, to dream up our own user interfaces and to test them out in collaboration with the Technical University at Twente. Ordinary screens are suitable for documentation, but for real presentations I need 19 inch screens and colour, or I can't get my narrative across. In order to see how the surf dies out on the coast the sea and the sky have to be blue and the beach yellow, otherwise the viewer misses the point. You have to do a lot to keep slides, audio tapes, videos and things like that in service. The mechanical elements in particular mean that they are unstable. Video especially looks appalling, the picture isn't sharp and if you blow it up it's even worse. You can't present biological topics that way, but you can with 19 inch screens."

A final aspect of passive presentation is not the media surrounding the artifacts on the museum, which sometimes enliven the visit, but the objects themselves. In 1980 it appeared that plans or preliminary moves were in train for a 'users' collection', a collection of objects that could be handled or, if possible used by the visitors. This 'hands on' principle can be applied in museum presentation as well as in learning kits for the schools. This application in the museum presentation did not take off to any great extent.

Van de Sande and Den Braven of the Openluchtmuseum: "One tries to make the presentation more dynamic by getting plants to work so that the people don't have to look at still machinery." But: "We don't go for displays that the visitors can swarm all over. In our opinion that's not necessary. We still think that a museum is a museum, and keep your hands off the bits and pieces."

Part of the display at the Drents Museum is there to be handled: "Part of a 1928 house has been erected in the historical set up, where all the contents are there to be handled as well as looked at. The linen chests can be opened and the contents touched. For fear that the articles will disappear we've got triple stocks of everything! But we've had 25,000 visitors to date and nothing's gone missing yet. The public were a bit shy about touching things at first, but when they caught on we even had to haul them out of the four poster beds in the style galleries! We had to do something about that."

In Assen they also try other ways to get the visitors involved with the collection: "In our important prehistorical collection we have experimented a lot with educational programmes that aren't based on the usual pots-and-pans methodology, but which try to make prehistory accessible through human activity; the thread running through it all is the primary necessities of life. (...) We now want to convey what we've developed in terms of doing and manipulation to the individual visitor. Some of our experiments show that parents often do not want to participate but they do send their children along. American grown ups don't have that problem, but here you run the risk that you get the opposite of what you want and people remain aloof and embarrassed. French parents seem to prefer to stay at a safe distance, too.

For instance, we offered the opportunity to do everything with flints: chop trees, shoot bows and arrows, even skin rabbits. We scrapped that one after a few days.

You have to limit your doing activities in the museum to demonstrations with sometimes the possibility to take something in your hands, or else the people feel embarrassed. You can do it in connection with a course, but in separate workshops.

Next year we're going to open a discovery room for individual visitors in the summer, where all sorts of things will be demonstrated by what they call 'animateurs' and 'animatrices' in France: people who keep the public occupied."

4.6.2 Active presentation

Guided tours and lectures

The guided tour which, ten years ago, was the most often used form of guidance, is often criticised as ineffective and out of date, but the criticism seems to have lessened. "The guided tour has made a comeback," they say, or "the public wants it." Van der Hoek of the Rijksmuseum: "I was pretty much an audiovisual monomaniac, but I've climbed down from that a bit. In other museums where I have worked before I had done a lot of audiovisual presentations and I didn't think that the guided tour was too effective. Now that I'm older and wiser, and thus more temperate, I think that every information carrier can be suitable. Just offer it and let the public choose."

Because guided tours are labour intensive they are contracted out to freelancers in museums like the Rijksmuseum, the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam, the Amsterdams Historisch Museum, the Gemeentemuseum of Arnhem and the Centraal Museum, or to volunteers (the Openluchtmuseum, the Mauritshuis, the Museon). The tour guides are trained and guided by educational staff from the museum. The museum staff only conduct tours themselves when their professional colleagues, dignitaries or sponsors come on a visit. Van Wengen of the Leiden Volkenkundig Museum regrets this development, but most of his colleagues don't attach so much importance to it. Van Wengen: "It's important that the educational service is the host in the museum; we don't want to lose contact with the public. Some tours are contracted out to a group of people who are paid to give a guided tour on certain subjects. But still a lot of people want an explanation or want to ask questions, or relate their own experience ("I had a holiday on Bali, once, too ...").

You can't send them into the museum with exercises. We're seriously looking for ways that we can be of service to such groups while still retaining enough time for our own jobs." An example of such a method, which is used in a school project at the Leiden Volkenkundig Museum, is that pupils who have prepared themselves on a given part of the collection lead their classmates round.

Faber of the Museum voor Volkenkunde, on the direct guidance of groups, says: "We do much less group guidance, but we provide information so that schools, for instance, can in large measure do the visit themselves. The original idea was pretty radical; no personal guidance at all, but make sure that printed material's

there. In reality there's a sort of middle path. We don't do guided tours, or very few, they're too labour intensive. Visiting schools often get a fifteen minute reception in order to orient the people. A minimum of personal reception seems after all to be important for groups."

Some of the critics of ten years ago (such as Brakke of the Drents Museum, Kok of the Centrum voor Natuur en Landschap and Hilckmann of the Veluws Museum) have stuck to their criticism and still do not do guided tours. They believe that their thematic presentation, with the use of activating media, is more effective.

Besides guided tours other means of 'front of house' education are used, particularly in the great museums, such as lectures and museum lessons. Sometimes a variety of forms are combined in connection with courses or symposia.

Guidance and education

Education forms historically the most important category of group visit. Many of the guiding activities of the educational services, ten years ago (Daamen & Haanstra, 1980) and even earlier (Van Lakerveld, 1970), were directed at students.

There was a broad range of educational activities, varying from direct guidance to the provision of information at a distance. Direct guidance included guided tours, museum lessons and projects spread over several days (as in the Leiden Volkenkundig Museum and on Terschelling).

Exercise and puzzle tours formed another type of guidance. Written material was made available in preparation for and during the visit, such as notes for pupils, teachers' information and suggestions for lessons. Learning packs containing information and replicas of authentic artifacts were sent off and requests for written material were answered (in particular by the Rijksmuseum).

An important new activity at the end of the 1970s was the educational exhibition, often primarily intended for the educational sector. Despite the relatively great attention paid to education complaints were heard about the relation of the museum's offerings to the curricula and vice versa.

No firm judgements can be made on the basis of the re-interviews about the current amount of educational offerings in comparison with a decade ago. The amount of interest from within the educational sector will certainly have lessened rather than grown as a result of declining rolls, financial cuts and a sterner view of dropout rates, especially in higher education.

The types of offering for the schools described above have stayed, but there are clear changes of accent, the most important being a considerable reduction in the number of special educational exhibitions. Furthermore, in many museums the educational accent now lies on written material about the permanent collection or about those exhibitions that are considered to be suitable.

Teachers now have to play a more actively guiding role, during the museum visit itself as well as in the preparation for it; their job is the connection between what the museum has to offer and the curriculum. Educational projects in recent years have not only become more dedicated to standard education, they have also become directed at certain groups of adults (the aged, country women).

The number of educational exhibitions on offer has declined, especially in the art area. Beenker of the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum seems to be an opponent of exhibitions that are organised from a particular didactic standpoint. The Centraal Museum and the Drents Museum have also given them up. Brakke of the Drents Museum: "Here we no longer believe in the benefit of educational exhibitions that of themselves ought to lead to a better artistic appreciation. We did have a successful series of seven such exhibitions with catchy titles such as 'As Blue as a Tomato' about colour and 'I wouldn't know what to make of it' about abstract art. The last one was in 1985. That sort of artistic education is old hat nowadays, and can be done to far greater effect outside of a museum setting, via the television, for instance or a district exhibition, things like that."

Schopping of the Centraal Museum: "The projects cost us a lot of time and money and were for a relatively small target audience; that's why they were no longer cost effective. School projects are fun, but they're small scale and have a relatively low status. Intermuseum loans are difficult to get. After you've done a couple of things with more money, with good quality paintings in five galleries and a catalogue, you look on that kind of a project in an attic as peanuts; but working for education has to happen and it remains important. For those exhibitions that lend themselves to it we make lesson notes or some other form of student guidance. Maybe they're less pleasant for the educational sector; in any case, they demand more from the teachers themselves."

Not everyone has stopped their special educational projects. Van Golberdinge of the Commanderie van Sint-Jan: "There are still some museums with educational projects; museums often take over my exhibitions. Such projects are a good form for the non-afficionado public. There is an interest in them and the educational sector appreciates them. It's short sighted to do away with such educational achievements now as something whose time has passed."

The Exhibition Service of the Culturele Raad Noord-Holland takes over exhibitions from the Commanderie van Sint-Jan, among others. They also create travelling educational exhibitions, some of which can be set up in schools, such as the 'Art in the Class' project, which contained six graphical works of art accompanied by teachers' information and lists of questions and exercises for the pupils.

The greater role that is expected from the teacher in educational projects was revealed in various interviews. Mrs Van Bebbber of the Buro Kunstzinnige Vorming Delft: "Ten years ago the total responsibility for the success of a school project lay with us. Often we even led the schools round ourselves. Thanks to the

staff cuts we can't be so bountiful, now, nor so detailed. Our activities are now more introductory and more directed to offering information. The instructor has to do the rest."

Bertheux of the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum on the educational accompaniment to the recent Malevich exhibition: "A special introduction day was held, attended by some 200 people, where it was explained that we, as a museum, offer a helping hand in the form of text panels, a film or slide show, but that teachers should prepare their students at school."

Van de Sande and Den Braven of the Openluchtmuseum: "We think it's nice if the schools come to the museum prepared. We made three packages to get people started at school so that they could follow up in the museum, but we haven't taken over the educational job, we aren't educators. Our teaching packages are also modest, they consist of a booklet and some background material for the teacher. Schools operate with so many different curricula, and each school wants to do a project differently. It's not very efficient to prescribe extremely extensive programmes for that."

Direct educational guidance in the form of guided tours or museum lessons has less attention but has not disappeared. Museum lessons were historically viewed as the principal task of the Museum. Goud: "One of the most important activities is still the giving of lessons. Every educational official in principle gives two morning lessons and performs other museum activities in the afternoons. Adult groups are increasingly participating in the lessons, but in principal they are for the educational sector. There's an enormous administrative overhead. (...) There is one staff member who makes up schedules and who looks up what combination of schools is possible in view of the bus transport. A participating school gets an invitation card with an appointment, whereby the teacher gets information about the goal and course of the lesson and about the possibilities for preparation and follow up at school. The lessons demand much more individual input from the student than they used to. After a brief introduction they go on their way, most often accompanied by booklets that are written on the basis of what's to be seen in the gallery. Some of the lessons are entirely practical, like the workshop lesson on the North Sea."

'Extra' activities

Finally there are the 'extra' activities: non-museum activities that may be viewed apart from the collection or exhibition. In part they may still be viewed as forms of instruction, in part they are forms of marketing or client relations. Van Wengen of the Volkenkundig Museum Leiden: "An exhibition is a lovely opportunity to organise other things around it. I like to speak of an 'exhibition-plus', a series of lectures, for instance, for those people who want to go deeper into a subject; artistic exhibitions such as a gamalan [1] concert or a Wajan [2] performance; or batiks [3] or calligraphy for people who want to do something with their hands. That way you can appeal to a variety of groups of a range of levels. You could also think about language courses, cooking lessons and suchlike or, more commercially, about appropriate snacks in the restaurant, or a good travel agent's counter."

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- [1] Indonesian gong and percussion orchestra.
 - [2] Javanese shadow puppet theatre.
 - [3] A method of fabric dyeing using wax resists.

There was at the time much criticism (Holman, 1980; Cramer, 1980) of the 'creative' courses and activities that occurred in 28% of the museums ten years ago (Daamen & Haanstra, 1980). This criticism boiled down to the fact that people thought that these were the wrong sort of activities for a museum to undertake, since there was little connection with the collection. Most often the activities were separate and could better be undertaken in creativity centres. Despite such criticism, these activities have not disappeared from the museums, even if they no longer have such a prominent position.

Other types of extra activities (of the educational service of the Gemeentemuseum of The Hague) are guided tours of the city and anniversary parties that "consist of a lighthearted museum lesson (in fine arts or music, for instance) and a creative follow up. It may sound a bit comical, but it's certainly not voluntary, or we wouldn't do it. There's a lot of demand for it," says Mrs Jonker.

The Museon organises a theme weekend once a month. Goud: "An 'astronomical' weekend, for instance, or, recently, a 'taxidermy' weekend, with about 25 taxidermists and all sorts of activities that people could join in. About 3,500 people came. We're doing more and more special activities in the weekends and holidays."

In the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum, too, the extra activities are part instructional, part marketing in nature. Beenker: "Moreover we organise lectures, concerts and days dedicated to a single artist; up to now we've had Andy Warhol, Joseph Beuys and Salvador Dali. Another activity is our annual cultural evening with theatre, a fashion show and a band. Such evenings serve as a sort of catalyst. The idea is for one evening to let the museum become one of Rotterdam's social attractions. Something like that is a success when you read in the lonely hearts columns: "Saw you in the Boymans, you with blue coat, green specs, etc." Extra activities like this aren't a perversion of the museum, as is claimed. The museum does have a social function for certain groups. Another possibility -- also a matter of good will -- for giving the museum a place in the city and to build up a relationship with a group, is the 'Friends of the Museum'. Ours was founded two years ago. It will be an élite, there'll be big spenders there, and representatives of big business."

4.6.3 Marketing

The interviewees agree that, in comparison with a decade ago, there has been much more professionalisation in the museum world. It must all be more businesslike, more commercial and efficient. Visitor numbers, publicity and marketing play a great part. In recent times, too, sponsoring has become normal in the museums.

Information and public relations

Does the greater attention to publicity mean a shift from "education to marketing"? Most of the interviewees who had public guidance and public relations/information as their task (half of the total) maintain that the attention to marketing has not, or

only to a limited extent detracted from the public guidance. The national inventory of ten years ago (Daamen & Haanstra, 1980) revealed that at that time 65% of the educational workers did informational and marketing work. The most frequently cited activities were the distribution of leaflets and posters, contact with the press, radio and T.V., and contact with the local tourist offices. The approach has become more professional. Hilckmann of the Veluws Museum: "We've become defter and more professional in our public relations than ten years ago. We now know exactly how we have to promote an exhibition in the media. I've built up very good relationships in the broadcasting world. We know the editors responsible for relevant radio programmes and the tourism journalists. For each exhibition we can print out who it's suitable for and who will get a press release."

Must public guidance and marketing be carried out by the same person, or by the same department? Opinions are divided. Van der Hoek of the Rijksmuseum is a convinced opponent of collaborative guidance and marketing: "The education department expressly does no marketing and public relations. There's somebody else for that. In the plans for the reorganisation of the museum it was projected that there would be a public department that would house both education and marketing. We resisted that most strenuously. People who are preoccupied with the quality of the guidance material mustn't be saddled with the quantity. If you do marketing, you're judged on a lot of things. We aren't suitable for that work, it's not our trade. (...) For educational workers it doesn't usually go much further than a bit of propaganda, writing a press release, a chat with the press and showing the television crew where the electric socket is. It has to come, but not at the cost of the quality of our department."

Proponents of the integration of guidance and marketing are particularly to be found in public-oriented 'Communications' departments like those in the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum, the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum and the Gemeentemuseum of Arnhem. Mrs Van den Bergh of the last named institution: "You can view public relations and education as separate areas, but that's not actually true in a museum. In terms of available time I currently have too many things to handle, but having separate, independent staff members for each partial job, such as public relations, sponsoring, education, doesn't seem too good to me. It all has to happen in an integrated manner. Public relations isn't just a question of pulling in as many people as possible. I can't carry out any public relations separate from the content. You have to know exactly what there is to be seen here. Publicity must have a clear relationship with the content."

Beenker of the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum: "Public relations and education flow seamlessly one into the other. You have to know who you're getting in in order to give them a good guide. Many educational workers think that public relations is superficial, that you have to be a smooth talker. You also hear 'and then I have to talk to the press', as if it were a waste of time and an objectionable occupation."

A good public relations policy is a serious business. We map out who writes about what, so that we can effectively follow up with the right channels. That's important, given the great diversity of exhibitions here."

In two museums the same person does education and marketing for pragmatic reasons.

Van Golberdinge of the Commanderie: "My colleague from the educational department is writing more and more texts for brochures, press releases and announcements. That's a very extensive job, but we aren't so public relations minded. Museums have continually to stay before the public's eye and that's often of necessity done by the educational service since the staff there work more with language and they're better at talking 'journalese'. 'From education to attraction' is only valid for some museums. Marketing is fine, but you don't have to give up education for it."

Brakke of the Drents Museum: "Ten years ago the same service looked after both educational work and information. I do presentation, as well as marketing and information work, which are actually different units that can get in each others' way. At one moment you're devoting yourself purely to presentation and the next you think: what lies are we going to tell now to get the public in. It does actually have the advantage that you can introduce some consistency."

The greater attention to information and public relations does not seem to have to have displaced the educational work of the museums. On the question of whether the same person must undertake both jobs opinions are divided. Those who are against it in principal emphasise the difference in aims of the two, proponents think that the two tasks must become integrated. Finally, the pragmatists undertake both functions, whether that's desirable or not. That is frequently the case with museums having only a small staff, where everyone fulfills a variety of functions.

Sponsorship

Where sponsorship, ten years ago, was a matter of specific discussion, nowadays many museums try to get their activities sponsored. They also now try more than they did to earn income by the exploitation of restaurants, museum shops and the hire of rooms in the museum for receptions, parties and similar things. In contrast to public relations and marketing, sponsorship is less often passed on to the public education department staff. Nearly half of the interviewees conduct activities in this area, but often only part time. "Approach a company about money for exhibitions and it seems that they only want to talk to the director. They're not interested in anyone else," says Mrs Jonker (Gemeentemuseum of The Hague). A direct relationship between educational work and sponsorship can sometimes be seen in courses or guided tours for companies that have contributed to the costs of exhibitions or permanent displays.

Mrs Van den Bergh (Gemeentemuseum of Arnhem): "Sponsorship is primarily a job for the director and myself and, to a lesser extent, for the other curators. There is a danger that the company sector will get tired of all the random begging campaigns and a longer-term view has to be adopted. We did organise a sponsors' evening once. (...) The Stonehenge exhibition was 50% financed by sponsorship money and 50% by venture capital. The profit on the entrance money was shared out after we had recouped a certain sum."

Apart from education and public relations, the Communications Department of the Stedelijk Museum also has as a function: "Where possible the discovery of sponsors, the maintenance of contact with possible sponsors and the negotiation of sponsorship agreements. The foundation of an Association of Friends of the Museum is new. It's our opinion that the basis of the support you are looking for doesn't only rest with local government which, as a municipal museum, is our first port of call, or possibly with the company sector, but that you also have to look for regular visitors who can support you, either morally or financially, by membership of a friends' association.

A campaign to gain more friends of the museum is undertaken on a certain level. That's not the language of your ordinary advertising agency. It all has to do with communicating a sense of what the museum is," says Bertheux.

Van Golberdinge of the Commanderie of Sint-Jan: "Sponsorship, which is generally necessary if you want more than the minimum, sometimes stems from the nature of the exhibition: Capi-Lux provided photographs for the Joris Ivens exhibition because Ivens's father founded the company. But going around begging for money is something I find frightful. Some people always did like sponsorship and were nuts about being able to say that they were going to lunch with the lads from Philip Morris again. I prefer 'indirect' sponsorship. People come here regularly with ideas for exhibitions. If we think their idea's a good one, then we say: we've got the building and the expertise, but you'll have to look after the rest. (...)

The government has an inflated idea about sponsorship which still only yields a fraction of the total cash. This museum costs about two million guilders a year. It's quite something if you get 20,000 guilders extra a year. After all, museums are public institutions that can be used to earn money. And the educational service is only responsible for a very small part of the total cost."

Mrs Jonker (Gemeentemuseum of The Hague): "We gained some experience with sponsorship with, among others, 'The Spiritual in Art', a hugely expensive exhibition. The question was, do you not go in for sponsorship, which means you don't get your exhibition, or do you go for it? It was decided that we would. That was the time that Overduin, accompanied by our business head, talked up a lot of money. (...) The exhibition was sponsored by the KLM and a bank, which asked all its employees to visit the exhibition, usually in the evening. We looked after their reception. First of all the visitors got a pep talk from their boss -- at that time there was an enormous fall in the share price on the stock exchange. After that Henk Overduin or I gave an introduction, and

then there was a guided tour or the people looked round on their own. It closed with a cocktail or a dinner that they organised themselves. Our introduction, which was about a difficult subject illustrated by a careful selection of slides, lasted half an hour or three quarters. We had different versions of the introduction and we could very quickly judge if we could use the easy one or the difficult version. It was a totally new dimension for our educationalists because you get a very different public. They're very interested in the financial aspects. After my introduction, a man came up to me once and said: 'What you said then, that's very interesting to me as an investor.'

Wagenaar (Amsterdams Historisch Museum: "Despite the steep decline in the budget the exhibition programme has remained virtually intact, partly through harder and more efficient work, partly through external money, preferably from government subsidies, which we regard as the most 'proper' funds. In practice we also work with sponsors, a savings bank or another firm.

Every guilder spent on sponsorship is tax deductible. At the end of the day we all pay for it. It's a diversion of the monetary circuit, but it's also a shift in one's own proper responsibilities. Governments of various complexions are made less aware of their job, that way. I think it's sad if museums, in the way of their normal activities, and that's what exhibitions are, have to be so dependent on external funding."

We may conclude that some of the interviewees have enthusiastically gone in for a more commercial approach, including sponsorship, whilst others do it with some dubiousness, or even have a high resistance to it. There is agreement that without sponsorship many activities would be impossible, or possible only to a lesser degree, but, on the other hand, that the contribution of sponsors' funds to the total costs is limited and is likely to remain so.

4.7 On numbers of visitors and types of visitors' groups

"Visitor numbers, oh you can suffer from them; if the weather's (too) nice in June you start moaning. Those damned numbers. (...) I know how relative such a figure is, but then you know that it's politically important for you." So, ten years ago, said the then director of the Gemeentemuseum of Arnhem. Nevertheless Holmann concluded that many of the interviewees refused to let themselves be too strongly influenced by the numbers.

In this section we investigate whether the role of viewing figures has changed and to what extent the interviewees believe that the public-oriented activities contribute to the numbers of visitors. Finally we see what has become of the attempts to attract 'new' sections of the public to the museum which, in the 1970s was principally undertaken on the grounds of a social-emancipatory view of public-oriented work.

Even though many workers expressly do not regard the visitor figures as a guide to quality, they do agree that, as Wagenaar of the Amsterdams Historisch Museum puts it: "The sensitivity to money and number has increased in the museum world."

High visitor numbers are still important in connection with political considerations but above all there are direct financial implications: income from entrance money is an important budgetary item, exhibition budgets are often based on a minimum number of planned visits (and thus on (extra) entrance money) and, too, the visitor figures can play a role in the attraction or retention of sponsorship funding.

Some of the interviewees talked about a desire or a need for growth and some have specific target figures for their museum.

Hilckmann of the Veluws Museum voor Oudheden: "Ten years ago the visitor figure was about 13,000, now it's about 17,000. We've fixed a target of 20 to 25,000 visitors for 1992. That has to be possible. We are going to direct our public relations at that goal and we are going to improve our product: the whole of the permanent display has to look fresh and justified and there has to be a good exhibition policy."

Faber of the Rotterdam Museum voor Volkenkunde: "The museum was closed for three years. An enormous amount was invested to turn it from a dusty building into a light, transparent yet still comfortable building. A theatre and a restaurant have been added. An active exhibition policy and marketing allowed us to hope that the number of visits, which was about 50,000 pre-closure, could be doubled. We're now round the 75,000 mark. It's higher, but it's not high enough."

Limits to the growth were most often attributed to physical reasons: buildings and galleries are not suited to large numbers. Even the museum with the largest number of visitors, the Noorder Dierenpark, is trying to achieve a limited increase. By stimulating visits just before and after the high season "You could maybe reach 1½ million visitors a year, without lessening the quality for the visitors. We're not going to try for any more as otherwise you'd have to enlarge and expand everything."

4.7.1 Is the growth in the public the result of the educational activities?

When asked how far educational work is the cause of the growth in the visiting public, most of the interviewees temporised. In particular the publicity surrounding exhibitions was viewed as a much more important factor. The whole of the museum world goes for exhibitions, at least according to Van der Hoek of the Rijksmuseum: "Rearranging your collection doesn't yield any publicity, you don't get the Queen visiting for that."

Hagenaar of the Amsterdams Historisch Museum, on this subject, says: "In the past one regarded temporary exhibitions as a way of filling gaps in the permanent collection. Nowadays there is the impression that temporary exhibitions have a great publicity function and are very important in gaining specific notice for your museum."

But Wagenaar also says: "Soliciting only for numbers will lead to a more streamlined product and at the end of the day will be at the expense of quality. We certainly don't want that here. So don't adapt your offerings to trends -- and that temptation does exist -- but do draw more attention to something special that you have in your museum."

And Faber of the Museum voor Volkenkunde says about this problem: "We stand behind our product, the exhibitions, and we look for the key in publicity. If, over some time, not enough visitors have come, then you start asking about the consequences for the exhibition. Are you going to alter it to draw a bigger public; and do we want all those people?"

And Schopping of the Centraal Museum: "There has been a clear rise in the number of visitors to this museum. In part we benefit from a general increase in museum visits and in part from the fact that our offerings have increased both in quality and quantity. The visitor figures are directly related to exhibitions. You don't get into the news with your permanent collection, even though we've tried every possible way to do that. Visitor figures are thus rather time related and you have to do a lot to equal a successful year. Museums wind each other up with this sort of thing. There's a sort of spiral. (...) How far the educational work has contributed to the higher visitor figure is difficult to say. The educational work, as it's undertaken here, is pretty much integrated with the exhibitions. Maybe people do come for the exhibited works in the first place, but how they're presented and brought over, and how the whole thing is designed, that's all important. A well presented display, with a good accompaniment, makes the visitors more contented and it makes their investment in time and money more worthwhile."

Educational guidance is viewed by the interviewees as one of the factors that makes the visit to a museum more attractive for the visitor. "Education as a part of the marketing strategy insures the museum of visitors in the future," writes Mrs Van den Bergh of the Arnhem Gemeentemuseum (Maandblad voor de Beeldende Vakken, 1989). She adds, in her interview: "Providing an optimal service for your public means more than extensive education. It also means you must pay attention to peripheral matters: how the people come in, how they are directed to exhibitions, collections and the restaurant or café. It's all about the total product of the museum. (...) If you want the public to come back, then the whole package is important."

While any direct connection between educational activity and visitor figures may be difficult to distinguish, there are specific instances of such a relationship that may be distinguished. The disappearance of guided tours from the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum under the previous director cost it a relatively large group of visitors. On this, Beenker, of the Communications department, says: "Under Janse (head of the educational department for years) the educational policy was primarily directed at groups and at verbal presentation. They'd built up a whole system with about 40 freelance guides, all of whom had their own circuit, mainly drawn from Rotterdam. These guided tours were good for about 60,000 visitors per year. Beeren scrapped the tours. In his view they were a bunch of gossip old ladies who didn't come for the art, but rather for the coffee and for the company."

4.7.2 A new public?

We have observed that many museums want a bigger public. More could mean more of the same. That becomes apparent, for instance, from their striving for more repeat visits, as has been stated by the Openluchtmuseum and the Gemeentemuseum of Arnhem, or from the attempt to spread the visits over the year. The latter can also mean trying to attract people outside the high season (at the Veluws Museum, for instance, or the Noorder Dierenpark), or to gain more visitors in the summer months (for example the Drents Museum and the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum).

Few of the interviewees state explicitly that they are trying to attract new groups in terms of educational level or socio-economic class.

The nationwide inventory prepared by the Kohnstamm Institute (Daamen & Haanstra, 1980) showed that 30% of the museums that did no educational work felt the need to attract new public groups; that is to say, groups that were not being reached at that time. Of the museums that did do educational work, 55% wanted to reach new groups. In particular they cited professional education, working youths and basic education.

Holman determined that, in museums where a subject specific approach was maintained, there was little missionary persuasion to reach new groups. The persuasion was clearly present among the representatives of the social-emancipatory approach. Does the virtual disappearance of that trend imply the end of attempts to reach groups which are strangers to museums?

The re-interviews show that the goal of seeking to reach a totally new group is now viewed as too ambitious.

Valk of the now defunct Lijnbaancentrum, for example, says: "Besides, even at the beginning, reaching a totally new public seemed to be a Utopia. The idea was to enthrall the people, to amaze them, n'importe qui."

And Wagenaar of the Amsterdams Historisch Museum: "By means of an exhibition with a wide variety of artifacts we continually try to attract a new segment of the public. It works, in part, but you have to be realistic. The dream that you can still reach all the layers of the population, that's to say with the more or less classical artifacts from the permanent collection, that's gone. In general the historical museums attract a wider public than the art museums."

Some of the interviewees detect a tendency to throw overboard the old ideals about the social diffusion of culture. In the Gemeentemuseum of The Hague, for instance, the Art Car is no longer used for district exhibitions but mainly for the schools. Mrs Jonker of the Educational Service compares the approach to the public under Overduin with the current policy: "Overduin thought that we are here for all types of public and he wanted to attract all groups, the non-afficionados too, and he wanted to mean something to them. Fuchs and Locher think that the museum must be a place where people who like museums or who are interested in the history of art like to come, and return too. Their view is that the educational service should seek relationships with the universities and the polytechnics. There's people there who are motivated and who are interested. Make sure that museum visits are included in the curriculum and let part of the course be given here. But we're worried about what we'd do for the average visitor in that case."

Van der Hoek of the Rijksmuseum: "The conditions for the participation of what are called the culturally impoverished seem to have worsened. It's all getting more expensive and more limited. The free Wednesday has already disappeared, the museum is closed on Mondays and the entrance prices are going up. If you can tolerate it, you go along with it. It seems as if the cultural institutes would sooner have ten visitors at a hundred guilders each than a hundred visitors at ten guilders apiece. The Rijksmuseum will soon get 'sky boxes' too. Heavy sponsors are pampered: they get a guided tour by the director, a banquet under the Jewish Bride. (...) Socio-cultural diffusion has failed, they say. But we only started it just after the war. It takes a lot longer than that for it to become a tradition. Still, that costs money, doesn't it?"

Nevertheless, in a number of museums and exhibition services attempts are made to reach new segments of the public with the aid of educational activities. Thus, at the Amsterdams Historisch Museum there is a staff member who creates special museum projects for students in basic professional education and intermediate general education. The Exhibition Service of the Culturele Raad Noord-Holland has also developed a project for LBO, since it appeared that the students in this area did not come to the other exhibitions.

Van Golberdinge of the Commanderie Sint-Jan says: "As a museum you have to try to cultivate a new public in order to bring people into contact with art. Many people have had someone in their own family or outside it who has opened their eyes. But a lot haven't. You can't leave it all to the uncles and aunts and the educational sector can't do it all on its own. You have to be helpful and continually give new groups the chance to get involved. Our educational exhibitions are intended as an introduction for a lay public."

The preferred means for reaching new groups, ten years ago, was seen as the collaboration of the museum with the schools and socio-cultural institutions in so-called 'educational networks' (see, for instance, De Jongh & Reedijk, 1980). These networks were intended as a coherent pattern of provisions for adult education.

According to Vaessen (1986, p. 125) it was the educational services who pleaded for such a collaboration in the first place, and such a plea implied a certain limitation of the traditional autonomy of the museums. In any case, the 1980 national inventory showed that regular contact with socio-cultural institutions seldom occurred in those days.

The intended structural collaboration with such institutes remained wishful thinking. Van Wengen of the Volkenkundig Museum in Leiden: "No clear 'educational networks' started up in which the museum played a clear role. It's remarkable that certain terms have completely disappeared from the stage. Twelve years ago the words 'éducation permanente' were scarcely ever out of my mouth. Even a scoundrel wouldn't be caught saying that nowadays. It's about the same for that idea of social networks. Maybe it's got something to do with the fact that the educational élan of the seventies has faded a bit. Collaboration does take place, but rather for particular events than structurally."

Collaboration in the educational sphere does take place, according to the other re-interviews, but only if it fits within the specific museum activities. In the main this takes the form of contacts with kindred museums or educational institutions. The autonomy of the museum is no longer a matter for discussion among the educational workers.

4.8 Conclusions

It appears from the re-interviews with educational staff that, of the three main trends that could be discerned a decade ago, the social-emancipatory approach has all but disappeared. In this approach the artifacts functioned as a medium and one strove towards a societal and consciousness raising goal.

The thematic approach, whereby the collection fulfills the role of a medium in order to convey something about the area of the collection, and the more traditional specialist subject-oriented approach, which seeks to illuminate the objects by means of information, have been retained.

Most of those interviewed gave us to understand that the influence of educational workers on the presentation has increased and that, in more general terms, the public-oriented activities in museums have become common property. A minority feels that the position of the educational work has weakened. On the basis of a tripartite division into (a) passive presentation / viewing accompaniment, (b) active guidance of (groups of) viewers, and (c) public solicitation, it may be stated that (a) and (c) have become more important, at the expense of (b):

- a. Much earlier than ten years ago attention was paid to the guidance of individual visitors. Opinions about the various media and methods whereby this can be accomplished (the degree of difficulty of the explanatory material, the use of computers, the use of 'hands on' displays and suchlike) remain divided. Those stemming from the thematic school are not usually scared of a lot of whistles and bells. The adherents of the specialist subject approach are more reserved. That is particularly true for the material accompanying modern art.
- b. There is still a lot of demand for the guided tour, but this is often subcontracted to a group of freelancers or volunteers who are available on demand. Most of the museums lay the emphasis of their educational activities on written informational material. The teacher nowadays has more often to do the tour guidance himself. The socially educational thematic exhibitions in the art field have diminished considerably. Creative activities take a less prominent place than in the 1970s, but extra activities of a solicitational character have increased.
- c. Much more is done by the museum in the area of public relations and marketing than was done a decade ago. In some museums there has been a clear fusion of public relations and educational activity into one department, but many educational workers view them as separate tasks. It is not the case that marketing has driven out educational work. All the interviewees acknowledge that the museums have become

more businesslike and that matters are conducted on a much more commercial basis. Sponsorship is frequently necessary in order to achieve anything more than a minimal presentation. The attraction of sponsorship funding is actually more often a job for the director than a new task for the educational staff.

The increase in the size of the museum going public cannot with any certainty be ascribed to public-oriented activities. Publicity for and around exhibitions is regarded as much more important. It is true that people do suppose that an exhibition with a good accompaniment makes the visitors more content. Apart from that the job is to make the whole museum product, including the restaurant and the museum shop, more attractive. Visitor numbers have become more important and many museums have set themselves the objective of increasing them further. In that connection much is being done to stimulate repeat visits and to tap the tourist market. The attempts to attract new groups in terms of level of education or socio-economic class to the museums are much less than in the 1970s. One of the possible ways of doing this -- structural collaboration between museums and socio-cultural institutions in so-called educational networks-- has never been achieved.

Chapter 5:

A STUDY OF MUSEUM VISITORS: SOCIAL PROFILES OF MUSEUM VISITOR GROUPS

The data presented in this chapter were obtained from studies of the museum-going public, whereby as a rule no study of a comparable cross-section of the population is presented. Surveys of this type are made regularly and the results are occasionally published in book or report form which often have a very limited circulation or are not made available for publication at all. Of the 182 reports on visitor groups that were collected, 142 contained some quantifiable indication of the distribution of the education or profession of the respondents, making them usable for a comparative re-analysis on the most important characteristics: age, education, and profession. In analysing the (average) education distribution of the visitor groups, the age distribution of the public is used only as a control variable: young people have received better education on average than older people, and some museums attract more young people than others. In addition, some attention is given to the profession of the respondents; such data are hard to come by, however. An attempt has been made to answer the following questions:

- a. To what extent do museums and exhibitions differ with respect to the education level of the public they attract, and to what extent can such differences be accounted for by such characteristics as:
 - the nature of the objects on exhibition;
 - the manner in which the public is approached in terms of canvassing (public relations) and guidance (education);
- b. To what extent is there talk of a more selective or more diverse social composition of museum visitor groups in historical comparison?

FLOW CHART ## (see: appendices)

5.1. Collecting the data

The first step of the study was to collect as complete a review as possible of existing material on surveys of the museum-going public. An initial stock-taking of material in the libraries of the Boekmanstichting (Amsterdam) and the Reinwardt Academie (Leiden) yielded approximately 50 usable studies. As a next step additional material was collected by means of a written survey of all museums in the Netherlands. With the assistance of the Dutch Museumvereniging and ICOM/CECA a letter was sent to museum boards asking them whether any survey of visitors had ever been done in their museum, and requesting access to the survey or report in question for secondary analysis. This resulted in reports with information on more than 100 visitor groups. Finally, material was used which was collected in 1988 by the marketing bureau Intomart Qualitatief during the 'Nederland Museumland' event. On that occasion a random sample of visitors to 14 of the larger Dutch museums was polled. [1]

All in all we have at our disposal data on 182 separate groups of museum visitors related to 81 museums or exhibitions, although not all data are suitable for a comparative re-analysis. After discarding the education distribution -- which we use as first selection criterium -- we are left with data for 137 separate visitor groups, spread over 63 museums. For 17 visitor groups we also have data on profession, 5 groups of which an employment distribution, but no education distribution is known were also added, so that 142 sets of data remain for re-analysis. In Appendix 5.1 we give the visitor data a number referring to museum (column a), year in which the survey was held (column b) and museum and survey reference (column k). The museums are listed according to province; the numbering has been taken from the guide 'Nederland Museumland 1989' (MJK, 1988).

TABLE 5.1 ## (see: appendices)

In table 5.1 a survey is given of the characteristics of the visitor groups from the remaining survey reports [2]. Fortunately, most reports concern recent visits to the museum (post-1980); in the case of recent data it is easier to establish how museums approach their public at the time of the survey. The survey clearly concentrates on Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague and Leiden, where there are no more museums to be found, but certainly a lot of potential museum researchers. The contributions from Leiden are mainly the result of activities by students of the local Reinwardt Academie. The variability of sample sizes, which is considerable between surveys, has not been taken into account in the present study: rather, each visitor group is regarded as one observation.

5.2 Reconstruction of the visitor data provided and in comparable form.

In order to facilitate re-analysis the data were interpreted to enable a reconstruction of the available material using fixed categories. In this study we are primarily interested in the following variables:

- education distribution
- age distribution

[1] These data were made available for analysis before the Intomart Qualitatief report (IQ, 1989) was published. We wish to thank Mr P. van Montfort for making this possible. Intomart Qualitatief also handed out a questionnaire which people could complete and send in at a further 70, smaller, museums. Unfortunately we were unable to use this material, as the groups of respondents involved were too small for our purposes.

(2) In the following, an analysis of public groups is given. Due to the fact that in some museums surveys are done more frequently and that some survey reports contain data on several public groups (i.e. from more than one museum), our data are based on less than 142 reports or museums. In those cases where reference is made to survey reports or museums it is the public groups that were analysed.

- employment distribution
- main activity (employed, student, unemployed etc.)
- residence and nationality

The diversity of approaches in the various public surveys is considerable. In addition, a variety of incompatible categories is used, and the interpretation of the data is often tricky at best. It was therefore no small undertaking to reconstruct the data according to our own model. The procedures we used included, for the categories indicated:

Age: The reconstruction of age distributions within the visitor groups was relatively easy. Of the total of 142, 130 surveys contained some indication of the age distribution of the public, often by giving ranges of tens of years. The age distributions in various survey reports are given in a variety of incompatible formats: sometimes ranges of the same size are used, sometimes ranges of variable size; sometimes five ranges are included, sometimes only three. A further problem is that it is difficult to interpret statements such as 'in this case, 16 or under', '70 and over' when compiling distributions based on the midpoints of ranges -- e.g. all persons in the age range of 20-29 are listed as 25. If the average of such midpoints is taken, the various surveys yield ages ranging from 26 to 53. The median age is 39 [3]. The median age of the population of the Netherlands (persons over 15) is approximately 42.

Education: A distribution according to education is included in 137 out of 182 surveys. A varying number of categories is found -- from 2 to 10 -- and with many different labels. This is an indication that a standard for this type of survey is completely lacking. In some cases the different labels reflect changes in the Dutch education system. In this study the following categories are used:

- 1 Primary education
- 2 Elementary secondary and lower vocational education
- 3 Lower secondary education
- 4 Intermediary vocational and technical education
- 5 Higher secondary education
- 6 Higher vocational education and advanced training courses
- 7 University

(3) In the following we will use the median as a 'yardstick of central tendency' rather than the (arithmetic) mean. The median is defined as that value for which equal parts of the distribution are found to either side. In most cases, the median and the average do not differ much. An exception is cases where there are extreme values in the sample. These do not influence the median. The interpretation of the median is often subjectively more attractive: to be above the median can be interpreted as 'on the positive side' or 'belonging to the better part.'

The categories found in the survey reports were interpreted and a figure assigned to each, based on the above scale. For instance, a category 'tertiary education' was awarded a value of 6.5. The average education level was subsequently calculated and found to be in a range between 3.23 (Museummolen Schermerhorn, 1975) and 6.02 (Centraal Museum Utrecht, 1984). It is not really possible to compare these figures to the median value for the population of the Netherlands as a whole -- 4.60 -- as the general level of education in the relevant period has improved significantly. For a realistic correction of the education figures we used a trend model based on existing studies (Table 5.2) showing an average annual increase in education level (0.05717 on a scale from 1-7) for the total Dutch population over a period of more than 20 years (1961-1983). For the period 1967-1981, in which the surveys we used were held, the increase would be 1.2 points.

TABLE 5.2 ## (see: appendices)

We can also extrapolate the education level that would have been found in 1988 using the equation:

$$1988 \text{ EDUCATION} = \text{EDUCATION} + (88 - \text{YEAR}) * 0.05717$$

In Appendix 5.1 column (d) the corrected education figures per visitor group can be found. In Table 5.3 a few key figures are given. The highest education level (6.06) was found at the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum (1978), the lowest (3.50) at the Maritiem Museum (1988). In none of the visitor groups was an education level found under the average for the Dutch population as a whole (3.38).

Profession: information on the profession of museum visitors is found in only 22 out of the 182 surveys. Nonetheless the variations in the numbers and labels of the categories used are even greater than is the case with the education figures. We compared the data to a recent scale (Ultee & Sixma, 1983), of the prestige of various professions; the scale is based on the valuation of a number of professions by a cross-section of the Dutch population. In this case, too, it is important to keep in mind when comparing visitor groups in different years that the professional prestige of the population changes (Table 5.2). The changes in professional prestige are less pronounced nationwide than the changes in education level: 0.15 points per annum on a scale from 1 to 100. To calculate the corrected values we therefore used the formula:

$$1988 \text{ PROFESSION} = \text{PROFESSION} + (88 - \text{YEAR}) * 0.15$$

The corrected values can be found in Appendix 5.1 column (e). Some key figures are given in Table 5.3; the median value is 58. The highest values (70, corresponding to academic professions such as 'priest' or 'architect') were found at the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague (1954), the lowest values (47, corresponding to professions such as 'shopkeeper' and 'cashier') were found at the Museummolen Schermerhorn in 1975. In this case, too, the median and lowest values are above the average for the population of the Netherlands as a whole (42).

TABLE 5.3 ## (see: appendices)

Main activity: a number of surveys contains some usable indication of the main activities of museum visitors. Categories suitable for re-analysis by us were: student/pupil, housewife, employed, pensioner. For each visitor group the percentage of visitors belonging to each category is listed. The percentages can be found in Table 5.3.

Region / geographical origin: information on the percentage of foreign visitors and the domicile of Dutch visitors -- indicated as the number of kilometers between the museum and the place of residence -- has also been included in the present study. If the place of residence was given as a province the geographic centre of the province is used as the basis of the distance calculations. Key figures can be found in Table 5.3. The main activity and region/geographical origin are not used in the present study, but were included for future reference.

5.3. Ways of approaching the public

One of our interests was to try and explain the fact that groups with an above-average status -- and usually a better education -- are over-represented; this is true both for museum visitors and other cultural visitor groups. Many possible causes come to mind, and the reason for differences observed between various museums is also open to speculation. The approach we took was to assume that the public was selected by at least three mechanisms:

- the accessibility of the objects exhibited;
- the manner in which the public is attracted (outside the museum);
- the assistance to the public (inside the museum).

Accessibility of the objects exhibited

The variability found is probably related to the first item: not all -- categories of -- cultural objects are easily accessible to the average museum visitor. It is reasonable to assume that an exhibit explaining aspects of folklore is accessible to more people than an exhibition of modern art. The information thresholds of the objects are different (Ganzeboom, 1984). An exhibit showing traditional crafts refers to experiences and concepts common to nearly every one of us, whereas appreciation of modern art is only possible through prior training and experience. In some cases there may also be status thresholds for the exhibited objects, which are believed to be higher in proportion to the possibilities of identification, which in turn depend on the number of references to everyday experiences. Museums or exhibitions showing mass culture objects (furniture, fashion) or everyday experiences (work) and objects (toys, objects found in the region) from everyday life differ in this respect from museums and exhibitions of modern art.

Attracting and assisting the public

Museums do not only differ in the collections they have to show, but also in the manner in which they present themselves. As this is a consequence of the policies followed, we have investigated the consequences of different policies on the size and social

composition of visitor groups. We will consider promotion activities and measures taken to assist the public separately.

In order to attract as many visitors as possible museums can utilize a variety of means, such as publicity material (advertisements, mailings, leaflets), secondary activities (lectures, concerts), and an active policy of regularly changing exhibitions. Persons with a relatively limited education are rare among museum visitors. Measures taken by museums to attract more visitors could lead to a greater social diversity of the public; of course it is also possible that simply more people from the currently dominating group will be brought in.

Other measures that can be taken by museums include making the exhibits themselves more accessible by providing more and better information to those who have already been brought in, educating or assisting the public. This is usually done as a service to other groups of visitors than those traditionally found in the museum. Important aspects are the extent and manner of organisation of the exhibits (by theme or chronologically), and the extent and form of the information provided. In some cases the exhibits are presented to the public in a very direct and unconventional manner. We found a few of such 'educating experiments' aimed specifically at lowering the information and status thresholds and bringing exhibits to the attention of a wider public (Art peep-show, Art Cart, experiments at the Rotterdam Lijnbaancentrum).

The manner in which the public is approached in many museums today can be described as professional. Most of the major museums employ presentation specialists. The contrast between the major functions of bringing in the public/public relations and educating/informing the public -- bringing in as many visitors as possible or, conversely, making the museum accessible to new categories of the public -- is one of the determining factors of the present study.

5.3.1. Collecting the data: drawing up an inventory and consultation of experts

We investigated the nature of the objects displayed and the manner in which the public is approached, using:

- an inventory of museum characteristics obtained by polling museum staff;
- a general assessment by a group of experts of how the public is attracted and informed.

Inventory of museum characteristics via polling of museum staff. We attempted to reconstruct the exhibits and the manner in which they were presented to the public at the time the surveys were held. The information in the survey reports on the exhibitions themselves was often inadequate. All museums involved were asked how they usually, or better: at the time of the surveys, presented their exhibits. In formulating the questions we referred to answers given on other occasions. If there were visitor groups for more than one year the situation in each of the relevant years was established. Unfortunately not all museums

were able to provide the information required; in the case of two museums the surveys had been done so long ago that an adequate reconstruction was impossible, in a further four cases it was impossible to reach the right person, or the museum declined to cooperate. The situation for 133 out of 142 visitor groups was established by interviews (partly by telephone) held by two graduates [4] from the Reinwardt Academie and subsequent visits to a number of museums to establish how the present situation differed from the situation at the time of the survey. This was done at museums where surveys had been done recently and which claimed that they had not since significantly altered the way they approached the public.

Half of these museums were visited by both investigators -- in order to reduce the subjectivity of their findings. However, it appeared that there were only minor differences in the assessment of both of the museum characteristics. And many characteristics (e.g. attracting public through media campaigns) cannot be established by visiting the museum, so that the focus was mainly on immediately visible things like signposting, possibilities for orientation, and nature of the exhibits. Differences between what was found in the course of these visits and the information provided by museum staff members earlier were only minor. If there was a difference of opinion the investigators were often divided among themselves too, in a degree comparable to that of their disagreement with the museum staff. For a limited number of characteristics there were occasional significant differences, and in some cases the exhibits and manner of presentation had been altered in a significant way. In the end it was decided to adhere to the reports made by museum staff members on prior occasions. There were no significant differences between the impressions gained through the telephone interviews and through visiting the museums.

Expert opinions

Wherever questionnaires are used, the answers depend to a large extent on the knowledge and motivation of the respondent. But even in the case of 'ideal' respondents, we faced the more serious challenge of devising a questionnaire capable of eliciting answers from which the manner in which a museum approaches the public could be accurately learnt. We were not sure we had succeeded. As there were no standard techniques available for interpreting the data, and persons with experience in such matters could not be found -- anywhere -- our own inventory of museum characteristics was supplemented with verdicts by experts of the manner of presentation of the museums involved. An estimation of the information and status thresholds was made by six members of the culture section of the empirical-theoretical sociology working group, University of Utrecht on the basis of the nature of the exhibits, which was determined from the (occasionally slightly paraphrased) descriptions of the museums and/or exhibitions in the guide 'Nederland Museumland 1989' (MJK, 1988). The methods of attracting and informing the public were assessed by 11 'museum experts' who were personally acquainted with the situation in the museums involved and who displayed a certain knowledgeability. In addition, graduates

(4) Edith Paanakker and Dagmar Bukuru

from the Reinwardt academy -- as such being museum experts themselves, and optimally prepared for their task through interviews and visits to the museums -- as well as nine persons from the Dutch museum world, mainly education and PR staff, gave their opinion, based, in both cases, on cards describing the museum or exhibition. The cards gave a short description of the exhibits, the year of the survey, and in the case of exhibitions, the kind of museum where the exhibition was held.

5.3.2. Creating an index from the assessments

The accessibility of the objects and the efforts made to bring in and inform the public cannot be judged from the objective data alone without leaving considerable room for uncertainty. In order to reduce the subjectivity of the expert opinions it was requested that characteristics be judged by several persons. In this way it was possible to test the validity of the judgements, on the assumption that a greater consensus of opinion indicated a more realistic assessment.

Accessibility of the objects

Our assumption was that the accessibility of museums and exhibitions is governed by the presence of information and status thresholds. The information thresholds -- knowledge, training, cognitive skills and the faculty of abstraction, all of which are helpful or required for appreciating the objects displayed -- are highest in the case of abstract modern art (museums), where some advance knowledge of the 'underlying ideas' is usually required. Another case in point is university museums and the like, where the amount of information one has to (be able to) digest can be daunting. Status thresholds in our context refer to the extent to which the exhibits are related to the everyday life of the observer. The extremes for the assessment of the information thresholds were defined as:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| A. | 'entertainment' | 'requires intellectual effort' |
| B. | 'does not require advance information in order to be appreciated' | 'requires specialised advance knowledge/information' |

In the case of the status thresholds museums and exhibitions were scaled between the following extremes:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| C. | 'identification with everyday experiences is easy' | 'far removed from everyday life and experiences' |
| D. | 'objects from the everyday life of the common people' | 'objects associated with the lifestyles of a social elite' |

When two of the four sets of definitions [5] were applied by six persons (Appendix 5.2) there appeared to be considerable consensus of opinion. One assessment disagreed slightly but significantly and was therefore not taken into account. The other eleven form a harmonious lot and demonstrate that for our purposes it is not necessary to distinguish two categories of thresholds. We therefore lumped together the assessments of status and information thresholds into one new category, 'assessed accessibility of exhibits'. There is great consensus of opinion between the experts in the assessments of the various criteria. The so-called inter-reliability factor for our group of experts was 0.935, which is very high. The final results of the assessments, (Appendix 5.1, column f) are expressed by a number between 0 and 100, indicating, respectively, 'accessible to everyone' and 'inaccessible'. The extreme values are represented. For convenience, we will discuss the results in five categories.

Least accessible in the opinion of the experts were museums of modern art. The second category includes most of the larger all-round museums such as the Booymans-van Beuningen Museum, the Rijksmuseum and the Centraal Museum, the collections of which include variable numbers of modern and contemporary exhibits in addition to a substantial collection of older works. The middle group is formed by mainly ethnological museums and exhibitions and museums of antiquities, and several 'feature' exhibitions aimed at a broad public. The next category, which is a bit difficult to describe in a few words, includes museums with collections of recognizable objects from everyday life (textiles, tiles, aircraft, bicycles, arms, jewellery) and two information centres near wildlife parks. The last category has some overlap with the preceding one, but includes typical 'children's museums' (street organs, toys, trains) as well as the large ethnological open-air museums (Arnhem, Orvelte, the Zuiderzeemuseum). It is interesting to notice that the 'educating experiments' (Art Cart, Art peep-show, Lijnbaancentrum) have been included in the last two categories. Whether the nature of the objects exhibited warrants their inclusion in these categories is doubtful; perhaps the six experts failed to differentiate between the collection as such and the public approach.

Efforts made to attract and inform the public

The nature and presentation of the collection determine the public, but museums can also employ other means in order to appeal to a small exclusive public of insiders or a larger group of interested people. Some museums make larger efforts than others, and some means are more effective. In order to assess the public guidance we placed cards with descriptions of museums and exhibitions before eleven experts from the museum world. The

[5] Factor analysis using a (rotated) two factor solution. This statistical technique enables us to decide on the question whether the grading of museums according to complexity follows that obtained by assessing the status thresholds, or differs significantly from it.

following contrasting descriptions could be chosen to reflect their general opinion:

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| E. | 'the efforts at educating the public exercised by this museum are minimal' | 'the activities of this museum contain a substantial educative component' |
| H. | 'it is very difficult for a person to find his way in this museum' | 'this museum is very helpful in providing information to the visitor and in showing him how to find the way to the exhibits he is looking for' |

In order to assess the efforts of museums to attract the public, the following criteria were given:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| F. | 'in this museum one rarely sees any advertisements' | 'this museum makes considerable efforts to advertise what it has to offer in order to draw more visitors' |
| G. | 'in this museum very little attention is given to public relations' | 'in this museum considerable attention is given to public relations' |

Each respondent was given the choice of two answers. If a respondent indicated that he or she had insufficient knowledge of the situation an answer was not required. But every statement was tested against each card by at least one respondent. In so doing it was possible to arrive at a total score for every museum or exhibition. The factor analyses of these scores (Appendix 5.2) proved to be considerably more difficult than the analyses of the accessibility scores. This was caused by a lack of consensus and by unexpected combinations of statements. Statements F and G on the efforts made to bring in and inform the public did not present any particular problems, but the correlation between positive answers to E and H was not always very high; apparently there is too much scope for multiple interpretations of the statements, especially H. On statement E a consensus of opinion was reached by five out of the seven experts. It is these five consistent opinions that were eventually used. The opinions given by some respondents on statements E, and almost all opinions on statements H were discarded, and therefore they do not show up in the index (Appendix 5.2). The scores on how museums bring in the public and approach the public are given per museum in Appendix 5.1. [6]

[6] In Table 5.8 the correlation between both assessments is indicated. In the top left area we find the museums that score low in both the area of information and assistance to the public and of bringing in the public. In the bottom left corner we find the museums that show considerable activity in both areas. In the remaining four corners we find museums that do well in one area, but fail in the other.

TABLE 5.4 ## (see: appendices)

5.3.3. Constructing an index of the inventoried museum characteristics

An inventory of more than 100 characteristics of museums and exhibitions [7] was drawn up. It was unpracticable to analyze so many data all at once. Therefore characteristics which tended to occur together, or which were deemed to have a similar effect on the public, were brought together under one index in order to make the data more manageable. The index was calculated by counting how often the indicated methods of approaching the public were used per museum. (In cases where the data were quantitative, e.g. 'no. of addresses on mailing list' it was noted which museums belonged to the more active half). Because of the division by the number of characteristics per group the score of each index is 0 (the museum never belongs to the 'active' half) to 100 (the museum consistently belongs to the 'active' half). [8] This does not apply in the case of the division of the exhibits into genre categories, nor to the effective admission fee. These questions will be addressed below.

Accessibility of the exhibits

In drawing up an inventory of the characteristics of the museums and exhibitions (Table 5.4) we began by reconstructing the presentations. In order to determine the accessibility of these presentations we asked museum staff to what extent certain genres of exhibits were part of the presentations (the first group of characteristics in Table 5.4). In order to allow us to develop a yardstick of accessibility we weighed these percentages, using the 'assessed accessibility of the presentation' as a criterium. A given category of exhibits becomes more or less important proportional to whether the museum or exhibition as a whole was judged to be on average easily accessible or 'difficult'. The results of weighing the values results in the following new values (for 100% information per genre in a presentation):

% art and arts & crafts, 1940..	+ 100
% art and arts & crafts, 1900-1940	90
% art and arts & crafts, 1850-1900	80

[7] In the case of exhibitions, the characteristics of the exhibition are listed next to the characteristics of the museum that organised the exhibition. However, in these cases the indexes refer to the exhibition only.

[8] This method is also handy to avoid problems with information that is unavailable. All indexes reflect the position of a museum on the basis of that number of characteristics for which information is available.

% art and arts & crafts, before 1850	70
% ethnological information	45
% work & technology	40
% archaeology	35
% other information	25
% information on natural history	10
% information on local history	10
% information on (inter)national history	10
contains familiar objects from the everyday life of the Dutch people	-10

The figures constitute an index of accessibility for each presentation, in a range from 0 to 100. Presentations containing scenes from (natural) history as well as references to everyday life in the Netherlands are assigned a score of 0 ('very easily accessible'); presentations of contemporary art receive the maximum score of 100 ('extremely difficult'; see Appendix 5.1 column q). As museums may cover a number of genres, other values than those quoted above can occur. Some figures for well-known museums in the Netherlands follow (figures apply to the permanent collections).

Hedendaagse Kunst Utrecht	100
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam	82
Gemeentemuseum Arnhem	71
Booymans-van Beuningen	65
Groninger Museum	58
Rijksmuseum Amsterdam	46
Centraal Museum Utrecht	42
Lakenhal Leiden	41
Museum van Oudheden Leiden	35
Spoorwegmuseum	20
Noorder Scheepvaartmuseum	19
Museumdorp Orvelte	8
Zuiderzeemuseum	0
Amsterdams Historisch Museum	0

The score for exhibitions held in museums may differ from the score for the regular collection: 'La Grande Parade' and 'Wat Amsterdam Betreft' (Stedelijk Museum) were awarded 100 points, and the same score was awarded to the exhibition at Sonsbeek and the 'Ooghoogte' exhibition at the Van Abbe Museum. 'Rembrandt' (1969) and 'Landschapsschilders' (1987) in the Rijksmuseum received 70 points and 'Schatten uit Turkije' (Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, 1986) 57 points. [9]

The correlation coefficient of 0.85 between the assessed accessibility and the accessibility emerging from our inventory is remarkably high.

[9] The system for awarding points is fallible, and in some cases an unrealistic result is obtained. It can certainly be considered an oversight that no attempt was made to differentiate between art and arts and crafts. As a result the scores obtained by Speelklok tot Pierement in Utrecht (71) and the Schoonhoven Goud- en Zilvermuseum (66) are unrealistically high. If this museum scale is used by others for future purposes, it is recommended that arts and crafts museums be made into a separate category and awarded a score of 35 points.

Attracting the public

Four distinct forms of activity are counted as attracting the public. Each of these was indexed according to a number of characteristics, and per group (Table 5.4). The first of such activities is related to the organisation of the museum. Does the museum employ staff specifically responsible for drawing visitors? One of the most important ways in which museums can manifest themselves is through their exhibition policy: it is reasonable to expect that special exhibitions will attract more public than the regular collection. How often does the museum call attention to itself by organising exhibitions? The number of scores per museum above the median for these characteristics is the index for the internal promotion activities.

In the second category we find additional methods museums can use to draw the public: the external promotion activities. Traditionally, museums advertise in magazines, brochures etc. providing tourist information; visits to museums are included in promotions by the Dutch national railways (NS); and some museums publish their own magazine or newsletter. Many museums also mail directly to selected individuals and the media (newspapers, radio, T.V.). There are many ways the media can be used to draw attention to the museum. We distinguished 17 different ways in which museums can promote their activities.

There are also less traditional ways of arousing the curiosity of the public, indexed as extra activities. These include activities not strictly belonging in the museum, such as concerts and lectures, which may serve to draw a new group of visitors. In the same category we rank facilities such as a restaurant or nursery, which are not related to the museum activities proper but serve to make the stay at the museum more comfortable. We also mention special activities organised for certain groups of visitors such as senior citizens. The index compounds the scores for seven separate categories.

Finally, the street profile of the building and the physical accessibility of the museum can be enhanced or improved by flags, banners, signposts, as well as architectural measures such as open or glass doors/façades. This index reflects the answers given to 3 separate questions.

In this way 30 questions related to the promotion activities of museums could be expressed in four separate indexes, which together provide an indication of the influence a museum has on the composition of its public; for a more compact analysis, the four indexes were subsequently compounded into one. In order to weigh the significance of each of the four indexes, experts were asked to give their opinion on how active each museum is in its promotional activities. The street profile index was deemed to be objective enough, so the experts were not asked for an opinion on that score. In the compounded index (promotion activities, inventorised) only the three indexes internal/external promotion activities and extra activities are included. The scores, on a recalculated scale from 0...100 can be found in Appendix 5.1, column i.

Informing the public

In Table 5.4 information is given on the presence and size of education departments. We also took into account whether a museum specifically addresses primary or secondary school pupils, to indicate how the 'information climate' in a museum is. These four criteria together form the index for information of the public. The index information facilities reflects data on the manner of presentation: the presence of art (historical) objects, explanatory texts, slide shows, models, and guided tours. Scores for 11 separate questions were recorded.

The previous two indexes were compounded into one index information, inventorised. On the recommendation of experts we consulted it was decided to weigh the indexes as follows: (the size of) an education department and activities specifically aimed at young people were twice as important as the information facilities. The scores for this index, re-scaled from 0...100, are included in Appendix 5.1, column j.

Additional characteristics

Two groups of characteristics remain which do not relate directly to the manner in which the public is approached as indicated above, but which contribute to the social composition of the public, and the opportunities of the museum to influence it. A direct social selection can be made by how the admission fee is fixed [10]: many museums can be visited free of charge by specific groups, and most museums give reductions to specific groups (e.g. holders of a Museumjaarkaart). The table provides an overview of the possibilities. The effective admission fee is our estimation of the admission fee actually paid minus a group discount; this was determined by polling the public.

The second group of characteristics provides an indication of the museum size, which is calculated from the area of the presentation rooms, the number of staff employed, and the number of visitors. The visitor group in the year to which this study applies was 80,000 median. This means that the larger museums are relatively over-represented in our sample.

All indexes are listed together in Table 5.5. The correlation between all the constructed characteristics is given in Appendix 5.3. A positive coefficient indicates that the various scalings of the museums overlap to some extent, a negative coefficient that the characteristics are mutually exclusive to a given extent.

[10] The admission fees were corrected by assuming an average inflation of 4% annually (CBS, 1985).

TABLE 5.5 ## (see: appendices)

5.4 Analysis of the education level

In Table 5.6a and Table 5.6b the average education level of the museum visitor groups is related to the following characteristics:

- The accessibility of the objects displayed; this includes the assessed information and status thresholds or, alternatively, the accessibility on the basis of our inventory of questionnaire responses;
- How the visitor is approached; this is calculated on the basis of the various indexes for promotion and information of the public, as well as expert opinions on these subjects;
- Control variables; especially the size of the museum, the year of the survey, and the average age of the visitor group involved.

By regressive comparisons (indicated by a,b,...k) the influence of various characteristics concurrently can be demonstrated. The coefficients indicate which museum characteristics are responsible for the greatest variations in the education level of museum visitor groups, and which have a small or negligible effect. The more important conclusions are also presented in a graphic form.

The (development of the) social composition of museum visitor groups was then analysed in relationship to the nature of the presentation and the manner in which the public is approached (Tables 5.6a and 5.6b). In Table 5.6a the accessibility on the basis of our inventory serves as a control variable, in Table 5.6b the assessed accessibility. A positive coefficient is indicative of a high score for well-educated visitors, a negative coefficient means that visitors with a limited education scored high. A single regression equation determines the effect that several characteristics can have; the effects of the remaining characteristics are constant in this statistical model. Each coefficient reflects the influence of one characteristic, corrected for the interference of the remaining characteristic. The coefficients have been standardised, and it is therefore admissible to compare their values directly. Using the first regression equation ((a) in Table 5.6a) the education level of the public is greatly influenced by the accessibility of the objects displayed. The coefficient of 0.48 for this characteristic [11] can result in a difference of 2.5 points in the level of education between least and best accessible presentation in our study, indicating a considerable influence, which does not preclude an influence of the average education level by other characteristics. Of the other control variables, the year of the survey has no significant influence on the education level of the visitor groups in the surveys, which apparently has remained the same for presentations that have not been changed. The variable we

[11] 0.35 before standardisation

analysed was '1988 education': the score for education level, but corrected for the increasing education level of the population. Furthermore, the same regression equation [12] yields as a result that visitor groups tend to be better educated if they are younger (which holds true for the population at large as well), and that larger museums on average draw a slightly better educated public than the smaller ones (the difference is not, however, significant). Columns b through e of Table 5.6a address the relevance of the various efforts in approaching the public. Using the regression technique compensates for the fact that the education level is influenced to a large extent by the accessibility of the presentation and the year in which the survey was done, and to a smaller extent by the age of the visitors and the size of the museum.

TABLE 5.6A ## (see: appendices)

Column b provides information on the effect of how actively the public is invited into the museum and provided with information. Here we list the opinion of museum experts. The same information, but as it was inventorised on the basis of statements by museum staff is given in column c. The variability of the outcome is indicative of differences in the effects that various ways of drawing and informing visitors have on the education level of the public: an intensive support of the public is related slightly--but noticeably--to a lower level of education, and considerable efforts to draw visitors do not result in a lower but higher education level of the public. The effect of intensive museum support leading to lower education levels was not indicated by the experts (Column b), but our inventory did show this to be the case (Column c). The effect of increased education levels when museums do their best to draw more public appears to be significant in both cases. This leads to the following conclusion: an intensive support of the presentation using educative means results in a public with a lower education level; sizeable efforts to draw more visitors bring in a public with a higher level of education.

[12] We also performed an analysis (which we did not record) to investigate whether the form of the questions has a significant influence on the recorded education level; this proved not to be the case. Whether it was explicitly asked if respondents had actually completed a school or course, or that the assessment of his or her education level was left to the discretion of the respondent, does not noticeably affect the level of education ultimately recorded.

The equations d - g and h - i test the individual components of both the indexes resulting from our inventory. The index for promotion is compounded from three sub-indexes: internal and external promotion and extra activities. The index for information (c) is based on two sub-indexes: the extent of visitor support and the number of educative support facilities. The relevant equations show that all sub-indexes have effects tending in the same direction as the compounded index, even though the size of the effects may vary. But the image that emerges is always the same: sizeable efforts to draw more visitors bring in a better educated public, and intensive visitor support leads to more visitors with a more limited education.

Equation j provides information on the effect of educative experiments on seven groups of visitors, related to the Art Cart, the Lijnbaancentrum (3x) and the Art peep-show (3x). In these cases the manner in which the public was approached was based on "extreme social-emancipatory notions" (see chapter 4). Application of equation j clearly reveals that the public in these settings has indeed had a significantly more limited education than the nature of the exhibits would suggest. This means that such social-emancipatory efforts may really work, that is to say, they did under these experimental circumstances. To what extent they promoted (more frequent) visits of persons with a limited education to a museum could not be determined.

Equation k sheds light on the effect that the admission fee (after deduction of any discounts) has on the education level of the public. No effect could be established: a more expensive museum ticket does not bring in a more select public as far as their level of education is concerned.

TABLE 5.6B ## (see: appendices)

We compare Table 5.6a and Table 5.6b in order to determine the difference in the accessibility of the objects as determined by survey and assessment. The results always follow the same line, although the measurement determined from assessment is more closely allied to the public's level of education. It would seem that the selectivity of the collections is not covered sufficiently by the 12 categories summed up under 'type of collection' in Table 5.4. The emphatic notification concerning the nature of the collection as written on the cards used for the assessment seem to give a great deal more information about the anticipated educational level. Nevertheless, the result of the analysis shown in Table 5.6b is virtually identical to that of the preceding table: public guidance attracts a lower-educated group, public attraction has the opposite effect. The effect of the educational experiments is not yet significant, as the assessors have kept in mind the experimental character of these institutions in their assessment. The differences in price again exert no influence.

Visualisation

The result of previous statistical analyses is - in hindsight - fairly simple to represent in figures in which the relationship between the various museum characteristics might be somewhat less defined, but in which the relationships found are still easily recognised.

Figures 5.7a and 5.7b contain the educational levels of the visitor groups found for combinations of public attraction and guidance, subdivided into four categories; Figure 5.7a shows the categories, derived from assessment by museum experts, Figure 5.7b shows those derived from questionnaires. They present a brief description and attendance year for the visitor group concerned, and the average level of education. For each category, the educational levels have been summarised into an (underlined) group average. This representation does not include any other characteristics, specifically the accessibility of the collections. Nevertheless, the relationship arrived at via statistical analysis is globally seen: within the categories for public attraction, the level of education declines as the intensity of public guidance increases; within the categories for public guidance, the educational level rises as the intensity of public attraction increases.

In figure 5.8 - educational levels of visitor groups according to accessibility of the collection, on the basis of surveys - the strong relationship between accessibility and level of education is clearly seen. This is indicated by the (Regression) line, which shows the average or expected relationship. The influence exerted by public attraction and guidance is indicated by underlining the museum and exhibition designations. Intensive public guidance according to both criteria is underlined once, intensive public attraction according to the criteria (survey and assessment) is underlined twice. The relationship between these two types of approach towards the public and the level of education is represented somewhat coarsely, but is still recognisable. The influence of both characteristics is established by counting the number of times the museums/exhibitions concerned fall below or above the line. If public relations methods had made no difference, the underlined indication should show a clear 50%-50% division with regard to the line. For public guidance, 16 of the 26 underlined cases (62%) lie below the line; in these cases the educational level is lower than would be expected on the basis of the collection. For public attraction, 12 of the 18 underlined cases (67%) lie above the line, which shows that the public is better educated than would be expected. The seven educational experiments are listed separately, and in capitals. Five of the seven (71%) lie below the line, and therefore have an educational level which is lower than would be expected on the basis of the objects exhibited.

TABLE 5.7a ## (see: appendices)

TABLE 5.7b ## " " "

5.5 Analysis of the occupational level

The scarce data available to us -- namely for 22 visitor groups - on the occupational level of the museum visitors has led to the inclusion of several new museums in our file, particularly because of the previous (1954) study conducted by Van der Hoek (1956) on the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague. Studies into occupational level are considerably older than the average: most date from the seventies, many from the sixties even; it would seem that at the time social status was often determined on the basis of occupation. An analysis of occupational level could also give extra information - even more than education level could - as it also indicated socio-economic position. It is quite likely, indeed probable, that the education level of museum visitors has increased with the decline in occupation level. This could be an indication that there is a decline in the concept of financial barriers, while accessibility in terms of information and social barriers has remained the same. The small number of visitor groups in the study and the partial lack of data markedly restrict a meaningful statistical analysis. Any regression comparisons have been noted in Table 5.9. There is one very noticeable result we can report here: the occupation level of the visitor groups has declined sharply over the years. Even with so few units of measurement this is still a most significant effect; the result remains the same with the accessibility of the objects exhibited. This development is in contrast with the development in educational level of the same 22 visitor groups, (Figure 5.1), which would indicate that - whatever the reason might be - Dutch museums have gradually become more accessible for lower status groups, at least in one aspect. Interpretation in terms of a lowering of financial barriers is certainly possible. This would correlate well with the findings in Chapter 2, which indicate the diminished importance of income with regard to museum visits. This agrees with the finding that the pricing structure - not of any real significance in any case - has a greater effect on the level of occupation than on the level of education. The various indicators relevant to public approach do not have any influence at occupational level.

FIGURE 5.11 ## (see: appendices)

5.6 Conclusions and discussion

The repeated analysis of visitor data in this chapter has led us to the following conclusions:

- a. Museum visitors are a far from homogenous unit with regard to social background. The education level of the visitor groups investigated between 1967-1988 in Dutch museums and exhibitions varies on a scale from 1 to 7, from a half point above the average for the Dutch population to a full point below the maximum. The occupation level varies accordingly, in contrast to the education level, taking into account the shift in

the education level of the Dutch population as a whole. However, the occupation level of the museum public has clearly declined in relation to that of the Dutch population.

- b. The differences in education levels between museum visitor categories are strongly linked to the accessibility of the exhibited objects. This has been demonstrated in two ways: via a survey of object categories and via direct assessment. In both cases this resulted in a sliding scale from historical and natural history institutions to museums/exhibitions for modern art. The difference in education levels between the institutions at either end of the scale is about 2.5 points.
- c. Museums and exhibitions with intensive public guidance (for educational purposes) attract a somewhat lower-educated public than might be expected on the basis of the level of accessibility of the objects. This relationship is not a strong one, but nevertheless present. More pronounced is the effect of so-called educative experiments, where museum objects are literally brought to the public's door. This is where you will indeed find a group of comparatively lower-educated visitors.
- d. In contrast, museums and exhibitions which conduct intensive public relations receive a more highly educated public than might be expected on the basis of the level of information accessibility. This is an even stronger correlation than the (educationally lowering) effect of public guidance.

The first three conclusions agree with previously formulated expectations about public developments. The fourth conclusion is unexpected and difficult to interpret: why should museums and exhibitions with an intensive public relations machine attract a better educated public? One would expect that intensive public relations would also imply a broadening of interest, or at best would not affect the social composition of the public. The relationship appears to be reversed; it is also significant, however one might conduct a public relations campaign. Let us - before entering into speculation about the possible causes - point out once again which factors could not be responsible for this result. It is not dependent on (a) the year of the study, (b) the scope of the museums or (c) the nature of the objects exhibited. One might make the assumption, for example, that in recent years public relations has become more intensified and that the museum-going public has become better educated; or that art museums are trying harder to attract visitors and at the same time are drawing a more highly-educated public. Although this is true in itself (compare the correlations in Appendix 5.3), the statistical analysis has kept the influence of the year of study, museum scope and accessibility at a constant level. Any other factors which might lie behind it are difficult to imagine.

Two possibilities remain: those with higher levels of education are indeed attracted to more 'intensively' presented museums, or else museums with a better educated

public carry out more intensive public relations. It is difficult to imagine why the latter would be the case. The notion that more efforts at attracting visitors indeed cause a more highly educated public to be attracted to the museum is therefore the only remaining option. It is likely that the avenues selected to attract visitors (advertisements in art magazines and news periodicals or direct mail) are unilaterally aimed at a higher-educated public, and that museums and exhibitions which don't present themselves with such a public face are more dependent on casual visitors. However, we cannot give any clearer reasons for the correctness of these assumptions.

Chapter 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

When we reanalysed the data on developments in visitor attendance for Dutch museums, we used previously existing research material, supplemented with new source material:

- a. The CBS figures on Dutch museums; these give an insight into the development of Dutch museum collections and the interest shown by the Dutch population and foreign tourists over the last decade. We have divided this data - based on CBS data - according to study year and type of museum.
- b. Data from studies carried out periodically on the Dutch people by the Sociaal and Cultureel Planbureau, to assess how they spend their time - including whether or not they attend museums, and if so, how often. This data serves to highlight the general-social background of Dutch museum visitors, and any changes which might have occurred during this period.
- c. Data concerning the outlook and activities of educational staff of Dutch museums with regard to public approach and public guidance. A new questionnaire provides a picture of opinions held in 1989 on the matter of public approach, in comparison with data collected a decade ago.
- d. Public data gathered from 142 museums and exhibitions, derived from previously conducted public enquiries. The characteristics of the various visitor groups, such as they appeared from these public enquiries, were combined with the data on public approach operative at the time the study was conducted in the museum in question; this was established on the basis of discussions with staff members who knew the museum well at the time of the study, and on the basis of assessments made by experts. The most emphasized characteristic of these visitor groups was the average educational level. The question specifically asked was the degree to which this can be linked to the nature of the museum, and to the investments made in approaching the public.

The CBS data

The CBS data on museum attendance in Holland shows a clear, steadily rising trend. Since 1950, public interest has increased about tenfold. Although it seemed this rise would stagnate a few years ago, the last few years have actually shown an acceleration. To be able to explain this rise, we first investigated whether it could be considered a 'true' increase, or whether it could be due to registration artefacts. It must be concluded that this rise is indeed true. The CBS seems to adhere to a fairly restrictive definition of 'museum', so that categories recognised by the ICOM, e.g. zoos and botanic gardens, are excluded. This definition has remained the same throughout the years. There were only a few indications which seemed to imply overestimation with regard to registration. This relates specifically to several multifunctional institutions, where the CBS does not separate the museum section of that institution from the remainder. On the other hand, a number of small museums are not included by the CBS. Altogether, these registration issues only play a limited role: by themselves they could never explain

the escalation we are now witnessing. A picture of the true rise in interest, particularly in the casual visitor category, is also demonstrated by periodically held national population studies. The rise in public interest isn't only real, it has also been registered across the board. During the study, we divided the museums into art museums and non-art museums. This last category includes ethnic and historical museums, museums for commerce and technology and anthropological museums. Visitor numbers have increased for all of these categories, although the rise is most clearly seen in the non-art museums. It also seems that the number of non-art museums is increasing more rapidly than the number of art museums. Taken in all, museum collections are showing a tendency towards 'simplification'. This would seem to indicate a cultural spread effect.

Population study

A closer investigation of population studies enabled us to throw a light on the question of cultural spread consequences resulting from the rise in museum attendance. In a comparative study on social composition between 1975 and 1985, based on studies of how the Dutch spend their time, not much social spread seems to have manifested itself. It could be said, however, that there was question of a broadening of the public: an increasing section of the population is now attending museums. This growth can be seen for both the casual and the frequent visitor, but is still not applicable to those groups (particularly those with a lower education) who traditionally hardly set foot in a museum. This conclusion contrasts with the previous finding, that a growth in the number of museums and the number of visitors has been relatively greatest in the non-art museums, which more people in the lower education category do attend. We blame this contradiction particularly on the global phrasing of the population study, where no indication is given of the nature of the museums visited.

Repeated interviews with educational staff

From our repeated interviews with educational staff it would seem that of the three mainstreams of public guidance, the 'social-emancipatory' approach of ten years ago has virtually disappeared. For this approach, the object only held an intermediate function; social and consciousness-raising goals were pursued. Only the 'thematic' approach, in which the collection provides the means to communicate themes from the entire range, and the more traditional 'specialistic' approach, which places emphasis on the objects themselves, have remained in vogue.

Activities which aim to guide the public have become common in museums. In addition, the educational staff places more emphasis on individual viewing guidance, at the cost of direct guidance of visitor groups. Guided tours are often contracted out, and the guiding of students is largely carried out indirectly, by handing out information to teachers. We see a considerable decline in the number of special educational theme exhibitions in the field of art.

Aside from guidance, the attraction of visitors is another publicly motivated task for the museum. Museums are spending a lot more attention on public relations and public attraction than ten years ago. A number of museums have combined attraction and guidance into one department, but many educational staff members continue to consider these as separate tasks. Attracting the public has not been at the expense of public guidance, therefore. The increase in the number of visitors is not attributed to public guidance in a more restricted sense. Publicity about and surrounding exhibitions is considered much more important in that regard. In most museums there is talk of satiation and of a commercial approach. Visitor figures have become more important and many museums have made it their aim to increase these figures further. The principal intention is to encourage more return visits and more visits by tourists. Unlike in the seventies, there is far less attempt made to attract new groups in terms of education level or social-economic class into museums, or to work together with these groups.

Repeated analysis of public studies

The repeated analysis of results coming from previously conducted public studies provided us with an accurate picture of the relationship between the nature of what the museum offers and the social background of the public. On the basis of a description of the nature of their collection, the museums involved are categorised according to the accessibility of the objects shown. The most accessible were those which offered a direct connection with the everyday experience of the Dutch: ethnic museums such as the village museum Orvelte, the Zuiderzeemuseum and the Nederlands Openluchtmuseum. It seems such museums attract visitors with a relatively low level of education. Nevertheless, the average education of these visitor groups lies above that for the Dutch population. In contrast with these simple ethnic displays we have the art museums, particularly those exhibiting modern art. Such museums enjoy the support of an extremely well educated public. The development of the educational level of the visitor category investigated runs exactly parallel with that of the Dutch population, so that one cannot speak of a rise in exclusivity.

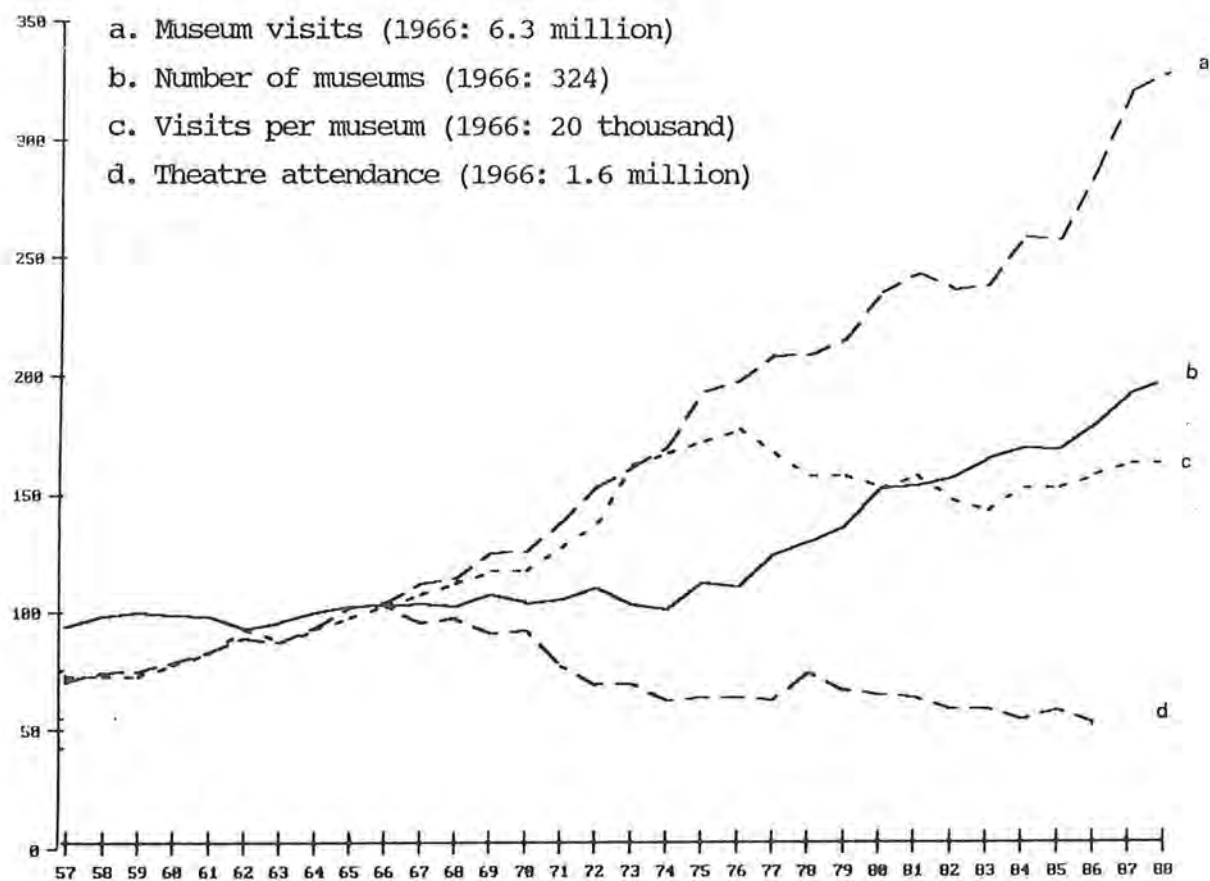
The key question formed by the repeated analysis of these public studies was not the relationship between the nature of the collection and the social background of the public, however, but the extent to which the public relations conducted by the museums has had an effect on attendance. Which consequences have efforts in the field of education and public relations had? Are there museums which have been more successful than others in reaching lower education categories due to their p.r. approach?

The educational and public relations efforts by the museums have been shown in various ways. We have made use of both information provided by museum staff of the museums concerned as of assessments made by experts. It would seem that museums and exhibitions with intensive public guidance (educational work) actually do attract a slightly lower educated category of people, based on the level of accessibility to be expected from the

collection. This relationship isn't a strong one, but nevertheless present. More significant is the effect of the so-called educational experiment, where the collection is literally brought to the public's door. In comparison, one can indeed speak of a group with a lower level of education in this case.

In addition, it seems that museums and exhibitions which conduct intensive public relations receive a higher educated public than would be expected on the basis of the level of accessibility of the collection. The most likely explanation which we can suggest for this last - unexpected - result is that museums realise their intensive public relations particularly through those channels which only reach those with a higher level of education.

Figure 1.1: Developments in the number of museums and museum visits and in attendance of subsidised theatre 1950 - 1988 (index figures).



Source: CBS, 1986, p. 26 compare with Table 2.1.

Table 1.2: Five museum categories, according to opening year

	Opening year				Number museums	
	<1944	1945-64	1965-74	>1975		
Fine arts/mixed	57%	14%	18%	13%	67	(100%)
Anthropology	36%	26%	9%	18%	11	(100%)
History	27%	26%	19%	27%	293	(100%)
Natural History	23%	19%	27%	29%	47	(100%)
Commerce and Technology	14%	17%	34%	36%	107	(100%)

Source: CBS (1986) Table 2.3

Table 2.1: Growth in the number of museums and museum visits since 1950

year	museums opened		
	number	visits total	per museum
		* 1000	
1950	243	2.616	11
1951	254	2.871	11
1952	255	3.134	12
1953	280	3.526	13
1954	302	3.552	12
1955	304	3.769	12
1956	301	5.032	17
1957	296	4.237	14
1958	310	4.475	14
1959	315	4.523	14
1960	311	4.767	15
1961	309	5.024	16
1962	293	5.391	18
1963	302	5.277	17
1964	315	5.660	18
1965	323	6.206	19
1966	324	6.344	20
1967	327	6.863	21
1968	324	6.990	22
1969	339	7.656	23
1970	328	7.695	23
1971	333	8.477	25
1972	349	9.429	27
1973	326	10.463	32
1975	355	11.924	34
1976	350	12.188	35
1977	394	12.856	33
1978	411	12.884	31
1979	432	13.275	31
1980	485	14.504	30
1981	489	14.992	31
1982	500	14.566	29
1983	525	14.661	28
1984	539	15.959	30
1985	538	15.879	30
1986	572	17.699	31
1987	615	19.847	32
1988	630	20.300	32 (provisional figure)

Table 2.2: Classification of Dutch museums according to the type collection per period.

type of museum	prior to 1900	1900- 1944	1945- 1964	1965- 1974	1975- 1979	1980- 1984	1985 and after
Fine arts/ Mixed	20 (48%)	43 (28%)	59 (22%)	73 (19%)	77 (17%)	85 (16%)	91 (15%)
Anthropology	2 (5%)	4 (3%)	8 (3%)	9 (2%)	12 (2%)	12 (2%)	12 (2%)
History	17 (41%)	75 (49%)	145 (55%)	202 (52%)	245 (53%)	287 (53%)	326 (53%)
Natural History	2 (5%)	15 (10%)	22 (8%)	35 (9%)	42 (9%)	48 (9%)	54 (9%)
Commerce and Technology	1 (2%)	15 (10%)	30 (11%)	68 (18%)	89 (19%)	111 (20%)	132 (22%)
Total	42 (100%)	152 (100%)	264 (100%)	387 (100%)	465 (100%)	543 (100%)	615 (100%)

Table 2.3: Number of visits to Dutch museums in 1987, according the type of museum and opening year.

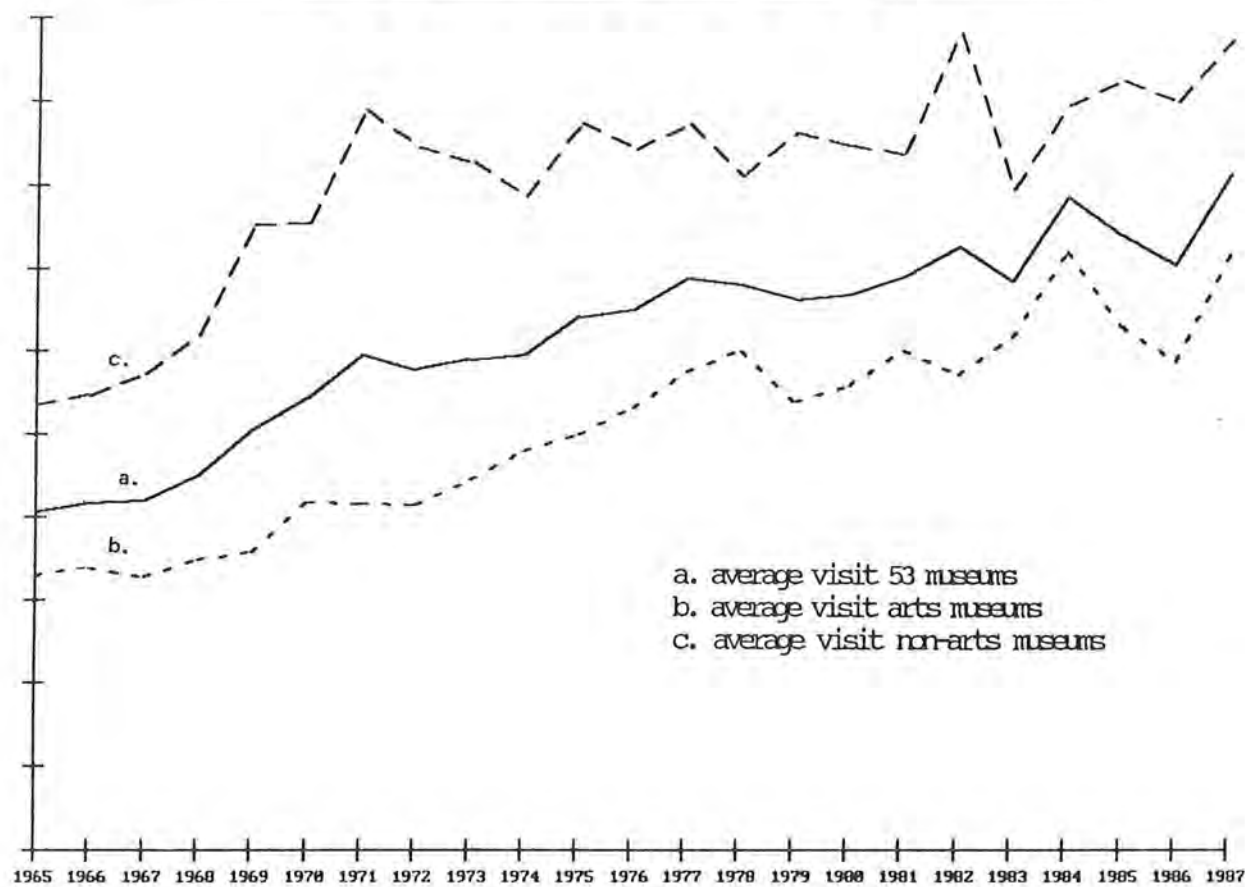
	Opening Year			total
	prior to 1965	1965-1979	from 1980	
Fine arts/ Mixed	59 5.000.536 (44%)	18 1.680.497 (30%)	14 205.383 (7%)	91 6.886.416 (35%)
Anthropology	8 504.333 (5%)	4 22.500 (1%)	0 0	12 526.833 (3%)
History	145 4.096.011 (36%)	100 1.347.215 (24%)	81 607.878 (21%)	326 5.918.200 (30%)
Natural history	22 540.072 (5%)	20 525.074 (9%)	12 1.296.354 (44%)	54 2.361.500 (12%)
Commerce and Technology	30 1.170.031 (10%)	59 2.036.357 (36%)	43 815.129 (28%)	132 4.021.517 (20%)
Total	264 11.310.983 (100%)	201 5.611.643 (100%)	150 2.924.744 (100%)	615 19.847.370 (100%)

Table 2.4.: Trends in interest shown for 53 museums which were already in existence in 1965 and attracted over 50,000 visitors in 1987.

	number of museums	% growth 1970-1986	
Fine arts/ Mixed	20	141%	→ 141%
Anthropology	4	167%	
History	21	189%	
Natural history	1	158%	
Commerce and Technology	7	253%	
Total for all museums	53		178%

Source: CBS, own re-editing. Model defined as $SU \ln(Y_{t+1}/Y_t)$, where Y^t is the visiting figure for year t .

Figure 2.5: Trends in interest shown for 53 museums which were already in existence in 1965 and attracted more than 50,000 visitors in 1987.



Source: CBS - own re-editing

Table 3.1: Social background, museum visits and theatre art attendance according tot the Tijdbestedings-onderzoek 1975-1985 (study on how people spend their time).

		TBO75	TBO80	TBO85
AGE	21-64	37.9	37.2	39.1
YOUNG CHILD	0-1	51%	48%	41%
EDUCATION	1-6	2.57	2.70	3.56
OCCUPATION	1-6	3.63	3.70	4.26
INCOME	0-1	23%	34%	36%
MUSEUM VISITS	1-3			
never	(0 x pj)	60%	54%	49%
sometimes	(1-3 pj)	31%	36%	36%
frequently	(\geq 3 pj)	10%	12%	15%
THEATER ATTENDANCE	1-3			
never	(0 x pj)	68%	65%	63%
sometimes	(1-3 pj)	20%	24%	25%
frequently	(\geq 3 pj)	13%	11%	12%
N		997	2165	2384

Table 3.2: Museum visits and theatre attendance according to social background.

	MUSEUM VISITS			THEATER ATTENDANCE		
	'75	'80	'85	'75	'80	'85
PARTICIPATION	39%	46%	51%	32%	36%	38%
AGE						
20	51%	46%	44%	35%	29%	36%
30	36%	44%	48%	34%	34%	35%
40	39%	51%	54%	32%	38%	39%
50	42%	44%	54%	27%	41%	38%
60	28%	42%	54%	31%	38%	40%
r	-.10	-.01	.06	.05	.06	.03
β	-.06	.04~	.11	.01~	.09	.05~
YOUNG CHILD						
no	43%	46%	54%	32%	38%	42%
yes	38%	44%	47%	33%	33%	31%
r	-.05	-.01	-.05	-.02	-.05	-.12
β	-.06	-.01~	-.01~	-.01~	-.02~	-.10
EDUCATION						
primary	25%	29%	36%	18%	28%	20%
lower vocational	36%	39%	35%	22%	28%	23%
lower secondary	44%	53%	50%	42%	40%	38%
higher secondary/intermediary	57%	53%	56%	52%	42%	45%
vocational						
higher vocational	60%	72%	73%	52%	55%	52%
university	74%	87%	88%	74%	72%	65%
r	.27	.28	.30	.31	.21	.26
β	.18	.22	.28	.26	.14	.21
OCCUPATION						
primary industry	24%	28%	(47%)	23%	23%	(35%)
labourer	29%	32%	36%	16%	22%	18%
self-employed	51%	43%	36%	25%	37%	26%
lower level employees	35%	44%	51%	40%	37%	37%
intermediate level employees	36%	55%	55%	29%	42%	42%
professional/managerial	53%	65%	72%	37%	58%	53%
r	.16	.22	.15	.20	.22	.15
β	.01~	.08	.06	-.04~	.12	.08
INCOME						
lower 2/3	34%	40%	43%	27%	29%	30%
upper 1/3	60%	60%	62%	50%	47%	48%
r	.24	.19	.18	.27	.18	.19
β	.14	.08	.06	.06	.08	.09
N	997	2165	2382	997	2165	2382

~: $p < .10$. Percentages in brackets apply to a very small group.

Flow diagram HK 5

AVERAGE AGE
VISITOR GROUP

ACCESSIBILITY
INFORMATION OFFERED

INVESTIGATION YEAR

AVERAGE
EDUCATION/OCCUPATION
VISITOR GROUP

VISITOR GUIDANCE

CANVASSING OF PUBLIC

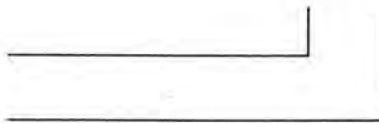
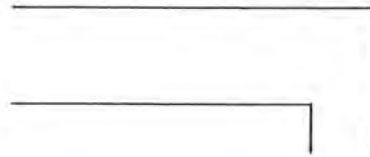


Table 5.1: Review of several characteristics of usable statistics reports (N=142)

YEAR	1950-59	1%
	60-69	4%
	70-79	25%
	80-89	70%
CITY/AREA	Amsterdam	23%
	Leiden	13%
	Rotterdam	13%
	remaining Western area	14%
	East	15%
	North	9%
	South	4%
RANDOM SAMPLE	minimum	31
	median	208
	maximum	9034

Table 5.2: Development in education level and occupation prestige level of the Dutch population.

SOURCE	YEAR	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION
Literature study	1961	1.46	
Time spent	1962	2.34	42
Leisure time spent	1965	2.11	40
Leisure time spent	1968	2.10	40
Lifestyle	1974	2.77	
Time spent	1975	2.61	
Lifestyle	1977	2.88	43
Involvement	1978	2.41	
Amenities study	1970	2.89	
Time spent	1980	2.83	
Lifestyle	1980	3.12	
Lifestyle	1983	3.14	44
EDUCATION = $-1.646 + 0.05717 * \text{YEAR}$			
OCCUPATION = $30.7 + 0.15 * \text{YEAR}$			

Source: H. Ganzeboom, Cultuurdeelname in Nederland, Tabel 7.1

Source 5.3: The most important background characteristics visitor groups attending Dutch museum (N=142)

	n	minimum	median	maximum
AGE	130	26	39	49
EDUCATION	137	3.2	4.6	6.0
EDUCATION 1988	137	3.5	5.1	6.4
OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE	22	45	58	68
OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE 1988	22	47	60	72
SOURCE IN HOLLAND (km)	105	2	54	170
% FOREIGNERS	104	0%	5%	44%
% WOMEN	108	10%	47%	87%
% STUDENTS	52	1%	18%	58%
% WORKING	47	17%	50%	90%
% PENSIONERS	16	0%	5%	25%
% HOUSEWIVES	44	2%	14%	80%

EDUCATION 1988 AND OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE 1988 adjusted for increase in the education and occupation prestige level for the Dutch population (see Table 5.3. and text).

Table 5.5: Characteristics of Dutch museums and exhibition halls
(N=142, situations when visitor studies were conducted)

<u>NATURE OF THE COLLECTION</u>	
% (applied) art prior to 1850	17 x
% (applied) art 1850-1900	6 x
% (applied) art 1900-1940	6 x
% (applied) art 1940..	10 x
% natural history information	4 x
% anthropological information	10 x
% commerce and technology	8 x
% archeology	8 x
% local historical information	7 x
% (inter)national historical information	6 x
% other information	5 x
including objects related to (Dutch) daily life	71 x
 <u>CANVASSING OF PUBLIC</u>	
<u>EXTENT OF CANVASSING THE PUBLIC</u>	
size of public relations staff	1 m
conducts temporary exhibitions	89 %
(if so:) number of annual exhibitions	4 m
 <u>MEANS OF CANVASSING THE PUBLIC</u>	
included in local/regional tourist information	93 %
distribution of leaflets	76 %
distribution of magazine or bulletin	49 %
(if so) circulation of magazine or bulletin	600 m
includes in National Railways tours	35 %
has mailing list	82 %
size of mailing to media	90 m
size of mailing to schools	25 m
size of mailing to individuals	40 m
size of mailing to other parties	40 m
included in the weekly agenda, local press	89 %
included in the weekly agenda, national press	62 %
radio and tv coverage	77 %
regionally distributed exhibition posters	78 %
nationally distributed exhibition posters	57 %
advertisements in local newspapers	28 %
advertisements in national newspapers	43 %
 <u>EXTRA ACTIVITIES</u>	
regular concerts	33 %
lectures	37 %
regular other cultural activities	36 %
non-cultural activities	15 %
special activities for particular groups	41 %
restaurant or coffee corner	62 %
daycare facilities	13 %
 <u>STREET IDENTIFICATION</u>	
clearly posted road signs in the vicinity	29 %
eyecatching entrance marking (flags)	48 %
open or glass door	85 %

Table 5.6: Definition of visitor and museum characteristics, with regard to the analysis (N=142)

Visitor characteristics

EDUCATION 1988	Average education for 1988 level
OCCUPATION 1988	Average occupation prestige for 1988 level

Control variables

AGE	Average age of the visitors
YEAR OF STUDY	Year of public investigation
SCOPE	Size in relation to staff number of visitors

Accessibility of objects

ACCESSIBILITY (ASSESSMENT)	Accessibility of objects exhibitions based on the assessment of 6 assessors.
ACCESSIBILITY (SURVEY)	Accessability based on collection's composition.

Canvassing of public

CANVASSING OF PUBLIC (ASSESSMENT)	Canvassing of public bases on assessment of 11 museum experts
CANVASSING OF PUBLIC (SURVEY)	Canvassing of public; combined index with regard to scope of activities, advertising and extra activities.
EXTENT OF CANVASSING THE PUBLIC	Intensity of canvassing the pub (staff, exhibitions)
ADVERTISING	Intensity of canvassing the pub via the media
EXTRA ACTIVITIES	Intensity of canvassing the pub via extra-museum activities

Public guidance

PUBLIC GUIDANCE (ASSESSMENT)

Public guidance (assessment)

PUBLIC GUIDANCE (SURVEY)

Public guidance; combined index with regard to extent of public guidance and means of public guidance

EXTENT OF PUBLIC GUIDANCE

Intensity of public guidance (staff, activities)

MEANS OF PUBLIC GUIDANCE

Means of public guidance (subtitles, exhibition signs, folders etc.)

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT

Educational experiments

Price

EFFECTIVE PRICE

Effective price paid

Table 5.7a: Variations in educational categories for groups attending the museum according to (A) accessibility the objects (B) control variables (C) canvassing public (D) public guidance (E) price.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)
<u>A. Accessibility</u>											
ACCESSIBILITY (SURVEY)	.478	.276	.332	.363	.376	.433	.435	.287	.306	.338	.332
<u>B. Control variables</u>											
SCOPE OF MUSEUM	.113~	-.037~	-.089~	-.051~	-.036~	.082~	.047~	-.041~	-.000~	-.004~	-.074~
STUDY YEAR	.069	.051	.058	.013	.018	.045	.051	.032	.049	-.020	-.019
AVERAGE AGE	-.136	-.172	-.107	-.163	-.169	-.145	-.151	-.161	-.164	-.161	-.144
<u>C. Canvassing of public</u>											
CANVASSING OF PUBLIC (ASSESSMENT)	.341							.389	.428	.331	.348
CANVASSING OF PUBLIC (SURVEY)			.419								
EXTENT OF CANVASSING THE PUBLIC				.331	.349						
ADVERTISING				.009		.099~					
EXTRA ACTIVITIES				.047			.156"				
<u>D. Public guidance</u>											
PUBLIC GUIDANCE (ASSESSMENT)	-.076~										
PUBLIC GUIDANCE (SURVEY)		-.199									
EXTENT OF PUBLIC GUIDANCE							-.137"				
MEANS OF PUBLIC GUIDANCE								-.223			
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT									-.224		
<u>E. Price</u>											
EFFECTIVE PRICE										.026~	
adj R ²	.282	.290	.311	.352	.362	.280	.290	.348	.375	.377	.326

Pairwise deletion of missing values. ~: statistically not significant ($p > .10$). ": $.05 < p < .10$.

Tabel 5.7b: Variations in educational categories for groups attending the museum according to (A) accessibility the objects (B) control variables (C) canvassing public (D) public guidance (E) price.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(h)
<u>A. Accessibility</u>											
ACCESSIBILITY (SURVEY)	.605	.522	.496	.522	.519	.594	.575	.499	.506	.470	.499
<u>B. Control variables</u>											
SCOPE OF MUSEUM	.069	-.145	-.032	-.068	-.049	.057	-.014	-.057	-.056	-.072	-.078
STUDY YEAR	.167	.137	.105	.117	.109	.159	.137	.133	.148	.072	.080
AVERAGE AGE	-.171	-.115	-.179	-.165	-.189	-.172	-.140	-.171	-.176	-.173	-.156
<u>C. Canvassing of public</u>											
CANVASSING OF PUBLIC (ASSESSMENT)	.323							.308	.346	.288	.280
CANVASSING OF PUBLIC (SURVEY)			.333								
EXTENT OF CANVASSING THE PUBLIC				.250	.280						
ADVERTISING				-.064 [~]		-.029 [~]					
EXTRA ACTIVITIES				.119 ["]			.183				
<u>D. Public guidance</u>											
PUBLIC GUIDANCE (ASSESSMENT)		-.022 [~]									
PUBLIC GUIDANCE (SURVEY)			-.252								
EXTENT OF PUBLIC GUIDANCE							-.191				
MEANS OF PUBLIC GUIDANCE								-.259			
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT									.114 [~]		
<u>E. Price</u>											
EFFECTIVE PRICE										.017 [~]	
adj R ²	.412	.447	.500	.459	.401	.405	.431	.477	.503	.456	.439

(Pairwise deletion of missing values.) [~]: statistically not significant (p>.10). ["]: .05<p<.10

