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DEMAND IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY: THE CASE OF POPRONDE

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Abstract

The formation of demand in the music industry is highly uncertain and volatile. Since the music industry is a dynamic industry where quality, uncertainty and oversupply prevail, it is difficult to predict which product will gain success. However, to overcome these uncertainties, consumers will base their decisions on several aspects which will show the quality of the product. This research project makes an attempt to show how Popronde, a travelling showcase festival in the Netherlands, is one of those institutions that plays an important role in the formation of demand in the Dutch music industry. Even more specific, the media attention that (not for every band though) comes with Popronde, is determining in demand formation in the Dutch music industry.

This quantitative research answers two questions, namely (1) ‘how does participating in the showcase festival Popronde influence the demand for live performances expressed by bookers of venues?’ and (2) ‘how does media endorsement during Popronde influence the demand for live performances expressed by bookers of venues?’ The main findings show that participating in Popronde does not increase the demand for every band or artist. The data shows differences between the group of participants. However, participating in Popronde and receiving media endorsement will cause an increase in the amount of shows, as well as the audience size.

Next to that, the data also shows how the supply side is affected in this research. The data shows large differences in the long-term effect, which implies that some bands gain success, while others split up entirely.

Keywords: Music Industry; Demand Uncertainty; Demand Formation; Certifiers; Quality Signaling; Popronde.

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1. Introduction

The music industry in the Netherlands is a highly dynamic and uncertain industry. Quality uncertainty prevails on the side of the consumer, because of the choice between many, differentiated products that are hard to compare with each other. This makes it especially difficult for the more commercial supplier, because it is unsure which product will generate revenue. Quality uncertainty also appears because cultural products are experience goods, for which quality can only be established after purchase (Nelson, 1970). The latter makes it important to be known for your former work as an artist, to establish a brand or reputation, because this reduces some of the quality uncertainty of the product. The uncertainty about quality is also present on the supplier side of the industry. For producers of cultural products it is challenging to predict what the audience will like eventually and they have to strike a balance between investing and bearing the risk of a failure. All these uncertainties are reinforced by the fact that the market is congested; there is an oversupply. Apparently, producing music appeals to many people and this makes it close to impossible for a consumer to inform oneself about all the products available.

As a reaction to this quality uncertainty, consumers look at all sorts of quality signals to reduce some of the uncertainty. They base their decisions - some more than others- on their social surroundings and on certifiers. Certifiers are neutral and experienced people or institutions that are able to supply the consumer with information about the cultural products. Since the certifier has less of a commercial interest, as they do not gain from sales of the product, the information supplied tends to be more objective than information coming from the producer.

For the producer of the cultural product, it is important to get a buzz going on in order to get their product noticed and in turn, have any chance on success. This 'buzz' is important, because quality uncertainty is not only reduced by looking at certifiers, but also by looking at other consumers. This is called a bandwagon effect or herd behavior and can create phenomenon like informational cascades and network effects. This will be further discussed in depth in the theoretical framework. However, creating this buzz is not easily done in the music industry, where there is such a large supply. One way to get noticed as an upcoming

artist, is to join the Popronde; an event in The Netherlands that claims to offer a stage to young, upcoming talents in the music industry (Popronde Nederland, 2017). This traveling festival takes place every year between September and November. A group of acts, selected by the organization of Popronde will tour every Thursday to Sunday in different cities in the Netherlands, from Leeuwarden to Middelburg. For an unknown band, Popronde is the perfect opportunity to do some gigs outside their own city or area and gain some intensive tour experience, since there are so many gigs to play in a short amount of time (Popronde Nederland, 2017).

The Popronde provides more objective information about the product than the producers of cultural products and has experience in the field of popular music, which makes it a suitable certifier for consumers. Maarten Middendorp (music industry professional and booker for the bookings agency Agents After All) shares this informed opinion about the Popronde and its importance in certifying new talent during an explorative interview, where he speaks about the kind of participants of the showcase festival:

“Nou, het is wel echt de stap naar echt op eigen benen staan en een eigen tours doen. Ik denk wel dat daar altijd wel bandjes in zitten die die stap aan het maken zijn of kunnen gaan maken (Maarten Middendorp, personal communication, Feb 8, 2018).”

“Well, it really is a step towards getting on their own feet, go touring on their own. I think every year there are bands participating that will be able to take this next step (Maarten Middendorp, personal communication, Feb 8, 2018).”

Based on the experience during a few years of the Popronde festival, Maarten assumes that the Popronde acts as an important certifier for the Dutch music industry. Former literature also shows the importance of more objective and experienced persons or institutions that act as certifiers to be important in the market for cultural products. The aim of this research is to find out if, and to what extent this claim holds for the Popronde. Does Popronde play a role in the formation of demand for Dutch bands? Will the demand for participants go up after their participation in the Popronde? That it is difficult to predict demand for cultural products may

be assumed, but it is also known that there are several factor determining demand. Popronde might be of influence in this process.

Key in this research is the distinction between bands that participate in the Popronde and bands that participate in the Popronde and on top of that receive endorsement from certain media institutions in Netherlands. Some of the 150 participants in the Popronde get endorsement from one of the three media institutions, to be known as 3voor12, OOR and Never Mind The Hype. They all list their favorite participants of that year and this comes with extra media attention and the chance to play a gig at the stage they adopt in every city, on every day of the festival. The expectation is that this endorsement is of extra influence while aiming to create a buzz.

This research attempts to find out if participating in the Popronde will create that buzz where upcoming artists are desperately looking for in order to get noticed and by doing so, steer demand. More specific, the thesis will focus on the effect of the Popronde on the demand for live performances in the club circuit. It will also find out what role the, to the Popronde connected, media institutions play in this.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will explain and summarize the different theories of demand for cultural products that are known in the literature and how they connect with the subject in this thesis; the formation of demand for performances of Dutch emerging acts.

1. Standard theory of demand

The Standard Theory of Demand tries to explain consumer behavior by economic factors that determine the decisions of consumers. This neoclassical, standard economic theory follows five principal factors that will determine people's choices to consume one product or another. These are:

- 1) **Price** – *When the price of a given product goes up, demand goes down.*

In classic theory of demand, price is an important determinant. Supply and demand will drive the market to equilibrium; an optimal outcome where both sides get the best benefits regarding price and number of products supplied. If we look at the demand for live performances of young, upcoming bands, price cannot be seen as a determining factor. This is not because the venues have unlimited money, this is certainly not the case. It is because in practice, it is actually the venue –so, the booker of the venue- that for a large part will determine the price of the live performance instead of the band itself. The young, upcoming bands that participate in the Popronde do not yet have much influence or bargaining power in this process. For them, the more they play the better it is for their outreach and publicity. The gigs they play at Popronde do not generate income either; there is some available budget for the expenses, but this is mostly not any more than a hundred euros.

- 2) **Income** – *When income goes up, the demand for a given (normal) product goes up.*

Income can in the case of demand for live performances be considered as the budget the venue reserved for their bookings. It can be assumed that this budget does not change dramatically during the timeframe the experiment of this thesis is conducted, so this influence can be neglected.

- 3) **Tastes and preferences** – *Not only price and income decide what products will be consumed; also taste and preferences play an important role. How taste and preferences come about is under debate. Further on in this Theoretical Framework this is discussed more in depth.*

In the case of demand for live performances, it is not as much the tastes and preferences of the booker that determine the demand, but the audience this booker represents or tries to satisfy. In some way, we can consider this to be stable over the time of this experiment as well. This is because although one individual can develop its taste over time and therefore express a different preference, it is likely there will be another individual expressing the preference the former individual had before. Of course, taste for musical genre will develop over the years, like the popularity of disco music in the eighties or rock music in the nineties. However, there is no reason to believe there has been a major shift in musical genre for the timeframe of this experiment. The tastes and preferences of the audience as a whole, represented by the booker of the venue will not influence demand as much that it is taken into consideration in this thesis.

- 4) **The prices of related goods and services, whether they are substitutes or complements** – *If the price of a substitute goes down, demand for the product will go down. If the price of a complement goes down, the demand for the product will go up.*

Since it is already determined how price has little effect in the case of demand for live performances, the prices of related goods and services can also be neglected. It could have

influence on the demand for live bookings when for example; all midsize acts that normally would be booked on a Saturday evening all together increase their wages considerably and venues decide to book cheaper, smaller bands instead. However, there is no sign that this was the case during the experimental time of thesis. Therefore, this influence is neglected.

5) Characteristics of the good / service or the expectations of the good / service –

When is expected that the price of good will go up in the future, short-term demand will increase. When is expected that the next version of a computer will not be as good as this one, short-term demand will increase.

This factor plays an important role in the experiment of this thesis. The live performance of a band can be considered to be experience good, because value can only be determined after experience (Nelson, 1970). Later on in this Theoretical Framework, the difference between experience goods and search goods will be explained more thoroughly. Because of the experience goods characteristics, the expectations of the good become an extremely important factor in determining demand. This means that the reputation of the band and their expected quality become increasingly important. Participating in Popronde will influence the expectations of the live performance, because it is acting as a certifier (Caves, 2000). On top of that, there are the media platforms that are able to give some bands more attention than other during Popronde. The expectations are that these media platforms will strongly enhance the certifier-effect of Popronde and influence the demand for live performances expressed by bookers of venues.

Standard assumptions in the theory of demand

The demand analysis explains how any change in the above factors, also causes change in the quantity demanded of the good or service. To rely on this theory any time, standard economics has made some assumptions about consumer behavior that are stated below:

1) Rational behavior – Consumers maximize their (expected) utility and are able to order their preferences for goods and services rationally. Therefore, this also assumes consumers

are aware of their preferences. They spend their limited resources on the goods and services that make them best off. Some explain this as the consumer having perfect information about all available options and consequences, while others state a 'softer' version of this story where consumers act on limited information due to costly product searches. When assuming the latter to be more often the case in real life, certifiers as Popronde play an important role in the determination of demand. Information about the product is facilitated to the consumer, in this case the booker of the venue. The information even reaches the audience that is represented by the booker. The participation in Popronde expresses a quality signal, making it easier for the rational consumer to decide upon limited information.

2) **Tastes and preferences are given and stable over time** – The article 'De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum' by scholars George Stigler and Gary Becker (1997) states famously that tastes 'are stable over time and similar among people'. The authors do explain various 'commodities', like music appreciation or visual art appreciation. However, the consumer's taste for a given commodity is essentially the same and in a constant relationship with all its other tastes. So, they argue, it is not the taste of the consumer that alters, but the consumption capital they have built for the one commodity instead of the other commodity. According to Stigler and Becker, this makes why some people choose music over visual art; because they yield more utility from listening to music since they have built consumption capital for music, not because their initial taste for music differs from that of someone else.

3) **Consumers decide independently of each other** – This assumes that consumers only focus on maximizing their own utility and are insensitive to choices of their social surrounding. This might not be the case for bookers of venues, since they represent the choice of the audience instead of their own choice. It is especially for them important to pick up signals in both their own social surroundings and those of their audience. Also, they will closely monitor the actions of other bookers on the market. The demand for an artist might go up when he plays at several other venues throughout the country, but might go down when the artist plays in venues close by; the booker might decide to offer his audience something they cannot find in the area.

These assumptions are sometimes useful and should not be forgotten in analyzing demand schedules for cultural products. However, since the cultural industry displays specific products features, it is important to allow for peculiar circumstances. As Towse (2010) explains, the standard economic theory of consumer behavior needs to be extended when dealing with cultural products. It is difficult to predict demand for cultural products, but theory shows how some factors play an important role. This thesis is taking those as a starting point and makes an attempt to show how demand comes about in this particular case of the Popronde.

2. Demand uncertainty in the cultural market

The assumptions as discussed above are not completely satisfying when cultural markets are being studied. The theory needs some adjustments in order to be used for cultural goods and services, which in some respects are different from ‘ordinary’ products. There is great demand uncertainty for cultural products; some of them will gain commercial success and their revenue will far exceed the production cost, while other products only attract a few paying customers (Caves, 2000). The demand schedule for cultural products forms in such a distinct way partly because; (1) products of arts and culture deal with novelty and new experiences of which (2) consumers cannot be fully informed before consuming, (3) people listen to experts and/ or follow a crowd for value formation and (4) there is little known about how tastes and preferences for new products are formed (Towse, 2010). In the following chapter, these distinct features of products in cultural markets will be discussed more in depth.

Product differentiation

Cultural products have the distinct characteristic to be highly differentiated. Two records cannot be compared with each other although from the outside they might look the same. This is because it is the content that matters, and this content cannot be the same to other content due to copyright enforcement. This means there is no perfect substitute for any cultural product, but there are many close substitutes (Handke, 2010). The cases discussed in this thesis are good examples of this. When looking at the Popronde participants, there is no

perfect substitute for indie rock band A, but there are approximately 30 close substitutes, namely bands in the same genre that are all found qualified enough to participate in the showcase festival Popronde.

When these records have different qualities that are as such recognized by the audience, the records are *vertically differentiated* products. This means there is a sort of ranking, where everybody recognized that record A is better than record B. When they are sold at the same price, record A will always be preferred over record B. If this distinction is not so clear but it is rather a matter of taste, the products are *horizontally differentiated*. This means that when the records are sold at the same price, some consumers will pick A while others pick B. Since there are so many dimensions involved in a cultural product that make whether or not consumers like it, the cultural market has infinite variety (Caves, 2000). This creates infinite possibilities why consumers like or dislike a cultural product and makes that quality is less easy to define than for other, standard products. In the case of this thesis, the show played by a Popronde participant is the product. Since all bands are more or less of the same quality because they are all selected by the same Popronde jury to be qualified enough, one could argue these products are horizontally differentiated. However, some bands are picked as one of the favorites of this year by the media platforms OOR, 3voor12, Never Mind The Hype and 3FM. You could argue that bands with this media endorsement are better than bands without media endorsement. Following this reasoning, the products are vertically differentiated. In general, cultural products exhibit both horizontally differentiated as vertically differentiated characteristics (Caves, 2000).

Experience goods

Cultural goods are often referred to as ‘experience goods’. Nelson (1970) was the first to introduce this concept and he distinguishes between (1) search goods and (2) experience goods. Search goods are goods for which quality and product characteristics can be ascertained before purchase. The consumer will search, inspect, evaluate and compare products with each other, before purchasing. For experience goods on the other hand, central characteristics are not known before purchase and quality can only be experienced after use. The consumer is only able to determine the quality of the product or service after purchasing

it and using it for a while. There are two important points of departure in Nelson's theory, namely: (1) the consumer will search until marginal return of searching equals marginal cost of searching and (2) the consumer knows where he can find relevant information.

In the case of experience goods, product searches will not provide the consumer with direction, since value can only be established after consuming. Nelson (1970) argues that when this is the case, brand reputation starts to play an important role. In the case of experience goods, buying from an incumbent firm reduces quality uncertainty in two ways. First, the consumer can assess earlier released products from the firm that might not be the same, but give a quality signal about the firm. Secondly, the supplier shows professionalism and dedication to a long-term commitment by building a brand and reaching for a well-established position in the industry. The first argument definitely holds for cultural products, where former reputation of the producers involved tends to be important for market success. Another important effect in the case of experience goods is the influence of social surroundings at the starting point of experiencing. The live concert of an artist would fall in the category experience goods. It is difficult to ascertain its value prior to experience since value lays in the experience. Social surroundings will be of great influence regarding the starting point of experiencing. People often visit concerts together with a peer, or they share the great experience they had afterwards. On the other hand could be argued that the live performance is a search good as well. Since the price of a concert ticket is reasonably high, experiencing is costly. Searching is difficult since it will not be totally possible to ascertain all properties before purchase, but through reviews and reputation, some prior knowledge can be obtained.

Cultural economists Kretschmer, Klimis & Ju Choi (1999) distinguished a third category, the one of credence goods. This type of good, introduced in 1973 by Darby and Karni, is explained as a type of good for which the quality is hard to assess, even after consumption. Kretschmer et al., (1999) argue that cultural products fall in this third category, because there is no basis for claiming redress when the product disappoints after consuming. This is true in the market for cultural products, where disliking a live music performance will be largely attributed to personal preferences. However, one could also argue that in the case of live performances, at least some quality can be determined. It can be determined whether

or not the band played, which already assesses a certain quality. One could say something about the quality of the sound system and so on.

The concept of experience goods is also used in another way in the field of cultural economics. The discussion in this field shows how the enjoyment of the arts increases with experience and how this assumption is the basis for concepts as ‘rational addiction’, ‘learning by doing’ and building ‘consumption capital’. However, this is beyond the scope of this thesis so these theories will not be discussed in-depth here.

Incomplete information

As seen in the above chapter, cultural goods are experience goods about which consumers have incomplete information before purchase. However, Caves (2000) explains that it is not only the consumer that does not have full information, but also the producer. Producers do not know whether the audience will like the products. At the same time the consumers do not know whether he/she will like the cultural product offered, since a creative product is an experience good and it is subject to subjective evaluation. It is a *nobody knows* situation, where there is no *asymmetric information* between the two parts but *symmetrical ignorance* (Caves, 2000).

The demand for cultural products is of influence in creative activity, production, distribution and marketing. The audience expects cultural products to be of some level of artistry on the one hand, but it is extremely difficult to predict the success of a performance or product, so the question is how much are you going to invest, being a cultural producer. The industry is characterized by fads and fashions, since tastes and preferences for cultural products tend to be quite subjective (Caves, 2000; Rothenbuhler & McCourt, 2004). A cultural product can enjoy extreme success at a given moment in time, but this is no guarantee for long-term success. In the music industry this phenomenon is reinforced by the development of music genres, which also tend to develop quickly and unpredictably. In order to overcome such uncertainty, marketing has become almost as important as the intrinsic qualities of the cultural product. The ‘humdrum’ input (Caves, 2000) such as record labels and managers, rely for a large part on promotional activities and the final product that

becomes successful can be as good of quality as the product that did not gain any market success.

Demand uncertainty is exacerbated by oversupply or congestion of the market, which is another feature cultural markets are known for. The number of different, reproducible cultural product offered on the market is almost constantly exceeding the demand for it. Consumers are not even able to inform their selves about all products supplied (Handke, 2010). This has several implications in the market for cultural products, the first being consumers who look for quality signals. This will be discussed more in depth later on in this theoretical framework. Secondly, in situations where many people can choose between many options, a small part of the whole will get a disproportionate amount of attention, not due to actions of the people involved in the system (Shirky, 2004). Shirky shows how in many situations, 80% of the demand covers 20% of the products. It is often referred to as 'power law' or '80-20 rule', and was first researched by Vilfredo Pareto in 1935, but repeated by many others (Pareto, 1935; Samuel and Thomas, 2009; Blot Guillaume, Saurel and Rousseaux, 2015; Shirky, 2004). Thirdly, there will be fierce competition among cultural suppliers to get their output even noticed. It is not unusual that the marketing budget for cultural products far exceeds the production budget. Handke (2010) mentions how oversupply can be self-reinforcing. Because there is such a large offering for example in the music industry, record companies tend to follow the strategy of releasing many records in order to get one, so-called 'cash-cow' in return. The expectation is that at least one of those artists will become successful and return the investment made for all the other artists. This way, the record labels contribute to the congested market.

There are many studies that contributed to the question of why creators still feel the urge to supply more products to the already congested market. For example Kretschmer et al., (1999) point out the peculiar psychological satisfaction that this kind of expressive activity generates. The intrinsic motivation of creators can hardly be denied. However, extensive research on the determinants regarding the supply of cultural products is beyond the scope of this research.

In most of the cases, quality uncertainty will not be totally overcome by searching. Because of the infinity of close substitutes that is available to consumers, the cost – in time

and money- spend on inspecting all possible options is extremely high. That is why consumers of cultural products try to inform themselves about a fraction of all possible options (Handke, 2010). In this search, they will rely on help from several market signals. This includes, among other things, the behavior and recommendations of other consumers, expert opinions and certifiers. In the next chapter, these market signals to overcome quality uncertainty will be discussed more in-depth.

3. Quality signaling

Consumers look for quality signals because there is quality uncertainty, infinite variety and oversupply in the market for cultural products. The difficulties are real for as well producers as consumers of novelty; nobody knows what will be a success and what will not. In theory, a consumer is looking for the best transaction to make on the market. This requires information about the product, which costs time and effort. There are several ways to reduce these costs, like by building own experience, using the expert opinions or observing choices from others. According to O'Reilly (1982), there are six factors that influence people's decisions in what information source to use. These are: (1) quality of information, (2) accessibility, (3) trustworthiness of the source, (4) more uncertainty about the product requires more information use, (5) and the same is true for complexity, (6) characteristics of the decision maker (O'Reilly, 1982). On the market for cultural goods there are different dynamics to observe regarding quality signaling. Below, several of these signals will be discussed.

Herd behavior/ snowball effect

One important quality signal is the behavior of other consumers, which is often referred to as herd behavior or bandwagon effect. Towse explains (2010) that consumers tend to follow the crowd and how they do not make individualistic choices but are influenced by other people. They base their decision on what other consumers have chosen before. This disempowers the assumption in neo-classical demand theory of the consumer making individual choices. Caves (2000, pp. 180) adds to this that it is not a complete irrational way of behaving because it is common rationale that such a large group is not often wrong. However, as Caves points out, it

supplies consumers with hunches but they are definitely not certainties. Also, in the case of cultural products, it could be perceived that the product's value increases with the amount of people that consume it because part of the value lies in being able to discuss this product with other users. When a large group consumes a certain product, it will be easier for the consumer to find like-minded consumers and discuss the value of the product after consumption.

Kretschmer et al. (1999) even argue that in the case of experience and credence goods, determination of quality is dependent on what other people think of this products, sometimes before consumption, but in many cases after consumption, for example when you read a good review about a recorded album you disliked when consuming it. Herd behavior can cause a tendency towards conspicuous consumption, a concept that is explained by Towse (2010) as buying a product to show off towards your social surroundings. Cultural products tend to be appropriate for this since culture is a shared good and reflects common values. Consumers can use cultural products to show their preferences to peers and built an identity for themselves.

Certifiers

As discussed above, due to several characteristics of cultural products and product search being costly, people rely on other things when they make their consumption decision. One of those other things is the knowledge of a certifier, which will reduce information asymmetry and decrease the cost of their search (Towse, 2010). These people, institutions or media that claim to be independent and experienced are an important source for people to obtain information about cultural products.

Because there is a large supply in the cultural market of differentiated products, it will cost the consumer much time and money to refine their own cultural taste and find the best suitable product on its own. The producer's marketing actions are often biased and in favor of its own artist. The advertised information helps the consumers in their choice, but the information supplied is usually quite limited. Therefore, the consumer relies on certifiers, who are, or pretend to be, independent and experienced critics and advisors.

The reason why consumers tend to rely on these certifiers is because of their neutral and objective character. They are able to provide a lengthy description of the cultural product that

would not be believed by consumers if it would come from the producer, because the producer has a commercial incentive (Caves, 2000). It is not very usual that the producer of a record writes a lengthy review about the record, giving away all its properties and offering a valuation. However, a certifier is able to do this and consumers will easier accept this. Third-party review information coming from critics, opinion leaders and industry experts is valuable to consumers because it is independent information and provides consumers with guidance and reference about the product's qualities. Especially when consumers try to estimate aesthetic, historical or authentic value of products, the input of experts is essential. This is because particular skills, experience and training will contribute to a better value determination. It is likely to assume the expert will make a better decision regarding the cultural products than the consumer (Throsby, 2001). On the other hand, the independence and therefore worthiness of the certifier can be questioned, because producers of cultural products will have a great incentive to bribe or strongly influence the certifier in order to get a positive review. Another disadvantage is to be found in the possibility that the taste of the certifier does not correspond with the taste of the consumer.

To overcome these problems of independence and tastes that do not correspond, the consumer needs to find a certifier they trust and who will select the available products in line with their taste. The Popronde in the Netherlands acts like a certifier for music consumers in several ways. The organization of Popronde exists of a production team as well as a jury containing over forty music industry professionals (Maarten Middendorp, personal communication, Feb 8, 2018). They have built a strong reputation for themselves because several participants of Popronde became successful bands. This is also how they place themselves in the market: as scouts of new talent in the Dutch band circuit (Popronde Nederland, 2017). The jury of Popronde selects 150 bands out of over 1000 applications. They are not affiliated to any commercial organization, which makes them an independent and experienced certifier. This research attempts to find out if the Dutch bookers of venues rely on the Popronde as a certifier and to what extent they base their consumption decision on this.

4. Fads and Fashions

As extensively discussed above, demand for cultural products is extremely hard to predict. A pattern that is often seen in the demand schedule is that of fads and fashions: periods of exponential growth, followed by rapid collapses of demand (Handke, 2010). Also discussed extensively above, consumers depend on all sorts of quality signals. The decisions are interdependent, which means as much as they influence other consumers. This influence may lead to self-enforcing feedback loops, according to Kretschmer et al. (1999). The consumer's tendency to consume something that is recommended through their social surroundings, leads to favoring products that have already become known in some way.

Discussing the cultural products that we consume with peers enriches our experience with the products and helps us to value it. It is more accessible to discuss a popular song on the radio with peers, compared with an obscure record that only few people have listened to, just because discussion opportunities are more limited for the latter. This makes the existence of fads and fashion advantageous for the consumer (Caves, 2000). The following model by Kretschmer et al. (1999) explains the lifecycle of fads and fashions, building on the knowledge about experience good characteristics of cultural products, and assuming consumer interaction is a determining factor in demand formation (Handke, 2010).

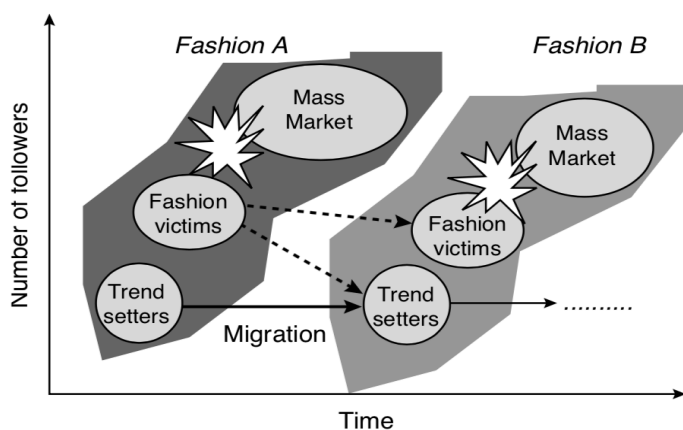


Figure 2. Critical mass model

Image 1. Critical Mass Model (Kretschmer et al., 1999)

Kretschmer et al. (1999) define the market for cultural products along four characteristics: 1) there tends to be oversupply; 2) there tends to be quality uncertainty; 3) consumers form a network of some kind and 4) demand for creative goods reverses in cyclic ways. The latter two characteristics are determinant in the existence of fads and fashions in the cultural industry. The concept of network effects is based on arguments of social contagion and increasing returns for cultural products. A typical example of a network effect is found for example in IT: there are only two leading computer software suppliers because these are the platforms all the other applications have built their products for. The more clients the platform serves, the more applications will be built for it, the more clients it will attract, and so forth.

This is a technological network effect that will usually lead to monopolistic power. However, in the market for cultural products, this does not have to be the case. This is due to the fact that consuming one cultural product does not exclude you from consuming another; in fact it might encourage you because you are building up cultural capital (Caves, 2000). Also, fads and fashions in the cultural industry come and go, and the fact that they are not so popular at this moment in time does not mean they will not become popular again in the future. For example the records of the Beatles are still extremely popular. This is in contrast to examples like the cassette recorder, a product that disappeared almost completely from the market when the CD was introduced. However, also in this example, some products make a comeback, like vinyl.

Because of positive network externalities, cultural products also tend to be subject to fads and fashions. We want to consume things other people also consume and because we value the social interaction that comes with it, it is likely that some cultural products become extremely popular while others are not even noticed. After a while, these positive externalities may turn negative because it reached the 'mainstream'. This is the point where trendsetters and maybe also fashion victims will lose their interest and move on to the next fashion. This is called *demand reverse* and causes the cyclic demand schedule of cultural products (Kretschmer et al., 1999).

3. Methodology

This chapter will provide a clear overview of how this research project is conceived and carried out. It will provide a general description of the research design and methods used, explain what kind of sampling method is used and how data is collected. It will emphasize both the strong aspects of this research design as its challenges.

Research Design

The aim of this research is to answer the following research questions:

- (1) How does participating in the showcase festival Popronde influence the demand for live performances expressed by bookers of venues?
- (2) How does media endorsement during Popronde influence the demand for live performances expressed by bookers of venues?

To answer these research questions, the researcher has chosen for an experimental research design. The goal of an experiment is to identify causal effects, to demonstrate how something causes something else. In a proper experiment, a treatment of which the researcher thinks it will cause an effect is applied to many respondents. Observations from before treatment are compared with observations from after treatment and ideally, there is a control group that did not receive the specific treatment but holds all other characteristics of the treatment group, in order to exclude other factors that could have caused the difference in observations (Handke & Herzog, 2017). In order to conduct a perfect experiment like described above, most often it is necessary to have access to a controlled laboratory setting with no other influences.

Unfortunately this is often difficult due to limited resources, but also because in social sciences, where humans and organizations are often the research subjects, one should take into account that human behavior might differ from normal in controlled laboratory setting (Handke & Herzog, 2017).

However, although it might be difficult to conduct a perfect experiment, this must not be a reason not to make an attempt. There are some considerable benefits to mention in favor

of an experimental design. First, it requires the researcher to think clearly about a framework for more targeted research with regard to time framework and data collection. It can be difficult to determine how much data will be enough for a research project. In the case of an experiment, the researcher is forced to think thoroughly about what data is going to be able to identify the causal effect the researcher is trying to prove is true. Secondly, an experiment does not necessarily require complex data analysis methods, when a research design is conducted with a clearly defined, strong treatment. It is for the above reasons that the researcher has chosen to conduct an experimental research design to answer the research question addressed in this thesis.

The experimental design to answer the research questions stated above is as follows. The cases under investigation are Popronde participants. The treatment in this experiment is the endorsement from media institutions that are affiliated to Popronde. This makes that we have group (1) that contains Popronde participants with media endorsement and the control group (2) that contains Popronde participants without media endorsement. The dependent variable is in this case the demand expressed by bookers of the club circuit in The Netherlands. This is reflected in the variables ‘amount of gigs played’ and ‘audience’. The latter variable is constructed from the amount of gigs played times capacity of the venue. Below, this is made visually clear.

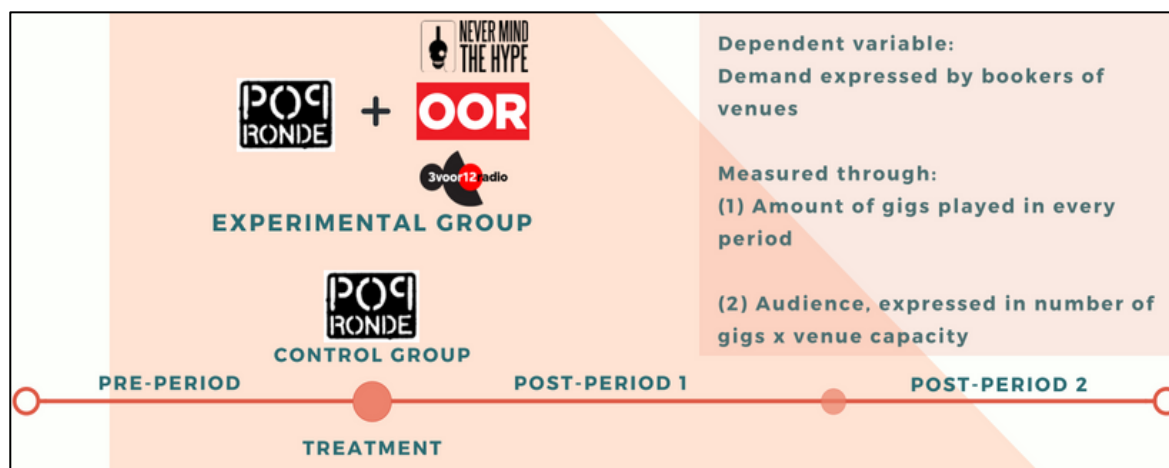


Image 2. Experimental Design

The cases in this research project are bands or artists who participate in the Dutch showcase festival Popronde. The sample chosen for investigation contains all bands that participated in the year 2015. 2015 is chosen because for this year, it was possible to look at one year before participating in Popronde, and two consecutive years after participating. The time frame of at least one year before is chosen because there tends to be some seasonality during the year in the demand for live performances. For example, the months October and November are mostly filled with shows in the club circuit, while in June and July, there are mostly festivals going on. The post period of two years is chosen to identify any short-term as well as long-term effect. Every period (pre, post1 and post2) lasts exactly one year.

The dependent variable in this research project is the demand for live performances, expressed by bookers of venues. To keep things comprehensible the researcher has chosen to focus on shows in the club circuit, not lastly because for these shows it is possible to determine the venue capacity. In case of a festival this is more difficult, because there are often multiple stages with different capacities and also time slots will play a role in terms of audience size. For every case it is determined how many shows they played and what the venue capacity for that specific show was.

The hypothesis is that participating in Popronde in itself will not directly influence the demand for live performances, but that participating in Popronde and getting endorsed by one of the media institutions who are affiliated with the Popronde, will influence the demand for live performances. The endorsement by media institutions will act here as a certifier that steers demand in a certain direction. A certifier is an independent and experienced person or institution that is trusted by consumers to select cultural products for them (Caves, 2000). Influencing in this thesis means that it is expected that demand for live performances will increase after participating in Popronde, and the premises is that it will increase more for bands who are endorsed by media institutions compared to bands that are not endorsed. The expectation is the increase will be visible in the number of bookings, as well as in the size of the venue they play in.

In order to research this properly, it is important to determine whether or not the cases enjoyed media endorsement. This is done on the basis of articles coming from these particular

media institutions in where they announce their favorite participants of 2015. This certification means also that the bands that are selected will play a show in a venue that is adopted by this particular media institution. The endorsement is therefore present online, as well as offline. Other variables like the amount of shows the respondents played during Popronde and the musical genre are collected in order to serve as control variables.

Sampling

The process of sampling the research units under analysis in this thesis has been done through strata sampling, a probability sampling technique (Babbie, 2015). First, the population that existed out of bands who participated in the Popronde in the year 2015 is divided into subcategories, the different strata. In this case, the subcategories existed out of bands that got media endorsement from OOR, 3voor12, Never Mind The Hype and bands that did not get any media endorsement at all. Some bands have been selected for Popronde 2015 but did not play any show, so the researcher considered these bands as not participating. Through this selection, the group of participants without any media endorsement resulted in 57 bands. There were 45 participants who did receive media endorsement. For all participants, multiple measurements are collected.

Collection

The Popronde archive was the source of information for the cases in this research project. This is the place where information on band name, genre and the number of shows played during Popronde is found. Information regarding media endorsement is collected from online articles coming from the different media institutions and checked in the Popronde archive. The data reflecting the demand for live performances is collected at the website www.podiuminfo.nl. This is an open source website where venues as well as artists as well as audience can announce the shows they are going to play or have played. These dates are collected for a time period of three consecutive years. Beneath is a table that consists an overview of the concept and variables that are measured.

Concept	Variables	Source
Success/popularity	<u>Dependent variable</u>	
	Demand expressed by bookers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of gigs • Audience (amount of gigs x venue capacity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.festivalinfo.nl • Websites of venues for the capacities
	<u>Independent variable</u>	
Media endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3voor12 talent (yes/no) • OOR talent (yes/no) • NMTH talent (yes/no) 	The websites and news articles of the relevant media institutions
Demand during Popronde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of shows played during Popronde 	Popronde archive
Characteristics of artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genre 	Popronde archive

Table 1. Variable overview

The data collection went relatively smooth, although the workload was higher than expected since it was sometimes difficult to determine what the venue capacity exactly was. This is because in most venues there are multiple halls which all hold different capacities. Sometimes this information was available through the website www.podiuminfo.nl, but sometimes it took some more effort to find this information. The researcher collected all data. Some extra information about venue capacity came from befriended music industry professionals who work with these numbers on a daily basis.

4. Analysis

The goal of this analysis is to find out if there is an effect on the demand for live performances noticeable for bands that participate in Popronde. Furthermore, the goal is to see whether this effect is stronger for bands that received media endorsement during the Popronde, compared to bands that did not receive media endorsement during the Popronde. The demand for bookings is measured in amount of shows in the club circuit the bands play and the average venue capacity of booking for participants of Popronde. The first step is to show some descriptive statistics for the cases in this research project.

Table 2. Univariate descriptives

	Mean	Max.	Min.
Number of shows during Popronde	10.08	27	1
Amount of shows pre-period	2.93	25	0
Amount of shows post-period1	3.70	25	0
Amount of shows post-period2	2.54	18	0
Venue capacity pre-period	318.68	1000	30
Venue capacity post-period1	385.50	1973	80
Venue capacity post-period2	559.73	5500	80

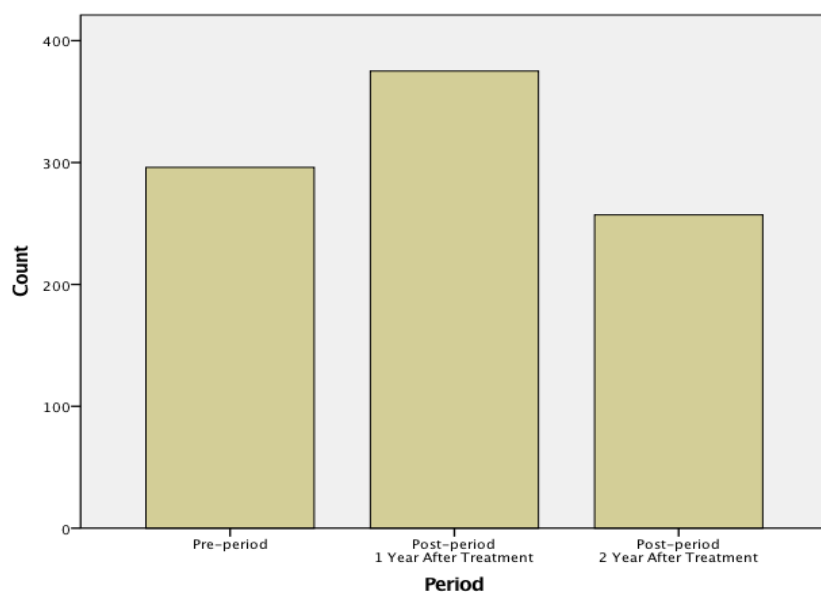
The number of cases is 101. The above table shows the numbers for the most important variables in this research project. As we can see in the table above, the amount of average amount of shows played increases in the first period after treatment and decreases again in post-period2. The venue capacity keeps increasing during the whole time period. This will be explained further on in this analysis.

Shows during pre-test and post-test 1&2

The amount of shows the band played all together has increased in postperiod 1 with 26%. In the second period, however, the number of shows decreases again. The number of shows played in postperiod 2 is even lower than the number of shows played in the preperiod. The possible reasons for this trend is explained further on in this analysis. The following table and bar chart show the amount of shows for all respondents together.

Table 3. Number of shows

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
Pre-period	296	31.5	31.9	31.9
Post-period1	375	39.9	40.4	72.3
Post-period2	257	27.4	27.7	100.0



Graph 1. Amount of shows in every period

To see whether or not this difference is significant, the paired sample T-test is used. Firstly is tested whether or not the mean of the preperiod is significantly different from the mean of

postperiod 1. Secondly, I tested whether or not the mean of the preperiod is significantly different from the mean of postperiod 2. Both outcomes have no statistical relevance with a P value of 0.092 for the difference between preperiod and postperiod1 and a P value of 0.453 for the difference between preperiod and postperiod2. However, these are values for the whole group of respondents, there is no distinction yet between respondents who did get media endorsement and respondents who did not. It is expected that these groups differ much from each other so that the outcomes for both groups separately will show significant results.

Popronde shows

The following SPSS output shows the difference between groups on the variable ‘number of Popronde shows.’ The bands that are endorsed by media platform OOR play on average the most shows (17.38). The bands that are endorsed by media platform 3voor12 play on average 16.33 shows. There are some bands that are endorsed by more than one media platform; they play on average 14.56 shows. The bands with no media endorsement at all play on average 9.13 shows, and the bands with media endorsement from Never Mind The Hype (NMTH) play 6.30 shows on average during Popronde. These differences between groups are significant with a P value of 0.000. Although the number of shows played **during** Popronde is not information we are looking for, the outcome does show there is a noticeable difference in demand during Popronde for participants with, and participants without media endorsement.

Table 4. Shows during Popronde, differences between groups (p.=0.000)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OOR	17.38	6.209	8
3voor12	16.33	7.071	9
NMTH	6.30	3.994	23
No media endorsement	9.13	5.385	53
More than one media endorsement	14.56	7.844	9
Total	10.08	6.564	102

Between group differences in number of shows

It is expected that the outcome of this research project will show that participating in Popronde will not always influence the demand for the band, expressed in the amount of bookings. However, participating in Popronde as well as being mentioned as one of the favorites of OOR magazine, 3voor12 magazine and/or Never Mind The Hype, will influence the demand for the band, expressed in the amount of bookings. The group without media endorsement acts as a control group.

To see whether or not the groups differ significantly from each other, two extra variables are constructed, one being the difference between pretest and posttest 1 (diff1), the other being the difference between pretest and posttest 2 (diff2). The goal is to find out if the difference between pretest and the posttests differs significantly in the group with media endorsement (group 1) and the group without media endorsement (group 0). In other words, the question that is to be answered is the following: ‘Did the amount of bookings for group 1 increase more than the amount of bookings in group 0?’.

A univariate analysis of variance is carried out to see if there is a significant difference for group 1 (with media endorsement) and group 0 (without media endorsement) between pretest and posttest1. This was the case, as can be seen in the graph below. The average difference between pretest and posttest was +2.600 for respondents with media endorsement, while respondents without media endorsement actually performed less in the year after treatment than the year before; the average difference for this group was -0.6207. This is a statistically significant difference with a p value of 0.00.

Table 5. Difference between pre-test and posttest1 for both groups (p.=0.000)

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
No media endorsement (0)	-0.6207	3.9624	58
Media endorsement (1)	2.600	4.9901	45
Total	0.7998	4.7003	103

Afterwards, the same test is carried out to see if there is a significant difference between pretest and posttest 2. Also in this test there is a significant difference between the group with media endorsement and the group without media endorsement. It is less significant compared with the test above, but with a p value of 0.048 still, within the boundaries used ($< p$. value 0.05 = significant), significant.

Table 6. Difference between pre-test and posttest2 for both groups (p.=0.048)

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
No media endorsement (0)	-1.1897	4.0586	58
Media endorsement (1)	0.7111	5.5662	45
Total	-0.3592	4.8444	103

The same test is carried out once more, to see if there is a significant difference between the value of the pretest and the average value of posttest 1 and 2 for respondents with and respondents without media endorsement. This is also the case. The group of respondents with media endorsement plays on average 1.6556 shows **more** in the entire postperiod than in the preperiod. The group of respondents without media coverage plays on average 0.9474 shows **less** in the post period. This is significant with a p value of 0.001.

Table 7. Difference between pre-test and average of post1&2 for both groups (p.=0.001)

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
No media endorsement (0)	-0.9474	3.7864	58
Media endorsement (1)	1.6556	4.2424	45
Total	-0.2010	4.1805	103

The following table gives an overview of the comparisons of means that are carried out in the analysis so far and shows whether or not these differences are significant. This table shows us that there is a difference between the average number of shows played during pretest and posttest. However, this is no significant difference for the whole population. It implies that for some of the respondents the treatment causes a higher mean during posttest, but not for all of them. The expectation is that media endorsement plays an important role in the formation of the demand for live performances. Therefore, the respondents have been divided in two separate groups; one with media endorsement and one without. The results confirm the expectation. There are significant results that show differences between the two groups under investigation. According to the results can be said that within the population, participating in Popronde as well as receiving media endorsement from one of the three media platforms mentioned before will increase the number of shows played in the two years after treatment. The largest increase shows in the first year after treatment.

Table 8. Overview

Group	Pretest	Posttest1	Posttest2	Posttest 1-2
Tot. Cases (average)	2.88	3.67 (p.=0.092)		
Tot. Cases (average)	2.88		2.52 (p.=0.453)	
No media endorsement (0)		-0.6207 (p.=0.000)	-1.1897 (p.=0.048)	-0.9474 (p.=0.001)
Media endorsement (1)		+2.600 (p.=0.000)	+0.7111 (p.=0.048)	+1.6556 (p.=0.001)

Media endorsement – Does it matter which media institution has mentioned the band?

In the analysis above, the distinction is made between bands that did receive media endorsement and bands that did not receive any media endorsement. There are three different media institutions that have an active collaboration with the Popronde, as explained in the introduction of this thesis. It will be interesting to see if there is a noticeable difference between these three media institutions, because this information would give extra weight or importance to this specific media institution. To see if it is possible to determine this, the group of respondents with media endorsement is further broken down into groups who received media endorsement from OOR, from 3voor12 and from Never Mind The Hype. There are some cases with more than one media endorsement, there is a separate group created for these cases.

The following table shows the difference in the means of pretest and posttest1, when dividing the cases in more specific groups. A univariate analysis is carried out to see if there are differences within the total group of cases. From the descriptive statistics we can tell there is a big difference between these groups, however there is no significant outcome. This is most certainly the case because there are too little respondents in each separate group. However, given the low number of observations, $p=0.086$ is a noteworthy result.

Unfortunately it is in this moment of time not possible to collect more data on this matter. This is the case because the media platform Never Mind The Hype was not active yet in 2014, so this year is excluded in this type of research. The data from 2016 is not suitable because it is not long ago enough to collect data for postperiod2. It might be a suggestion for further research to look more closely to the role of every media institution for itself, in order to come up with even more detailed information about their role in steering the demand for live performances.

Table 9. Difference between pre-test and posttest1 (p.=0.086)

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OOR	+2.75	4.979	8
3voor12	+3.44	6.064	9
NMTH	+1.74	3.671	23
No media endorsement	-0.30	3.262	53
More than one media endorsement	+0.33	9.695	9
Total	+0.78	4.719	102

Venue Capacity

The next part of the analysis will focus not only on the number of shows played, but also on the capacity of the venue. As the above part of the analysis shows, bands participating in Popronde who receive media endorsement experience an increase in bookings. However, this increase is not overwhelming, when translating it into what it actually means. The numbers above show that in the first year after Popronde, the bands that received media endorsement played on average 2.6 more shows than the year before Popronde. The next question that arises from these numbers is: Could it be the case that the bands not only played more shows after participating and receiving media attention, but also played in larger venues? The following part of the analysis provides an explanation to this question.

The table below shows the average venue capacity in pretest, posttest1 and posttest2. The average capacity of a venue played in during the pretest period is 318.68, in posttest1 it is 385.50 and in posttest2 it is 559.73. What is interesting to see are the N values in this table. Some bands played no gigs in one of the periods under inquiry, so not all respondents have a value for each period. It is interesting to see how postperiod2 has only 45 bands that played gigs during this period, but that the average capacity of the venue has increased with 75.6% compared to the pretest. This implies that the bands that are still active and play gigs in postperiod2, on average play in larger venues.

Table 10. Average venue capacities

	N	Mean	Max.	Min.
Average capacity pretest	80	318.68	1000	30
Average capacity post1	73	385.50	1973	80
Average capacity post2	45	559.73	5500	80

Venue capacity times number of shows played

Even more interesting to see is the average venue capacity times the number of shows the band played. This will estimate the size of the audience the bands play for, which will reflect partly their popularity. Therefore, new variables are conducted for each time period: PeoplePre, PeoplePost1 and PeoplePost2. Again the differences between preperiod and postperiod1 and preperiod and postperiod2 are calculated for this variable, to see whether or not these differences differ significantly for the group with and the group without media endorsement.

As you can see in the tables below, there is a significant difference between both groups between the preperiod and postperiod1. For the group without media endorsement, audience decreased on average with 190.88. For the group with media endorsement, audience increased on average with 1847.64. This outcome is significant with a p-value of 0.001.

When we take a closer look at the difference between the preperiod and postperiod2, the difference is obvious, but the significance level of 0.05 is just not met. For the group without media endorsement, audience decreased on average with 131.93. For the group with media endorsement, audience increased on average with 967.64. This outcome is almost significant with a p-value of 0.057.

Table 11. Overview for changes in audience (shows x capacity)

Group	Posttest1	Posttest2
No media endorsement (0)	-190.88 (p.=0.001)	-131.93 (p.=0.057)
Media endorsement (1)	+1847.64 (p.=0.001)	+967.64 (p.=0.057)

There are multiple theoretical explanations for the diminishing increase in postperiod2. It could be the case that the live performance activity of bands is subject to long-term seasonality and Popronde tends to fall into ‘high activity’ periods. There are for example more club shows in the months February-April and September-November, while there are more festivals during summertime. If postperiod1 is a period with a higher level of club shows anyway, this pattern will be found in the data as well. However, this is not the case for the data used in this thesis. To avoid this kind of bias, the periods are divided in full years, so this means the preperiod is a full year, postperiod1 is a full year and postperiod2 is a full year. There are no signs or evidence that the market for live performances has increased or decreased dramatically in the years under investigation, so there is no reason to assume the reasoning above is true. Therefore, it is assumed that the live performance activity of the respondents in this research is not subject to long-term seasonality and that there must be another reason for the decrease in postperiod2.

Another explanation is more likely to be true. Most of the bands participating in Popronde are at an early stage in their career. Popronde gives them the opportunity to play many shows in a short period of time (Popronde Nederland, 2017). From previous literature about the music industry it is known that the industry is characterized by oversupply and high entry and exit among producers (artists) (Handke, 2010). There are many bands that try to earn a decent living with their music, but not all of them succeed in this. A more plausible explanation for the decrease in postperiod2 is that participating in Popronde can be seen as some initial success for the band, a step upwards on the ladder towards success. The success, or maybe the lack of success that follows, could lead to a ‘make-or-break’ decision, which for

some bands will lead to breaking up entirely while others will flourish. According to the literature and previous results, this explanation is more likely to hold. Some more analyses are carried out to see whether or not this explanation is likely to be true according to the data collected for this research project.

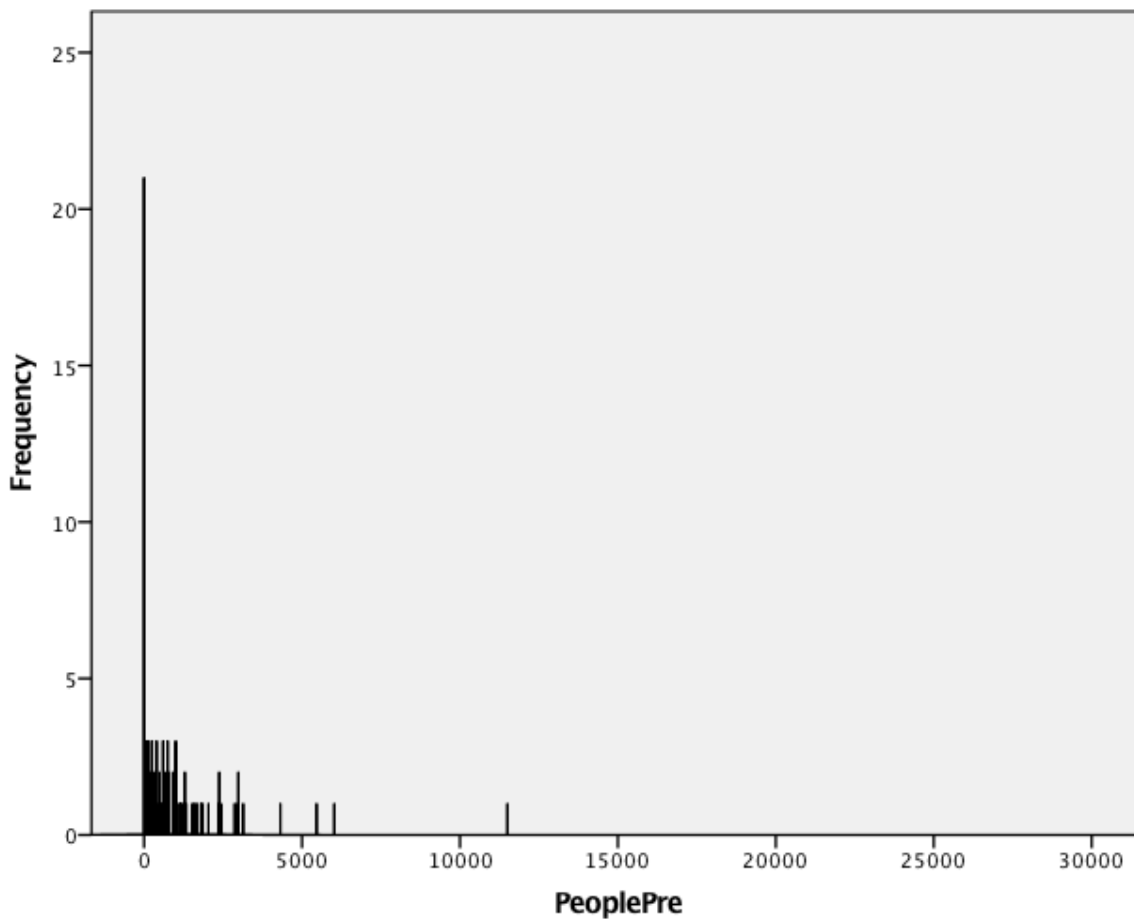
The table below shows some frequency statistics for the number of shows played in every period. What is interesting to notice is the 0 – score in every period, which represents the number of respondents that did not play any club show in that particular period (note that it is possible that the band played festivals during this time; these shows are not taken into consideration in this research project). This can be due to the fact that the band is not touring at that moment because they are recording a new record, for example. However, it is quite striking to see that in postperiod2, way more bands score 0, compared to other periods. In postperiod2 there are 57 bands that score 0 on number of shows played, while in the preperiod only 21 bands do not play a club show. It could be the case that many of the respondents who participated in Popronde 2015, are not active anymore in postperiod2, which is a full year after the last shows of Popronde 2015. It implies some of the bands have broken up, probably because even with the attention generated by Popronde and any media endorsement, there followed no real success.

Table 12. Descriptives on amount of shows

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Valid	Missing	0-score
Pre-test	2.91	3.456	102	0	21
Post-test1	3.69	4.739	102	0	29
Post-test2	2.52	4.445	102	0	57

This is further emphasized by the standard deviation that increases in postperiod1 and postperiod2. A standard deviation that increases implies that the values on this variable lie further away from each other. In this case, it means that some of the bands play a lot more, while others play a lot less (or not at all anymore). This is also a sign of some bands becoming quite successful, while others stay unrecognized or even split up entirely.

The three frequency tables below show also the division between bands who do very well, and bands that are not active at all anymore. The scores are for the variable audience (venue capacity times number of shows). In the first table the score are quit concentrated in the left corner. In preperiod2, this is much more scattered throughout the table. This indicates that while many bands score zero, which means they do not plat at all anymore, and other band score a low score which implies not that much progress, some of the bands move up into the higher segments; they will play more shows for al larger audience. Notice the Y-axes are different in every graph; there is an even larger difference between the 0 score of the preperiod compared to postperiod2 than it looks like at first glance.



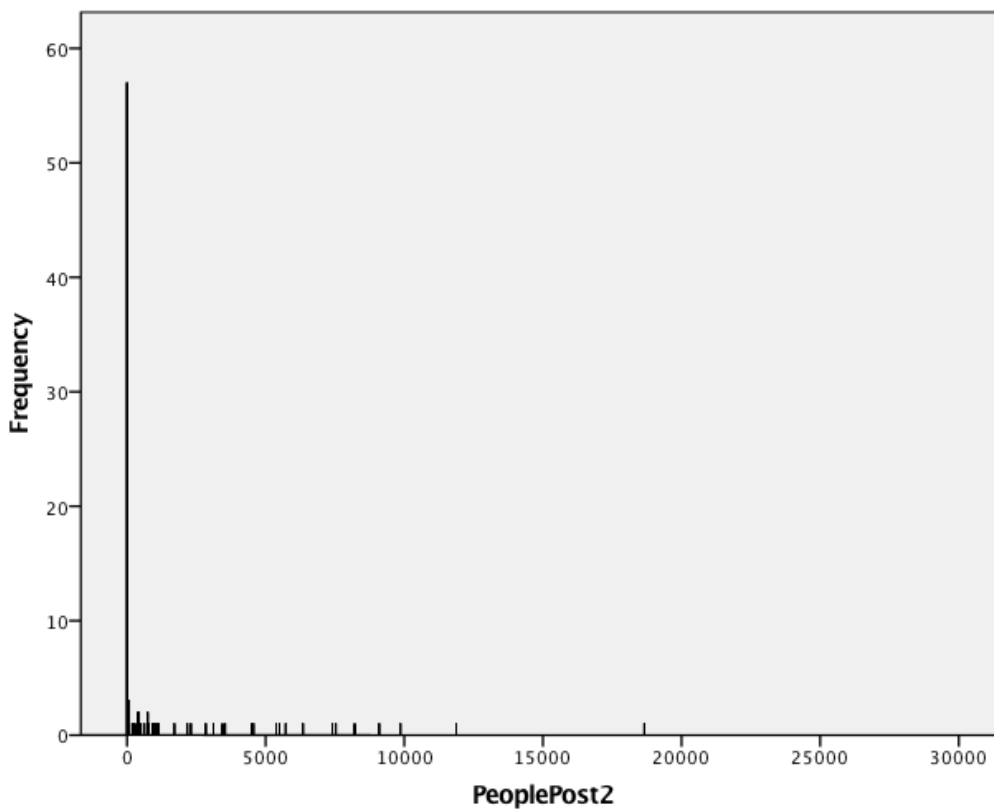
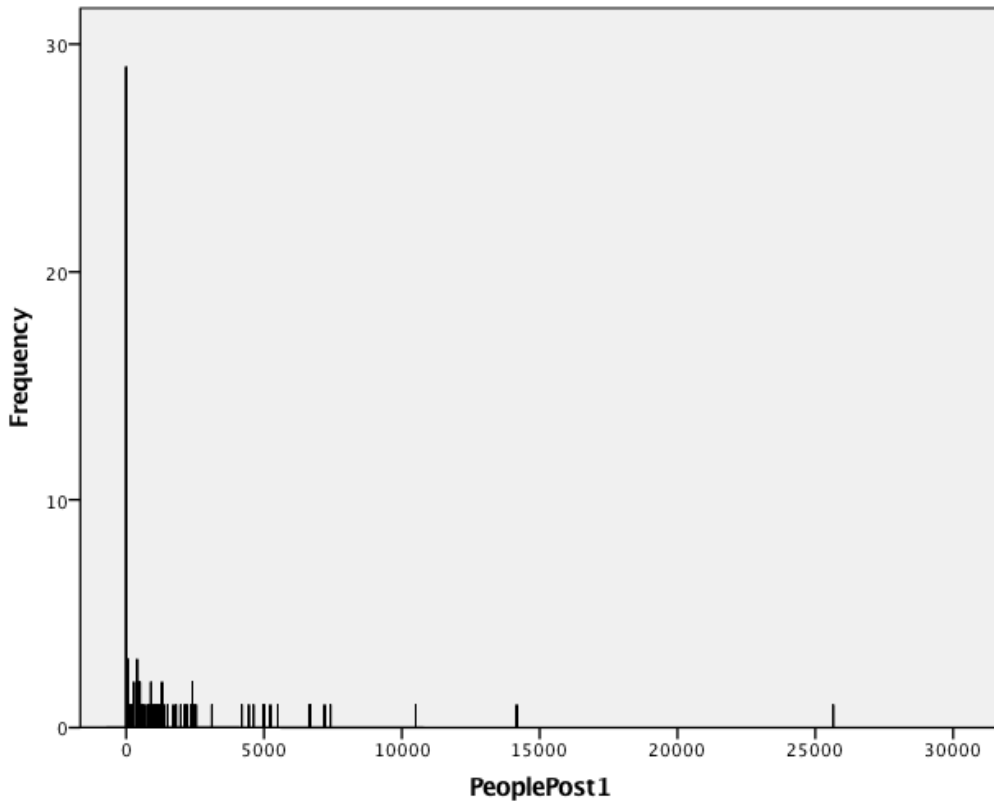


Table 13. Histogram graphs for audience (people) score (venue capacity times number of shows)

5. Conclusion

The data in this research project has shown some interesting findings about the effect of participating in the showcase festival Popronde on the demand for live performances. On top of that, the data showed how supply might be affected as well, which seems to happen when bands choose to quit after a while, with the absence of success. Firstly can be stated, based on the descriptive statistics, that participating in Popronde increases the amount of bookings in the first year after this treatment. However, in the second year after this treatment, the amount of bookings decreases and falls even below the year before participating in the Popronde. Also, the differences between preperiod, postperiod1 and postperiod2 are not significant, which means it cannot be certain that any differences are just an artifact of random variance. This implies that there are differences within the total group of respondents. This corresponds with the hypothesis stating that participating in Popronde will not per se increase the demand expressed by bookers of venues, but participating and receiving media endorsement will have a significant effect on the demand expressed by bookers of venues.

The difference between participants with media endorsement and participants without media endorsement already becomes visible when comparing the amount of shows these different groups played **during** Popronde. The group with media endorsement plays on average more shows compared to the group without media endorsement. Also the demand for live performances, expressed as the amount of shows played, increases significantly more for the group with media endorsement. Even more than that, for the group without media endorsement, the demand for live performances decreases in the first year after participation in Popronde. This outcome is significant. Also in the second year after treatment, the difference between both groups is still present. However, the increase in demand for live bookings is diminishing and the outcome is also less significant, compared with the first year after treatment. Taking all this in consideration, it can be stated that the bands who participate in the Popronde and receive media endorsement, will play more during the two years after their participation than they did the year before Popronde.

The explanation for this finding can be found in several lines of thought. It is likely to assume that bookers of venues will be influenced by the endorsements of media institutions.

Even though they are professionals and it is their job to have knowledge about supply, also for them, the oversupply in the market for cultural products makes it difficult (Hirsch, 1972; Kretschmer et al., 1999) to know about everything that is out there. They will rely on certain certifiers, in this case media institutions. Because those media institutions do not only give their endorsement through a list, but also adopt a stage in every city where the Popronde goes, this will be a convenient place for a booker to go to. This will be the place where the booker has a certain chance of seeing bands he might book in the future. The chance for a band to get noticed by bookers while playing on one of the stages adopted by the media institutions is therefore higher.

Secondly, the booker of the venue might be influenced indirectly by the media endorsement that can come along with participating in Popronde. The booker of the band will work hard to get his or her band endorsed by one of the media platforms, as stated by Maarten Middendorp (M. Middendorp, personal communication, Feb 8, 2018). Prior to Popronde they will reinforce their relationship to make sure the bands of the booker have a higher chance of getting endorsed by the media institution. The following quote explains this:

“Nou kijk, in de Popronde heb je een labeltje van 3voor12, een labeltje van OOR, een labeltje van NMTH OOR geeft altijd 10 bands een labeltje en die adopteren ook in elk stad een podium en daar zetten ze die bands neer, dus het feit dat er 150 bands mee doen, maar jij kan sowieso op een podium spelen waar ze uit 10 bands moeten kiezen, nou dan is er al een grote kans dat je daar kan spelen en als je daar niet kan spelen is er nog een kans op al die andere podia. Maar dus ga ik nu alvast volgende week eten met iemand van OOR, omdat ik nu alvast die plug daar wil zetten omdat ik dat bandje daar wil hebben. En dat soort dingetjes, het is af en toe verschrikkelijk, maar ja zo werkt het wel.”

“So, in Popronde you can receive endorsement from 3voor12, OOR, NMTH... OOR always selects ten bands and they also get the chance to play on their stage. If there are 150 bands participating, and there is one stage where they will choose among ten bands from which you are one, well then there is already a big chance you can play. And otherwise you still have a chance on all the other stages. So next week, I will have dinner with someone from OOR,

because I already want to have my artist noticed. This kind of stuff, sometimes it is horrible, but it is how things work."

Maarten also mentions how he invites bookers of venues to come and watch his bands play, so a deal can be made later on. Bands who already have a booker (this is the booker of the band, not to confuse with the booker of the venue) might have a higher chance of getting endorsed (M. Middendorp, personal communication, Feb 8, 2018) and in turn, being noticed by the booker of the venue because of the relationship both bookers have with each other.

When the dependent variable is not the amount of shows, but amount of shows times venue capacity, the results are even more convincing. The bands that receive media endorsement do not only play more shows after Popronde, but also shows in larger venues. This is a more interesting variable to analyze, because eventually, when a band becomes really successful, it is not so much about how many shows they play anymore, but about the kind and capacity of the venue they play at. By then, it is more about exclusivity than about quantity.

The difference for the group with media endorsement and the group without media endorsement is even more visible when looking at the variable audience. In postperiod1, the audience for the group with media endorsement increased with almost 2000, while the audience for the group without media endorsement decreased with 190. These numbers reflect the venue capacity. In postperiod2, the effect declined a bit but is still present. The audience for the group with media endorsement increased with almost 1000, while the audience for the group without media endorsement decreased with 130. From these numbers, it can be concluded that bands participating in Popronde and receiving media endorsement will increase their outreach significantly, at least in the first year after Popronde. The second year after Popronde also shows an increase, but not as striking as the result for the first year. Possible explanations for this are given below.

For both the variables number of shows and audience, the data shows clear patterns of an initial increase in postperiod1, which declines in postperiod2. This suggests Popronde has a non-permanent effect. An explanation can be found in the fact that most of the bands participating in Popronde are at an early stage in their career. Popronde gives them the

opportunity to play many show in a short period of time to get more known among the public (Popronde Nederland, 2017). From previous literature about the music industry it is known that the industry is characterized by oversupply and high entry and exit among producers (artists) (Handke, 2010). There are many bands that try to earn a decent living with their music, but not all of them succeed in this. Because of this, the decrease in postperiod2 is caused by the fact that participating in Popronde can be seen as some initial success for the band, a step upwards on the ladder towards success. The success or maybe indeed disappointing performance that follows, could lead to a 'make-or-break' decision, which for some bands will lead to breaking up entirely while others will flourish.

6. Reflection

This research project contributes to the ongoing debate about the formation of demand, as well as the role of certifiers in the creative industries. Because of demand uncertainty due to various characteristics of the creative industry it is hard to foresee if a cultural product will reach the consumer and gain popularity. This thesis tried to give a little more insight on how demand develops in the club circuit of The Netherlands for new, fairly inexperienced bands.

The first research design for this project was a quasi-experiment, which means in this case that it is no perfect experiment because there is no perfect control group. The control group would have to exist out of bands that have the same characteristics as bands participating in Popronde. They would not receive the treatment, which is the participation in Popronde, and the posttest scores for both groups would be compared with each other. However, in this situation it would have been virtually impossible to find a control group with the same characteristics as the experimental group, because all respondents, just as the cultural products they deliver, are heterogeneous (Caves, 2000). Therefore, at first, the researcher settled for a quasi-experiment without a control group. Treating the group who did not receive media endorsement as a control group and considering the participation in Popronde including media endorsement as treatment, instead of only the participation in Popronde, solved this problem, however.

There are some limitations to this research project regarding the data that was readily available. Firstly, the researcher doubted whether or not to use information from Google Trend for the variable success/popularity. However, while exploring this possibility it was found out that many of the bands are not ‘popular enough’ yet, to actually get results out of Google Trends. This option is therefore dismissed and the original idea of investigating the effect on demand for live performances is used. Secondly, the information for the variable audience is gathered through venue capacity times number of shows played. The venue capacity is a good starting point for figuring out how many people have attended the show, but is not conclusive on this. It would have been interesting to know whether or not the show was sold out and even more interesting to know how much tickets were sold. Also the price of a ticket could have told us more about the popularity and status of the band at that given time.

However, due to limited resources and time, the researcher decided to gather information about a vast amount of respondents for the amount of shows played and capacity of the venue.

The researcher decided to focus on the shows played in the club circuit in the Netherlands, which means the festivals played are left out of this dataset. This choice is made because for a festival, it is extremely difficult to tell on what kind of stage the band played and how many people attended. The consequence of this choice is, however, that bands that are more suitable for festivals because of any reason or bands that are more suitable for playing in a concert hall will alter the results a bit. However, there are enough cases in the dataset so these outliers will not influence the final result.

It can be said with quite some certainty that the participants of Popronde, who get endorsed by one of the three media institutions, will on average play more shows for a larger audience than the participants of Popronde who do not get endorsed. It would be interesting to see whether or not it matters which of the media institutions endorses the artist. It could be possible, for example, that the media institution with the most followers on social media has the larger influence on the demand for live performances. It was not possible in this research project to give answers to this question, because there were too little respondents within every group separately. However, it would be an interesting avenue for further research to find out which of those media institutions has most influence. To give even more detailed information, one could decide to gather more information about ticket price and number of attendees.

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Appendix A. Interview Maarten Middendorp (8 Feb, 2018)

K: Allereerst over Noorderslag; kan je een beetje vertellen wie er komen op Noorderslag en wat jij gaat doen op Noorderslag?

M: Op Noorderslag komt gewoon de hele industrie, uh.. het is de Nieuwjaars borrel van de industrie zoals ze dat ook wel noemen. Dus iedereen geeft elkaar daar netjes handjes en gaat zeggen dat het super goed gaat, dat is eigenlijk Noorderslag. Komen gewoon allemaal mensen, labels, bandjes, boekers, programmeurs, producers. Een hele grote groep aan professionals. Deze industrie is dan wel binnen, maar het is niet dat iedereen hier is. Het is wel een select gezelschap dat redelijk groot is, dat daar mag zijn. Ik vind het altijd wel meevallen hoeveel festivals er zijn. Er zijn altijd wel wat festivals, maar juist die kleine festivals die zijn daar juist niet zeg maar.

K: Oke

M: Het zijn altijd wel de grotere festivals die daar (Noorderslag) zijn.

K: dus echt wel de grote Lowlands, Pinkpop..

M: Ja maar ook wel een maatje daaronder nog hoor, mensen van festival Global, Huntenpop, parkfest Oosterhout, dat soort festivals die wel namen neerzetten, nationale namen die wat groter zijn dus midden A namen, die kunnen ze er wel een of twee boeken. Maar echt de kleine festivals die bands boeken die een beetje opkomend zijn, die lopen daar niet rond. Dat is gewoon te duur voor ze.

K: En ga jij nog iets werk gerelateerd doen op Noorderslag?

M: Als mijn eigen artiesten wel, dan ga ik die kijken, maar verder, ik loop gewoon de juiste mensen tegen het lijf en die geef ik dan handjes, dat is het eigenlijk. Maar het is niet, ik ben daar niet om iets te ontdekken omdat wat daar staat ik zo goed als al ken of geen interesse in heb.

K: Oke, en de andere kant van het verhaal, niet perse ontdekken maar je eigen artiesten wegzetten?

M: Nouja, als ze spelen heb ik het al weggezet, maar ik ga er niet kijken en daarna checken of er een programmeur is, die spreek ik daarna toch wel en dan vraag ik gewoon of ze het hebben gezien en wat ze er van vonden. Maar dat doe ik niet echt op de avond zelf; soms komen mensen naar je toe of je ziet ze snel effe en dan heb je het er even over, maar nee, het valt wel mee.

K: Kan je voor mij de rol/positie van Noorderslag in de muziekindustrie omschrijven?

M: Uhm, ja. Ik denk dat wel dat het voor iedereen anders is nog, ik vind Noorderslag niet meer zo belangrijk ijkpunt als dat sommige denk ik vinden. En al helemaal niet hoe het ooit was. Het was ooit echt het festival waar echt dingen werden ontdekt, en de winnaar van Noorderslag was ook echt de artiest die echt heel veel ging spelen, uhm, en daar liepen toen echt nog mensen rond om bandjes te kunnen tekenen en te kunnen gaan boeken en dat soort dingen, eigenlijk is denk ik nu 80-90 procent die hebben al een boeker of zijn al getekend of daar is al iets mee gaande dus in de meeste gevallen is alles of het meeste al weg rond een artiest.

K: Over hoeveel jaar geleden praten we dan?

M: 10 – 15 jaar geleden. Volgens mij was ik... ik ben nu denk ik 10 of 11 edities geweest en de eerste editie dat ik ging.. bijvoorbeeld met Kytteman toen, die opende de kleine zaal, toen wist je wel van nou dit gaat dit jaar ontploffen want, dat voelde je aan alles ofzo. Dat gebeurd eigenlijk gewoon niet meer.

K: Enig idee hoe dat zo gekomen is?

M: Hoe dat gekomen is weet ik eigenlijk niet want ik denk eehm, eehm, dat de industrie misschien gewoon veel eerder bij nieuwe talenten is gekomen. Ik denk dat we dat zelf hebben gecreëerd. Als je concurrent steeds jou een stap voor is, wil je hem een stap voor zijn. En als dat lukt, willen ze jou weer een stap voor zijn. Enzovoort. Tegenwoordig tekenen voor boekers, en dat vind ik niet echt een gezonde beweging, die tekenen steeds eerder artiesten terwijl die nog helemaal niet ver genoeg zijn. Dus we moeten wel, want anders is de concurrentie voor, en dan hebben ze niet die nieuwe grote namen.

K: Het is dan misschien meer om te zorgen dat diegene niet door iemand anders getekend wordt, dan dat ze er echt talent in zien.

M: Ik denk dat dat wel gaande is, ik denk dat dat niet gezond is, misschien creëren we het nu zelf wel, dat is mijn angst, denk ik, een aantal jaar geleden waren artiesten altijd heel erg van; labels ja, die tekenen heel veel maar die doen bijna niks, en ik heb het idee dat dat nu misschien ook bij boekers gaat ontstaan. Want bij labels is dat nu weg, die tekenen nu langzaam weer af en toe een artiest, en dat bouwen ze ook op, sommige dingen lukken ook echt dus dat is heel goed voor ze, alleen ik ben bang dat boekers dat straks ook gaan krijgen, dat ze zeggen van ja je kan wel bij een boeker tekenen maar vervolgens doet ie niks voor me. Want ik zie gewoon bands die bij een boeker tekenen en vervolgens niet meer spelen dan ze daarvoor deden, en dan denk ik ja wat is dan de meerwaarde van een boekingskantoor, dan kan je het ook zelf doen of de aanvragen die binnenkomen zelf afhandelen, dat scheelt je 15% wat in de meeste gevallen nog wel mee valt maar ik denk dat veel bands ook denken van; als ik een boeker heb dan ga ik wel veel spelen terwijl dat is helemaal niet zo.

K: Dat hoeft niet het geval te zijn. M: Nee.

K: Heeft Noorderslag invloed op de festival line-up van het komend seizoen, pratend over de 10 grootste festivals?

M: Ik denk dat het heel minimaal is, ook omdat er politiek wordt bedreven. Sommige artiesten staan nou eenmaal op festivals omdat het festival georganiseerd wordt door de boeker of door het boekingskantoor. Dus dan wordt er ook gewoon sneller naar de eigen stal gekeken. Ik denk dat er ook politieke spelletjes gespeeld worden die uiteindelijk niet gezond zijn voor de carrière van de artiest. Dus het is wel heel leuk om op een groot festival te staan maar als het nog niet klopt in waar je dan bent in je carrière is het de vraag of dat wel slim is om te doen. Ik denk ook dat ze soms ook, nee dat weet ik trouwens, soms worden ze binnengehaald met de belofte we zorgen dat je daar speelt, of dan kan je het voorprogramma van die en die artiest doen. Wat heel erg korte termijn is, want het gaat er juist om wat ga je de komende drie vier vijf jaar opbouwen en waar ga je naartoe en hoe doe je dat. Een festival zorgt er nooit voor dat je carrière ontploft, daar heb je veel meer voor nodig. Dus ik denk dat er wel een gedeelte is, ik heb af en toe wel dat ik boekingen overhoud of dat ze een artiest wel tof vinden en gewoon nog een keer willen zien live en dat, dat kan daar dan. (Noorderslag). Maakt niet heel veel uit of dat dan daar is, het mag ook een week later in de buurt zijn van het festival. Maar het is, ik hoor wel zoiets van mensen die zeggen ja na Noorderslag is mijn mailbox ontploft, maar ik heb dat zelf nooit zo gemerkt. Zeven edities nog nooit meegemaakt.

Ik weet niet zo goed wat mensen verstaan onder ontploffen, als ik een paar aanvragen heb dan vind ik dat geen ontploffen, dat vind ik gewoon normaal. Want ik heb al contact met die festivals, we gaan gewoon door, alleen er is even een show geweest.

Wat wel helpt, en dat zie ik wel echt terug. Bij bepaalde shows op Noorderslag zit tv, dat is vaak de kleine zaal de grote zaal, ik geloof de foyer ook en dan een paar spots. En dat wordt dan weer uitgezonden, en dat zie ik in de verkoop van mijn tickets heel erg terug. Dus ik zie, bijvoorbeeld bij Heavn, zag ik ruim een week na Noorderslag dat we nu ruim 200 tickets verkocht hebben terwijl daarvoor zaten we rond de 70 dus dan merk je wel van ze hebben het gezien op tv ze gaan opzoeken van oh komen ze in de buurt en dan gaan ze hun tickets kopen. Dat zie ik direct wel terug dus zo proberen wij af en toe ook wel onze artiesten weg te zetten dat je altijd die tv spots erbij hebt. Want die is heel waardevol want daar kijken gewoon ik weet niet hoeveel mensen naar, misschien 100.000 man, daar bereik je dan gewoon 100.000 mensen mee. Dat vind ik een heel waardevol persbericht dat je op Noorderslag staat, dat is gewoon een stempeltje naar buiten toe dat is ook wel voor ons naar festivals toe dat je kan zeggen van hee ja ze staan op Noorderslag.

K: Ja, een soort van certifier?

M: Ja, ja dat soort dingetjes ja dat is wel interessant.

K: Je gebruikt het wel als een persmoment, als je bands op Noorderslag staan, zowel daarvoor dan wel daarna?

M: We proberen het wel uit te buiten. Ik heb niet het idee dat dat dus dan in... Het is gewoon het totaal... het is ook zelden dat je gewoon naar een festival gaat en dat je zegt ik heb deze artiest en dat diegene zegt ok ja die boek ik. Daar ben je ook vaak in een proces mee bezig. Dus dan heb je het eerste contact en dan stel je dingen voor en dan heb je na een week twee weken weer contact en dan vraag ah had je al kunnen luisteren of had je al kunnen kijken en zo bouw je dat steeds op. En als je dan een keer kan zeggen van oh ja die staat trouwens op Noorderslag, mocht je er zijn kom even kijken. Dus je neemt het mee in je totaalplaatje. Het kan wel zo zijn dat wanneer je een keer iets nieuws hebt, wat nog vrij weinig of niet heeft gespeeld, dan zou het wel iets kunnen zijn dat mensen zoiets hebben van jeetje wat gebeurd er hier. Bijvoorbeeld met Kytteman toen. Maar het is dus wel heel erg veranderd met vroeger.

K: Kan je een beetje aangeven wanneer de beslissingen vallen bij de grote festivals? (Qua boekingen)

M: nou de grote festivals kijk, onze A artiesten om het zo maar te zeggen dan heb je het over blof en racoon en chef special direct miss montreal, die moet je in december al eigenlijk, die moeten dan al eigenlijk een goede zomer hebben staan. Als ze dan geen goede zomer hebben staan ben je al af. Nou spelen zij ook niet op Noorderslag, of ze moeten de popprijs winnen. Dus daar heb je het al helemaal niet voor nodig. Bij de andere artiesten begint het eigenlijk al in sept/okt, dan hebben we al de eerste afspraken staan met festivals, dan gaan we de eerste dingen al aanbieden, maar ik ben ook tot mei/juni bezig met festivals boeken. Maar ik hoor bijna niemand het nog hebben over Noorderslag.

K: Dus die beslissing is ook heel erg afhankelijk van oke welk niveau speelt de artiest,

M: Ja, en hoe duur is een artiest. Sommige festivals beginnen nu pas omdat ze eindelijk weten wat hun budget is omdat ze nog geld krijgen van gemeentes enzo en die moeten gewoon langer wachten. En dus, er is heel veel mee gemoeid. Sommige kleine festivals zetten hun namen in november al vast en dan zijn ze klaar, en sommige wachten tot februari maart omdat

ze weten van ja, er kan zomaar weer een nieuwe band opstaan en dan wil ik die hebben want dat is dan actualiteit. Er zijn er ook heel veel die zetten dan in november een kleine act vast voor weinig, voor duizend euro ofzo, omdat ze hopen dat ze dan in augustus, als hun festival is, ze dan 2000 euro waard zijn. Alleen wat heel veel gebeurd is dat de populariteit van die artiest dan niet doorzet en zijn ze in augustus, kent eigenlijk niemand ze meer, dus dan zijn ze eigenlijk die duizend euro niet eens meer waard. Dat is eigenlijk wat er heel veel gebeurd. Soms bellen festivals ook op en vragen ze welke artiest gaat er doorbreken? Maar dan denk ik, ik heb echt geen glazen bol ofzo, ik weet echt niet welke artiest er dit jaar groot gaat doorbreken. En als ik ga zeggen deze breekt door en het gebeurd niet, dan raak ik meteen het vertrouwen bij die persoon kwijt terwijl ik ook bij veel grote festivals het vertrouwen heb omdat ik ook regelmatig bands voor ze heb geboekt die ook daadwerkelijk stappen maakten en toen het festival was ook daadwerkelijk verder waren dan toen het geboekt werd. Als je dat vertrouwen opbouwt, en dat kost ook effe een paar jaar... dan nemen ze elk jaar wel iets van je af.

Popronde

K: In jouw optiek, wie doen er mee aan popronde, wie komt er naar popronde, ga jij er heen?

M: Wie doen er mee, dat zijn bands die denken dat ze kunnen gaan doorbreken denk ik. Ik doe alleen de shortlist, maar ehm.. ja daar zitten wel bandjes bij die denken dat ze goed genoeg zijn om Nederland danwel de wereld te gaan veroveren wat in veel gevallen nog natuurlijk helemaal niet zo is, maar dat is wel de perceptie die zij hebben. Dus daar doen gewoon echt helemaal beginnende artiesten, in elk geval zich inschrijven, ik weet niet of ze echt mee doen, tot de artiesten die wel echt klaar zijn voor die stap en nog even een rondje gaan maken om echt die stap te gaan maken.

K: en welke stap praten we dan over?

M: Nou dat is wel echt de stap naar Noorderslag, serieus, double bill of supports doen, goeie festivalronde en dan echt op eigen benen staan en een eigen tours doen. Ik denk wel dat daar altijd wel bandjes in zitten die die stap aan het maken zijn of kunnen gaan maken. Wie komen er bij de Popronde. Dat is ook de hele industrie, dat is wel grappig, dat zijn eigenlijk dezelfde mensen, daar komen managers, daar komen boekers, er komt heel veel industrie tegenwoordig bij de Popronde, die komen vaak ook in allemaal dezelfde steden. (Utrecht, Haarlem, Groningen, Amsterdam, Rotterdam Den Haag). Dus dat is echt grappig, daarin zie je dat de industrie, de industrie is wel echt altijd op zoek naar nieuw talent en dat zit tegenwoordig niet meer in Noorderslag maar meer in de Popronde. Dat zit er al weer voor, terwijl in de Popronde tegenwoordig ook alweer veel bands meedoen die al zijn getekend, dus dat geeft al aan hoe, te vroeg wij af en toe allemaal zijn. Maar dus daar komt eigenlijk wel echt de hele industrie een of meerdere keren kijken. En het fijne daarvan is, kijk Noorderslag is natuurlijk een show, maar de Popronde kan je er misschien wel 10 spelen of 20 soms zelfs 40. Dus je hebt veel meer kansen om jezelf te laten zien, om mensen uit te nodigen of mensen te bereiken. Met noorderslag moet je maar hopen dat diegene ook in de Oosterpoort is en ook nog eens komt kijken bij jou want tijdens jou spelen er ook meerdere bandjes. Maar net als ik, ik ga gewoon naar 3, 4, 5 poprondes toe en ik heb van te voren al een lijstje gemaakt met wat ik heel graag wil zien.

K: En je kan ze misschien ook een beetje volgen, als je ze de ene keer misschien net niet overtuigend vindt.

M: Ja, en soms staan ze gewoon helemaal in de verkeerde plek, en als de PA niet meewerkt, dan snap ik ook dat dat het niet aan de band hoeft te liggen dus dan kan je nog een keer gaan kijken op een andere plek. Dus daar komt echt een divers scala aan mensen ook wel van de radio en.

K: Kan je de positie / rol van zo'n Popronde omschrijven?

M: De popronde is dus heel belangrijk geworden de laatste jaren, omdat daar echt talenten zijn uitgerold de laatste jaren die echt door de Popronde stappen maakten, bv tijdens de Popronde een singeltje op de radio hadden en alles werd versterkt. Dat was met bv Go Back To The Zoo deed mee, dat was helemaal booming tijdens de Popronde, elke kroeg stond echt tot buitens toe vol, de Staat heeft toen meegedaan, we hebben het gezien met Rondé, maar ook heel veel gaande was, hetzelfde jaar als dat HEAVN die niet zoveel geboekt waren maar tijdens de Popronde een enorme hit scoorden en toen speelden ze gewoon op een paar plekken dat staat dan ook helemaal vol. Radio Eliza, maar die bestaan al niet meer, maar dat is ook helemaal booming geweest tijdens Popronde. Dus je merkt echt dat dat nu een enorme meerwaarde heeft en vanuit daar worden ook echt wel dingen weer op Noorderslag geboekt dus je merkt wel van... voorheen was het , echt 5 tot 10 jaar geleden, had je meer een deal dat

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Ehm, nu zit ik met heel veel andere mensen in de selectie commissie van Popronde waarbij je ook altijd een beetje gekleurd bent want je eigen artiesten, die krijgen altijd een stem van je. En in dat proces ontdekken heel veel boekers al bands, want ik heb zo Rondé getekend en ik heb zo HEAVN getekend, gewoon omdat... toen ik de muziek aan het luisteren was en toen ik dat tegen kwam dacht ah fack hier gebeurt iets of dit pakt me of ik vind dit te gek dus dan heb ik al contact voordat zij überhaupt weten of dat ze in de Popronde zitten. Ehm, dus het voorproces van de Popronde, in het selecteren dat is voor mij het belangrijke proces.

K: Denk je dat er meer Music industry professionals met die dat doel in de selectie zitten?

M: uhuu, ja want ik was de eerste boeker ooit die in de selectiecommissie kwam, en daar is heel lang over getwijfeld vanuit de Popronde omdat ze vonden dat ik dan gekleurd kon zijn. Maar uiteindelijk hebben ze dat wel gedaan, zo kwam ik achter bands en toen merkte ik wel dat in een keer veel meer boekers zich hadden aangemeld van ohja, dat wil ik nu ook, ik wil ook bij de popronde in die commissie zitten en nu zitten er bijna alle boekers zitten erin. Dan probeer je dat weer voor te zijn ofzo, het is af en toe heel lastig. Maar we ontdekken op veel meer manieren bands, gelukkig. Ik teken nu een band die een half jaar bestaat ofzo, vanuit hun school, misschien hebben ze 10, 15 shows gedaan, en dan moet ik het nu tekenen anders gaat iemand anders er mee vandoor. En ik geloof wel heel erg in hun muziek, maar ik weet ook niet of het uiteindelijk goed genoeg gaat zijn, maar ik weet wel dat ze met de popronde mee gaan doen, want dat niveau hebben ze al sowieso. Ik weet zeker dat ze een van dé bands van de Popronde van dit jaar gaan worden, dat weet ik nu al want dat voel ik gewoon, dat dat gaat gebeuren.

K: en wat bedoel je daarmee, een van dé bands?

M: Nou kijk, in de Popronde heb je een labeltje van 3voor12, een labeltje van OOR, een labeltje van NMTH, zij (Tape Toy) gaan een van die drie krijgen, ik denk 3voor12 of OOR.

K: Een soort van stempel van, die bands moet je checken?

M: Ja, die doen er altijd 10 (OOR) en die adopteren ook in elk stad een podium en daar zetten ze die bands neer, dus het feit dat er 150 bands mee doen, maar jij kan sowieso op een podium spelen waar ze uit 10 bands moeten kiezen, nou dan is er al een grote kans dat je daar kan

spelen en als je daar niet kan spelen is er nog een kans op al die andere podia. Maar dus ga ik nu alvast volgende week eten met iemand van OOR, omdat ik nu alvast die plug daar wil zetten omdat ik dat bandje daar wil hebben. En dat soort dingetjes, het is af en toe verschrikkelijk, maar ja zo werkt het wel. Ehm, maar ik heb ook het idee, nee ik weet het eigenlijk gewoon heel erg zeker, dat die band heel veel gaat spelen. Ze maken bubble grunch, maar wel vrolijk/melodies, waardoor het veel toegankelijker is dan grunch bijvoorbeeld. Ik voel aan alles dat de Popronde wel zijn ding gaat doen voor hen.

K: Leuk! Allright, Popronde's invloed op de festival line-up?

M: Ja, heel veel. Omdat ze in al die steden spelen, is het voor programmeurs een hele kleine drempel, het is en gratis toegankelijk, en je kan op je fietsje gewoon een x aantal shows zien. Bij Noorderslag betaal je geloof ik 80 euro voor een ticket? En je moet nog een hotel, en je moet nog naar Groningen, dus je bent sowieso 150, 200 euro kwijt en dan moet je nog eten en drinken, dus laten we zeggen dat je tussen de 300 en 400 euro eigenlijk al kwijt bent voor je daar bands kan checken. Dus die drempel naar Popronde is veel lager, ehm, en ik heb wel letterlijk dit jaar meegemaakt dat iemand zei hee deze artiest is nu aan het spelen, hoe duur is de artiest en is hij dan en dan nog beschikbaar want ik wil hem voor het festival hebben. Dat gebeurt echt veel meer, je krijgt veel vaker een mail die zegt ik heb het gezien op de Popronde dan ik heb het gezien op Noorderslag. Ik vind de Popronde daarin wel interessanter, alleen je zal zelden dan krijgen vanuit concert at sea of Lowlands of Pinkpop van hee we zagen je bandje op de Popronde, daarvoor heb je dan weer eerder Noorderslag nodig, maar juist in de beginfase waarin het zo belangrijk is voor bands, die opbouw, die kleinere festivals zitten veel meer op Popronde niveau en kijken daar naar die bands, dan Noorderslag. Ik denk dat programmeurs ook wel daar naar kijken, van wie zitten er al achter, als er al een grote partij achter zit is het. Dan zit er al vaak een beter idee achter.