



Erasmus Research Centre for Media,  
Communication and Culture

# Live Music Ecologies and Value Creation for Musicians, Industries and Cities

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Nederlandse Organisatie  
voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek



# POPLIVE

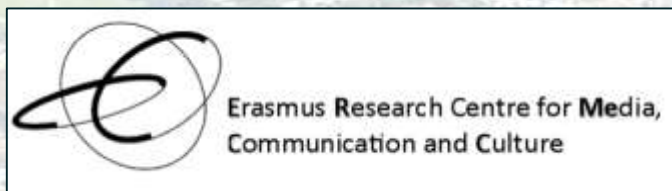
vereniging  
nederlandse  
pop|podia  
en festivals



MOJO



# Consortium



# Live music as a field of research

- Recorded music loses centrality, digitalisation transforms sector (Wikström & Defillippi, 2015; Nordgård, 2017; Poort & Rutten, 2012)
- Increasing economic, social and cultural importance of live music (Frith, 2013; Behr et al., 2015, Live Music Census 2017)
- Proliferation of festivals, events and live experiences (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz, 2011)
- Fragmented, case based approaches (Williamson & Cloonan, 2007)
- Dominance of UK and US perspectives
- Integrated approach is missing

# Our approach

## Research question:

How can local live music ecologies contribute to value creation in (1) the careers of pop musicians, (2) the position of music venues and festivals, and (3) the local (urban) society in general

## Levels of inquiry:

- The role of live music ecologies in labour conditions, skill development and nourishment of new talents. (Maker level)
- The position of music venues and festivals: the balance between structural and temporary live music infrastructure, for diverse audiences. (Sector level)
- The economic, cultural and social value of live music ecologies for cities. (Societal level)

# Three subprojects: A nested approach

Subproject 3  
SOCIETY

Policymakers

Audiences

Other urban  
stakeholders

Subproject 2  
SECTOR

Venues

Festivals

Bookers / agents

Pop Education

Subproject 1  
MAKERS

Pop musicians



# Methods: multi-method approach

- Multiple embedded case study design, comparing five cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Tilburg & Groningen)
- Qualitative in-depth interviews with musicians (N=50), music educators (N=15), representatives of music venues and festivals (N=25), music consumers (N=50) and policy-makers (N=10).
- Qualitative consumer-experience research – mental mapping, visual field research, and real-time interviewing/diaries (Mulder, 2016) – to measure and assess consumer value creation.
- A survey among directors of festivals and music venues, addressing their artistic choices, the balance between economic, cultural and social values in their decision-making, and views on the quality of the live music ecology in their respective cities.
- Statistical analysis on secondary data provide by our partners. Economic performance assessment using basic economic indicators. Concert data (**VNPF's Poppodium Analyse Systeem and MOJO's management information system**), containing information on concert attendance, acts, visitor demographics, financial and economic data, performance data etc. over a particular time period. Alumni data of pop academies to analyse the career development of musicians.

# Innovations of our project

To the research field of music industries:

- answers to new, pressing questions following structural transformations
- testing and expanding existing theories (eg. ecology approach)
- Multi-method approach: case studies, interviews, consumer-experience research, survey, data-analyses

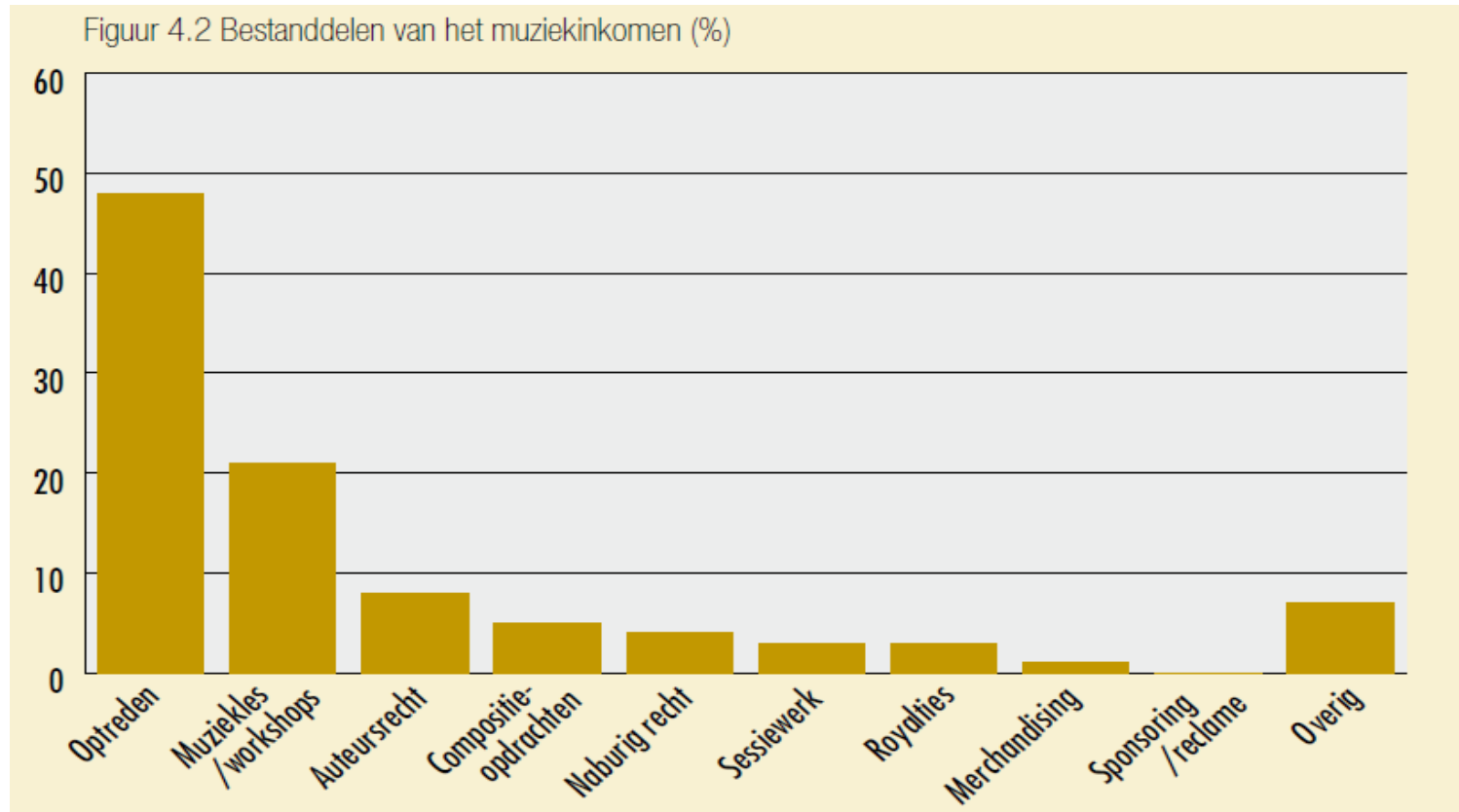
Application of our findings to:

- **Musicians'** labour skills and education in order to contribute to sustainable careers and talent development;
- Understanding changing consumption patterns and audiences interaction with the live experience;
- New value propositions and business models of the live music industry;
- (Urban) policies and planning issues surrounding venues and festivals.



# Challenge I – How to survive in an economy of (super)stars

Towards financially sustainable live music ecologies that support talent development



<sup>9</sup>Fuhr, S. von der. (2015). Pop, wat levert het op? Onderzoek naar de inkomsten van popmusici in Nederland. Cubiss.

# Making a Living in Live Music: entrepreneurial artists in the Dutch popular music industry

- How do beginning Dutch popular music artists strategize their careers?
- How do they understand that the industry works?
- How do they value their work practices?
- Is there a tension between new entrepreneurial values and existing repertoires of anti-commerce?



# Research design

## 20 Dutch artists Eurosonic Noorderslag 2018

### Interviews

- Covering themes such as goals, values, perceived factors influencing success, money
- Perceptions on how they translate this into practices
- Follow-up 2021



### Time use diary

- One week, daily reporting
- Mapping music career related activities
- And four likert scale statements
- Concluded with a short reflection on the week



# Preliminary conclusions

Artists play the game of the industry

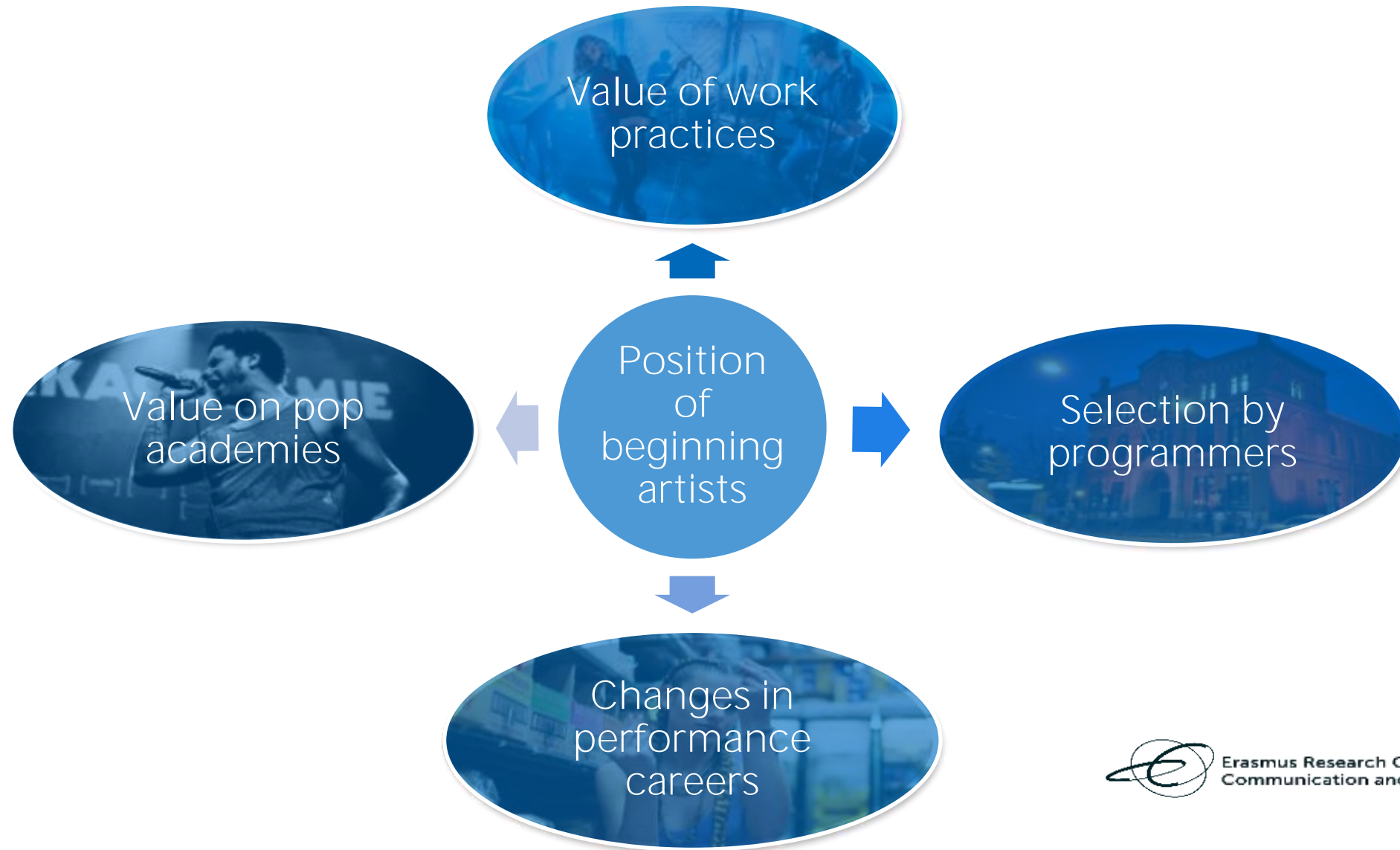
- **The** 'old' institutions in the music industry keep influencing the way artists organize their practices
- Circuit of commerce (Zelizer 2010)

Art and commerce are aligned

- Artists incorporate entrepreneurial practices while aiming for artistic goals
- Bohemian entrepreneurs (Eikhof & Haunschild 2006), reluctant entrepreneurs (Haynes & Marshall 2018) or hybrid polyvalent artists (Van Winkel et al. 2012).



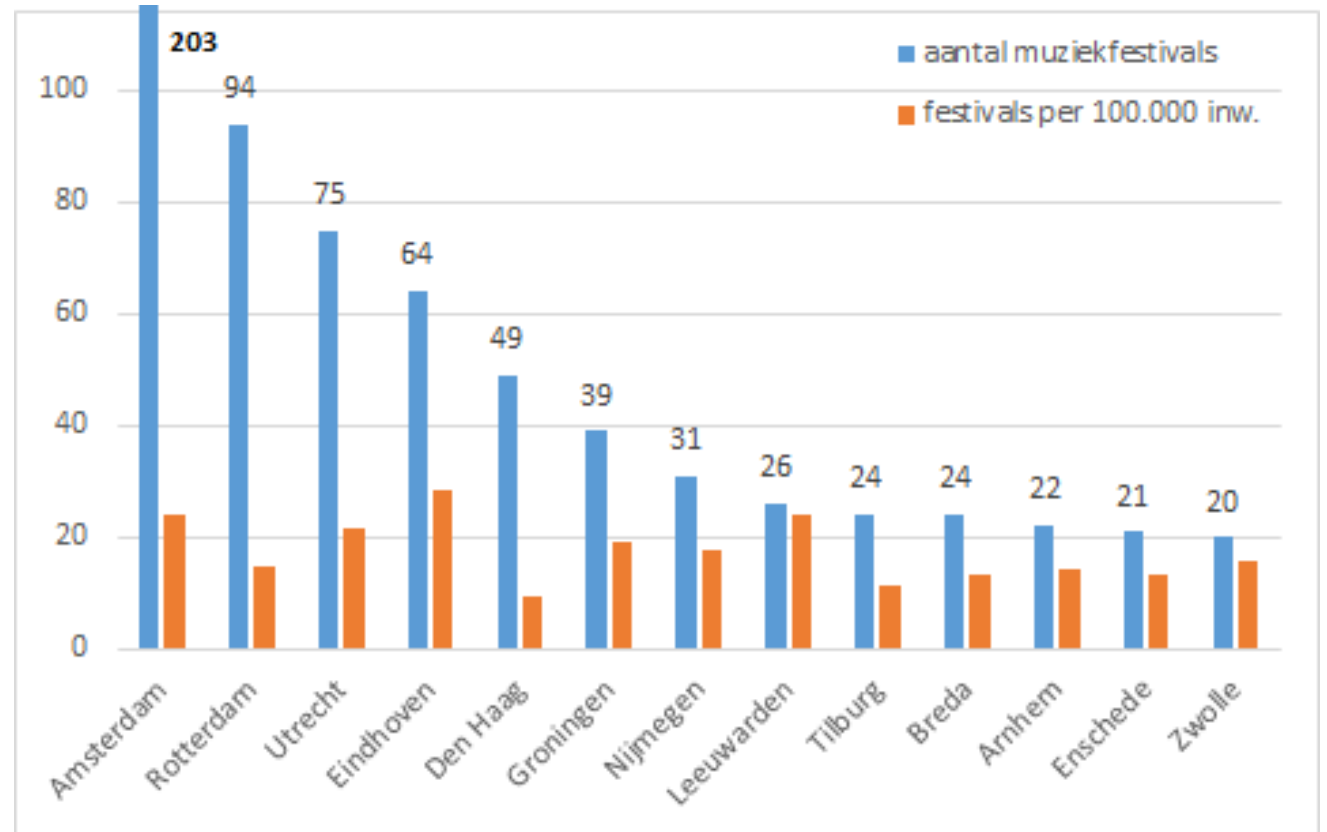
# The role of music ecologies in the (precarious) careers of pop musicians



## Challenge 2 - Festivalisation

The changing role and shape of the live music sector in The Netherlands in terms of new business models (e.g. festivalisation), the balance between artistic development and revenues, and the changing consumption and experience patterns of diverse live music audiences.

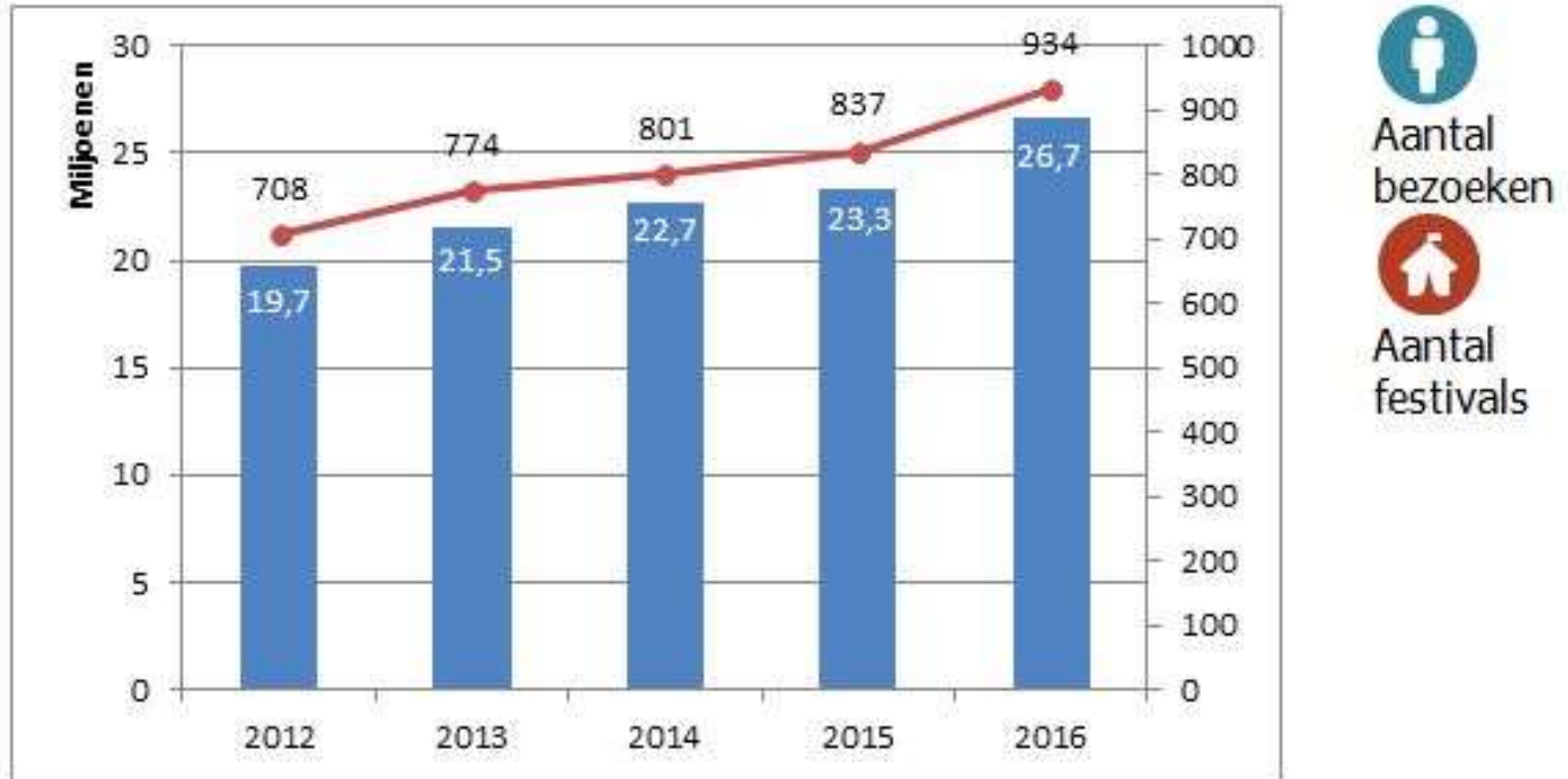
**'Festivalisering' stuit op grens:  
Nederland wordt te klein voor zo veel  
festivals**





# Continuous growth of festivals

Ontwikkeling festivalmarkt 2012 tot en met 2016



Source: Respons 2017

# Research methods

- I. A **quantitative** overview of the development of stagers of live pop music in The Netherlands between 2007 and 2017.
- II. A **qualitative** analysis to gather insights in the effects on the industry.  
Appr. 12 in-depth interviews with:
  - directors of music venues
  - directors of music festivals
  - directors of both a venue and a festival

The goals of these interviews are (1) to deepen the analysis on festivalisation, (2) to better understand the relationship between music festivals and venues, (3) to analyse the extent to which they compete or reinforce each other and (4) to measure the effects of this relationship on the value of the Dutch live music ecology in general.

# Preliminary findings

## Festivalisation and Brick and Mortar venues in The Netherlands

- ♪ Growing number of festivals, mainly in EDM, hiphop, cross-over festivals, existing festivals are expanding, Matthew-effect
- ♪ Blurring Lines: what is a popular music festival?
- ♪ Number of pop venues is relatively stable, de-institutionalising, (spin-off) festivals.
- ♪ Artists adapt to festival and club/venue season, live gets different role in career
- ♪ Until now no evidence is found that festivalisation has a negative influence on the Dutch live pop music ecology: co-evolution
- ♪ Increasingly, music festivals seem to be at the heart of the Dutch music ecology .



*Post-Monterey:*  
try-outs



1966 1970

1980

1990

*Going big:* Techno and  
alto become mainstream



2000

*Natural selection:*  
boutique and cross-overs



2010

2018



*Low season:* culturally and  
socially responsible



*Hyperfestivity:* your own  
personal EDM-fest



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# Challenge 3 – How does live music contribute to urban development

Representing the sociocultural diversity of contemporary cities



Image: [AV DezIgn](#), flickr.

# Research question and methodology

- RQ: What are the social and cultural values attributed to live music ecologies in urban environments?
- A qualitative content analysis on 20 live music reports, music strategies and policy documents
- 7 countries: the Netherlands, the UK, the US, Canada, South Africa, Australia and Scotland.
- 321 codes: focused on values, challenges, indicators and policy instruments
- 6 dimensions



# The social values attributed to local live music ecologies

The background image shows a large, dimly lit concert hall or festival space. In the foreground, the silhouettes and heads of a large crowd of people are visible, looking towards the stage. The stage is illuminated with vibrant red and green spotlights. A large blue banner with the 'EUROSONIC NOORDERSLAG' logo is prominent on the left side of the stage. Three blue rectangular boxes are overlaid on the image, each containing text related to social values.

Social  
capital:  
bonding and  
bridging

Community  
engagement

Identity



# The cultural values attributed to local live music ecologies

A photograph of a live music performance on a stage. Several musicians are visible, including a keyboardist on the left and a guitarist on the right. The stage is lit with warm, golden lights, creating a hazy atmosphere. Three blue rectangular boxes are overlaid on the image, each containing white text. The background shows stage equipment like microphones and stands.

Musical  
creativity

Talent  
development

Cultural  
vibrancy



# Challenges for live music & urban planning

A photograph of a crowded live music venue. The scene is dimly lit with blue stage lighting. In the foreground, a young man with glasses and a black jacket is looking towards the left. Behind him, a woman with long blonde hair is also looking left. To the right, a man with a beard and glasses is looking towards the camera. The background is filled with other people, some holding drinks. The ceiling has several stage lights and a green exit sign.

Small music  
venues

Acknowledging  
the value of live  
music in urban  
planning

Festivalization

## Challenge 4: The ecological approach to (live) music

- Burgeoning number of studies are using ecological metaphors for looking at several aspects of music practice and the industry (Keogh & Collinson 2016)
  - Focus on the integrative nature of the relationships among institutions, social groups, and their environment.
  - Mostly in discourses on cultural / musical diversity and sustainability of music cultures
  - Also in policy documents on music infrastructures and policy interventions
- More than an ecology trope?
- Wobbly theoretical underpinnings of the music ecology or ecosystem perspective



# The ecological approach to (live) music (**cnt'd**)

- Ecology approaches principally map socially networked worlds of musical actors, producers, institutions and intermediaries in relation to their environment.
- But what may the ecology approach add to related concepts like art worlds, cultural fields, networks, local scenes or cultural milieu?
- Such theories all analyze or take into account the spatial context in which (live) music is produced, consumed and distributed.
- We will systematically discuss these theories and subsequently add our own adaptation to the ecological approach.

# Becker & Bourdieu: Art worlds and fields of cultural production

- **Key assumption Art worlds:** all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art. Members of art worlds coordinate activities by which work is produced by referring to a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and in frequently used artifacts.
- **Roots** Based in symbolic interactionism (Crossley and Botero (2015), Martin (1996))
- **Key assumption field:** a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they take with respect to the field, these position-takings being aimed at either conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field.
- **Roots** Based in conflict sociology (Hesmondhalgh (2006), Prior (2011))
- **Focus** Spatial / geographical dimension affords relationships, but location is not an actor

# Subcultures, Scenes, Milieux

- **Subcultures: key assumption** A subculture in general terms is a group with certain cultural features that enable it to be distinguished from other groups and the wider society from which it has emerged.
- **Roots** Based in cultural sociology / Cultural studies / Semiotics (Hebdige (1979), Muggleton & Weinzierl (2003), Williams (2011))
- **Scenes: key assumption** Scenes are loosely bound networks of performers, critics, fans, and support facilities who come together to collectively create, what they identify as, a specific genre of music.
- **Roots** Based in cultural studies (Straw (1991, Shank 1994, Bennett & Peterson 2004)
- **Milieux: key assumption** The milieu framework looks at the way particular networks of people and music cultures interact, situating those activities in the wider cultural complex that they are developing within. Density of connections, relevancies, typifications, commonalities, and aesthetics.
- **Roots** Based in cultural studies/cultural sociology (Webb (2007)
- **Focus** on place based practices of shared meaning making, specific places affect interactions

# Social Network Analysis (SNA) and Actor-network theory (ANT)

- **Key assumption Social Network analysis** a methodology to study the connections and interactions within 'music worlds'. These can be connections between musicians or audience members, but also non-human networks such as the ties between venues or festivals.
- **Roots** Based in cultural sociology (Crossley, McAndrews and Widdop (2015))
- **Key assumption Actor-network theory** ANT is concerned with the assemblages of human and non-human actors that enable certain actions. It allows researchers to open the 'black box' of cultural production, shedding light on how the relationships between actors generate particular outcomes.
- **Roots** Based in Science and Technology Studies. (Prior (2008), Gander (2011), Chesher (2007), Piekut (2014))
- **Focus** Charts networks that afford production and reception of music, ANT mainly ethnographic



# Ecologies and Ecosystems

- **Key assumption** Analogies with the natural world, mostly concerned with the sustainability of particular musical forms and communities across the globe. Ecosystem consists of 1. Learning and teaching, 2. Musicians and communities, 3. Context and constructs, 4. Infrastructure and regulations, 5 media and the music industry.
- **Roots** Based in systems theory and Ethnomusicology (Schippers & Grant, (2016)).
- Further developed for live music by UK music researchers (Behr, Brennan, Cloonan, Frith & Webster, 2016), focusing on the changing ways in which different actors contribute to the qualities of the live music sector. It views the live music sector as a (inter)local network of different social actors (e.g. musicians, bookers and policy makers) as well as materialities (e.g. venues size, urban setting).

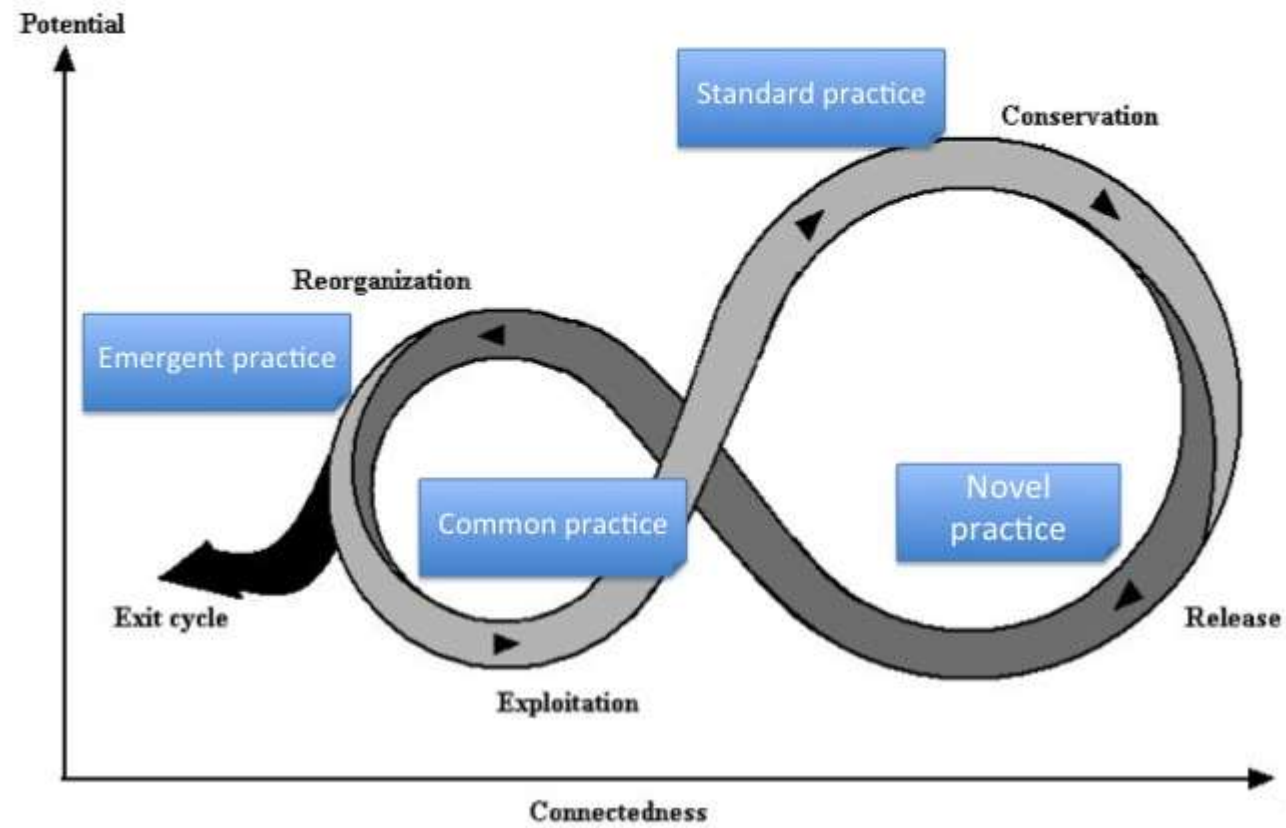
# Ecologies and Ecosystems, a critical view

- Ecology approach considers the macro level complexity of music practices (Keogh & Collinson 2016)
  - Has a functionalist emphasis on structural systems but tends to neglect agency and interpretive meaning
  - For live music, the spatial and temporal specific nature of performances is taken into account
  - Possibility to consider qualities of sustainability of the macro context of (live) music
  - Considers the structure of social relations between different actors and how that contributes to the qualities of the live music sector, including:
    - the **material** aspects of live music, such as the size of music venue and the urban setting in which music events take place.
    - the **intangible** aspects of live music ecologies, e.g. the musical experience and the histories associated with a specific venue.
- (cf. Behr et al, 2016)

# An SES framework for analyzing the transformation of the industry

- Resilience is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks. As amplified below, the focus is on the dynamics of the system when it **is disturbed far from its modal state. [...] It is also important to bear in mind that “systems” consist of nested dynamics operating at particular organizational scales— “sub-systems,” as it were, of households to villages to nations, trees to patches to landscapes.**
- Four crucial elements: Latitude, Resistance, Precariousness and Panarchy
- Adaptability is the capacity of actors in a system to influence resilience. In a SES, this **amounts to the capacity of humans to manage resilience.” (Walker et. al 2004)**

# Adaptive Cycle



Source: <https://lean-adaptive.com/2011/07/16/cynefin-panarchy-pdca-ooda-and-value-creation-curves/>



# Our take on the ecology of live music and value creation

- The quality or 'health' of specific live music ecologies seems essential for their ongoing capacity to create value.
- **'Healthy' music ecologies create economic value but also social and cultural value:**
  - include venues of varying sizes, which cater for different music audiences and bring diversity to the local music culture.
  - Add to strength of local networks which afford social cohesion
- In our approach, we emphasize that ecologies are locally and materially embedded, and include the more fluid and increasingly important temporary infrastructure (festivals, pop-**ups**, **DIY's**) in the urban environment.
- Ecological analysis of transformation, resilience and the adaptive cycle may prove useful for our analysis



Thank you for your  
attention!

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