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Wilfred Dolfsma

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Radio and Magazines: valuing pop music in the Netherlands (1955–1965)

WILFRED DOLFSMA, *Erasmus University Rotterdam & Maastricht University*

The advent of pop music, superseding Big Band and ‘Crooner’ music, was a remarkable phenomenon that marked the beginning of some important changes in Western societies [1]. How pop music ‘conquered’ each country however, differed between countries. When pop music arrived in the Netherlands and other countries in the developed world, it met with both enthusiasm and revulsion. Resistance from players in the Dutch system of music provision was strong at first. Enthusiasm was found mostly among young people, revulsion mostly among older people [2]. Tensions between people thrilled by the developments in popular music and those shocked by them even showed within organizations. A number of people involved in making radio programmes and music magazines wanted to jump on the bandwagon of pop music—although, as will be shown, they wanted to influence the direction in which the bandwagon was heading. Others, in these same organizations, in general those people who could make the decisions, resisted paying attention to pop music.

The musicologist Charlie Gillet has hinted at ‘the crucial role [of Alan Freed’s famous radio programmes in the USA] in popularizing rhythm and blues under the name rock ‘n’ roll’ [3]. The radio and the written music press had a much more influential role than this observation by Gillet would suggest [4], a role, however, that has not been sufficiently researched.

In continuous interaction with their audience, institutions for providing pop music became established from the 1960s onwards. These included, pop music radio, disc jockeys (DJs) and commercial charts. Pop music’s ‘conquest’ of the Netherlands was peculiar in comparison to other countries, including adjacent ones. This paper analyses the advent of pop music in the context of the institutional sclerosis of Dutch radio and the Dutch music press in particular, in terms of the theoretical framework of institutional economics [5]. It argues that the slow spread of pop music in the Netherlands, compared with other countries, was linked to the conflict between the sociocultural values of the established public broadcasters and those of the emerging pop music industry.

Institutions and the Advent of Pop Music

Some of the most remarkable institutions to be found in the music industry broadly conceived emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1955 Rock ‘n’ Roll moved to the centre of the music stage. The institutional changes the music industry and the media had to go through in the USA began later in Europe and the Netherlands and were more protracted [6]. *Blackboard Jungle*, the movie featuring Bill Haley’s song ‘Rock Around the Clock’, released in 1956, had a tremendous impact. The uproar in some towns made the authorities in other towns decide to prevent the movie from being shown, or to show

it without sound. The music was thought able to effect audiences, causing them to lose control and do improper and indecent things. The music press and the daily newspapers unanimously denounced the movie and the music. Elvis Presley, appearing on stage in the same period, was greeted with similar disdain. The music press, however, soon became more appreciative of pop music, and some of the broadcasters changed their policy as well. In the Netherlands, the magazine *Tuney Tunes*, was joined in 1955 by a second, less paternalistic and condescending music magazine, *Muziek Expres*. The first radio programme that experimented with the institutional form of a ‘presenter’ (not yet a ‘real’ DJ)—‘Tijd voor Teenagers’—began in September 1959 and was an immediate success. Others followed, as did the pirate radio stations. The idea that radio had to educate its audience only began to disappear after 1965, however.

The year 1965 was a watershed in the rise of pop music, for several reasons. When the Beatles became popular the world of pop music changed dramatically [7]. Looking more closely at the situation in the Netherlands, 1965 was the year in which pirate station Radio Veronica started with its chart ‘Nederlandse [Dutch] Hitparade’ (later renamed ‘Top 40’). The impact of this institutional development, the creation of a chart, was tremendous, and was partly evident in an increase in singles sales of around 30% [8]. From an institutional economist’s perspective, it can be observed that Radio Veronica’s chart was a success by any measure, whereas earlier types of charts on public radio were hardly noticed by the audience of pop music radio programmes. In an attempt to counter what was seen as a detrimental development, the Dutch government in the same year commissioned a third national radio station, Hilversum III, directed at young people that predominantly aired pop music.

Media—Radio and Music Press

According to Frith [9], radio and the music press played an important role in promoting the acceptance of rock or pop music in large parts of the world, especially in Western countries [10]. Radio is significant in determining which musicians or songs will be successful; radio plays an important role in the process by which people change the value they attach to pop music [11].

In the Netherlands and other Western European countries most of the broadcasters were public. *Tuney Tunes*, a monthly Dutch magazine on popular music, started during the Second World War (1942). Until 1955 it was the only music magazine aiming at the mass market by printing pictures, charts and lyrics. The stories in *Tuney Tunes*, often no more than an excuse for the pictures, were often made up and sometimes ludicrous to the point of being incredible [12]. In the 1950s two new magazines started—*Muziek Expres* in 1955 and *Muziek Parade* in 1957. These were somewhat more knowledgeable and aimed at a readership that wanted a better quality of information.

Much like the radio broadcasters some time later, the music magazines were not appreciative of Rock ‘n’ Roll at all. In July 1955 *Tuney Tunes* talked about a ‘disease’ that would never affect ‘normal people’. The working-class character of both the audience and the artists was emphasized in a derisory way, while the music was described as ‘primitive’, with a ‘killing beat’ but no melody whatsoever. As if to soothe the parents who might have become worried, the final note struck was that there was no need to worry as this music would disappear as fast as it had appeared, leaving no trace in its wake [13].

Worries grew as Elvis Presley became popular in the USA and threatened to gain an audience in Europe. ‘That terrible, degrading crying accompanied by sounds uttered in

a sinister way cannot appeal to us' *Tuney Tunes* commented in September 1956. It continued: 'as far as we are concerned, he can stay where he is: we might not survive a second Heartbreak Hotel'. The title of the comment was: 'Elvis Presley—Hysteria in Optimal Form' [14]. Similar reactions were provoked by the reception of the movie *Blackboard Jungle* in the Netherlands. Rebellion in the classroom depicted in the movie was accompanied, if not provoked, by Bill Haley's Rock 'n' Roll music. The Dutch premiere of *Blackboard Jungle* was on 1 September 1956. Riots broke out when mayors in some towns forbade the showing of the movie entirely, or only allowed it to be shown with the provision that there should be no sound [15].

Attempts at preventing Rock 'n' Roll (pop music) from gaining a foothold did not succeed. Not long after they realized this, the music magazines began to openly celebrate pop music. Even records by the black artist Little Richard, generally seen as an uncompromising and unpolished Rock 'n' Roll musician (more so than Elvis), were recommended. This attempt not to lose touch with their audiences did not prevent the music magazines from promoting artists and kinds of music in general that they found more 'appropriate' such as Cliff Richard and Pat Boone [16].

Printing lyrics turned out to be an important ingredient for the success of music magazines, as was printing the charts from the USA, the UK and Germany. In subsequent years posters became an important reason for people buying music magazines; ordinary pictures would no longer make the difference between magazines. Sharing magazines was common practice [17]. December issues were devoured for their 'popularity polls', for which readers could send in their personal favourites. Competition between the magazines concentrated on these polls, each magazine claiming to have the broadest and most reliable one. The results of these polls however were not very reliable. Journalists for these magazines sometimes tried to promote their own favourites, and fan clubs would also urge their members to send in the forms from the November issue on a large scale [18].

The Dutch government heavily regulated the mass media; there was even censorship for a while. The motivation for doing so was that exposing young, immature people to the 'cheap' images of mass culture was thought to have detrimental effects on the development of their personalities. Adults, again especially in the lower classes, were not trusted to have or develop appropriate tastes. It was only in 1959 that, reluctantly, programmes dedicated exclusively to pop music were scheduled on official Dutch radio stations [19].

In 1962–1963 there was another spurt of activity. Music magazines were restyled—became glossier—and radio programmes started to experiment. Although programmes with pop music on official radio were still popular, the audience started to move away from the public broadcasters. Until that time insurmountable language barriers had prevented a massive shift away from the official broadcasters to Radio Luxembourg, which only broadcast a few hours in Dutch each Sunday, to the American presenter Chris Howland at the German station NWDR, or to the Allied Forces Network (AFN) which aimed mainly at the US military in Western Europe. During these years pirate radio stations started broadcasting from the North Sea aiming at the UK and drawing a large Dutch audience as well [20]. It was during this crucial period that experiments with the institutions of DJs and charts based on retail sales figures began on Dutch radio; this bifurcation point for radio did not show in the data on, for instance, the use or the sale of radios, however.

As television took over the role of the most important mass medium and radio began to draw less attention from politicians, radio could experiment somewhat more. Radio

had to change its position; people tended to listen to the radio less often and for shorter periods of time [21]. The golden era for radio—the 1950s—had ended, but control of radio was also relaxed. Radio began receiving less attention from regulators in government and in the broadcasting organizations, and was able to develop relatively undisturbed.

Setting the Stage for Institutional Change

Pop music did not enter a social and institutional vacuum. The story of the institutional changes in Dutch radio and the music press due to the advent of pop music needs to be set against a background of developments in society at large [22].

Some commentators have argued that the Dutch broadcasting system was unique in the world [23]. Broadcasting corporations in the Netherlands were closely associated with religious or political positions. They were allotted time on radio and television based on the number of members they had. Once a particular threshold of members was reached, the government had to provide facilities, including financial means, for an organization to be able to start broadcasting [24]. As Lijphart shows, this so-called ‘pillarization’ (sociopolitical segmentation) was strong in Dutch society in those days [25]. Radio, and later TV, were strictly regulated; until 1947 radio was censored by the government [26]. After that the networks censored themselves for a long time.

Each pillar had its own broadcaster: VARA [‘Vereniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs’] was socialist, KRO [‘Katholieke Radio Omroep’] was Roman Catholic, NCRV [‘Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging’] was Protestant, and AVRO [‘Algemene Vereniging Radio Omroep’] was (purportedly) neutral. The board that governed the socialist broadcaster VARA, for instance, used to have members appointed by the social-democratic party, or its scientific bureau [27]. The boundaries between the pillars or sociopolitical segments were difficult to cross; there even was a time (1954) when Roman Catholic bishops successfully forbade their flock to listen to ‘heathen’ socialist programmes. Many listened to their bishops, but to forego pop music—which received more attention from VARA than it did from KRO—seemed to have been too heavy a toll for others. The socialist VARA, in its turn, forbade any mention of religion in its programmes [28].

Broadcasters regarded themselves as ‘owning’ musicians and employees, in part because of the rivalry between the different broadcasters and their constituencies from the respective pillars. Both producers of programmes and listeners thought that musicians and employees were ‘owned’ by a broadcasting organization. These people needed to communicate the ideals their respective broadcasting organizations represented and *thus*, the idea was, needed to subscribe to the organization’s sociocultural values in order to be persuasive.

For a long time radio stations not officially sanctioned by the Dutch government were not a threat to this system. Radio Luxembourg, a privately owned commercial undertaking broadcasting from Luxembourg, only had 2 hours of broadcasting in the Dutch language on Sunday morning and could only be heard clearly in the southern parts of the Netherlands. Due to the language barrier, the BBC, British pirates or the Allied Forces Network (AFN—broadcasting from the Netherlands, directed at American and British soldiers stationed mainly in West Germany) were not major competitors either: not many people in the Netherlands were able to understand English. Pressure built up when Radio Veronica started its broadcasts in April 1960 from a ship just outside Dutch territory. After only a few years Veronica drew many, especially young, listeners. From

1962 to 1963 Veronica's programmes began to show in all of the popularity polls published in the music press, sometimes even as winners of these polls. The programme 'Nederlandse [Dutch] Hitparade' was an immediate success when it started in January 1965 [29].

Broadcasters representing different pillars had lobbied with their respective political parties to ensure that the proposed new station, Hilversum III, would be shaped according to their wishes. Hilversum III, however, the new government elected in 1965, decided, had to focus on a young audience to regain the audience that Veronica had won [30]. Hilversum III was to be a more 'commercial' broadcaster. Years of discussions came to a conclusion with the decision taken by the newly installed government to go against the wishes of the established public broadcasters. An obvious way of drawing a young audience to Hilversum III was by paying attention to the kind of music young people preferred. The Dutch broadcasting system had to become less exclusive than it had been, and a new law on broadcasting that came into effect on 2 October 1966 had to make sure that this would and could happen. A popular, aspiring-to-be-legal broadcasting corporation (TROS) was incorporated in the system in October 1966 [31]. In that same period the government expanded the total time available for broadcasting on TV by commissioning a second channel (1 October 1964) and by expanding the financial resources of the networks by cautiously allowing advertisements on television (2 January 1966) and radio (1 March 1968).

Some networks had difficulties finding people to come up with ideas for programmes that would attract young people. Besides the fact that few of these people were available, corporate culture within the networks was not appreciative of pop music and the people that liked it. Radio programmes with pop music tended to be made by departments responsible for making children's programmes, instead of by light music departments [32]. Operetta was aired on a radio channel that had to attract a young audience, or pop music records were simply played without being introduced or commented on. In 1969, a committee from the combined networks addressed the issue, soon after which the official radio stations regained audience they had previously lost. Veronica finally opted for joining the system sanctioned by the Dutch government in 1976 [33].

The broadcasting system therefore had to respond to the pressure the advent of pop music created. Old institutions decayed and new institutions were formed, often imitating similar institutions from different contexts and countries.

Pop Music on the Radio

Pop music *re-presented* completely different sociocultural values than those represented in the institutions of Dutch broadcasting. The conflict between them was a prolonged one in the Netherlands, and in other respects different from the USA or the UK [34]. In the transition from a system of music provision that was alien to pop music, to one that could at least incorporate it, some noteworthy institutional changes occurred.

A comparison of the programmes made by a pioneer on Dutch radio—the first to present American music to the Dutch directly—on the one hand with later programmes that played popular music on the other, best brings out the changes Dutch radio went through. The comparison also emphasizes that clashes between different sociocultural values have a remarkably long history, with early clashes resonating for many years.

Pete Felleman's experience in making radio programmes is the first example of such clashes of sociocultural values; what happened to him influenced developments in later years. In 1947 Felleman introduced jazz music at the time, known and appreciated by

only a few people, to the Dutch audience through his radio programme ‘Swing and Sweet from Hollywood and 52nd Street’ for VARA. Later, for the same broadcaster, in 1949, he started ‘Hitparade’. Here he played the first 10 records from the American Billboard Hit Parade each month, with a *grand finale* he compiled at the end of each year. He acquainted the Dutch audience too with American popular music and the institution of the hit parade, or chart. The music magazine *Tuney Tunes* advertised the fact that it published the chart compiled by Felleman, mentioned when it would be broadcast, and added that it was ‘produced by Pete Felleman’ [35].

Broadcasts of ‘Hitparade’ continued until 1957 when Felleman was given the choice: continue making radio programmes for VARA or take up the offer to become label manager of Capitol. Capitol was then owned by record company Bovema, later to become known as EMI. Apparently, the decision was not just made by VARA director Broeks. In the meeting a Phonogram director Solleveld and a Bovema director Oort were present. Before moving to Bovema, Felleman had been a freelance employee of the record company CNR for 4 years, an activity that had not evoked the kind of response elicited when he started to work for Capitol. Bovema was, however, Phonogram’s most important competitor in the Dutch record market at the time. Because of Phonogram’s influence on Dutch broadcasters and—related to that—on Dutch politics, it is arguable that a fear of likely commercial influences on Felleman’s programme choices was not the only reason that pressed the VARA directors to urge him to make a choice. Felleman chose to become label manager, and VARA let him go even though he was immensely popular in the Netherlands [36].

The demands of pop music on the existing institutions of the radio industry were in conflict with the broadcasting practices at the time. Pop music depends on records becoming available and being aired soon after they are released, or even *before* they are officially released. Somebody presenting pop music on the radio had to be able to get his hands on ‘hot’ records and the best way to do this was by developing close relations with record companies. Over the years Felleman cautiously developed such connections. In the early period he obtained the records he needed by buying them in the USA with illegally exchanged American dollars, or he asked airplane pilots to bring them over from the USA [37]. While he had contacts with record companies, they did not give him records. The practice of presenters being given records by representatives of record companies is hardly ever questioned nowadays, but was considered highly suspicious in the 1950s. So, when in 1957, Felleman was offered part-time employment by a record company, which would allow him to play newly released records before anybody else could and draw a large audience of young people, he was not allowed to continue his programmes for the socialist broadcaster VARA. VARA director Broeks feared that Felleman would not be able to withstand the pressures a large record companies was likely to exert on an employee who produced a radio programme as well. Although any such influence would have been traceable in the programme scripts, each of which had to be handed in 48 hours prior to a broadcast, and that Broeks said that Felleman’s independence was not an issue, the latter was still forced to make a choice [38]. The sociocultural values of the ideas that broadcasters should be independent of commercial influences and that radio should be setting an example to its audience, teaching it good taste and manners, conflicted with what were perceived as the commercial values of the pop music industry and the requirements of playing that kind of music on the radio.

While Felleman had to leave VARA because of the possibility that his integrity might be in jeopardy, close ties with record companies did not harm two other well-known VARA pop radio producers, Herman Stok and Co de Kloet, who were, in a way,

successors to Felleman. At the start of their well-known programme 'Tijd voor Teenagers', when Stok's role was a limited one and Dick Dusters [39] presented the programme, the Felleman legacy still loomed large. One indication of this was that record companies' 'pluggers' were not allowed to enter the VARA premises. The company was afraid of being accused of 'payola' and so would not even accept a new and hot record by Elvis Presley from the record company RCA. Only a few years later, however, Stok and de Kloet were provided with a company car to visit the record companies and collect records [40]. VARA therefore appeared to want to conceal as much as possible what might be perceived as a loss of its independence, in order to hide the conflict of ideals that was involved in playing pop music. In ways such as this the institutional arrangements governing broadcasting began to shift under pressure from the pop music industry.

Dutch radio was supposed to educate its audience and teach it good manners and taste [41]. The correct pronunciation of the Dutch language was important in this regard—grammatically and phonetically. Improper words could not be used. Christian broadcasters, like NCRV, would make sure proper language was used. The name of the Lord, for instance, should not be used in vain. All public Dutch broadcasters emphasized correct pronunciation of the Dutch language. To these ends certain institutional arrangements were made. Presenters on the radio had to read a pre-prepared script; there was no room for improvisation. Moreover, programmes were recorded and edited before they were broadcast—live broadcasting would mean relinquishing control. One broadcaster—VARA—even went as far as to require the scripts of each programme be checked prior to recording [42].

AVRO would check the scripts of radio programmes afterwards, while NCRV directors would occasionally listen in. The people involved in the production of radio programmes were led to believe that, if they did not comply with these standards, their programme might be discontinued, or they might be replaced by others [43]. AVRO and NCRV gave people fixed, short-term contracts to produce pop music programmes, thus ensuring that they could easily be laid off. Members of the VARA and AVRO programme boards would listen to programmes to determine their quality.

Songs were regarded as intrinsically valuable. Skipping or shortening the introduction of songs was not allowed, and neither could the presenter or DJ talk when a song had started. Jingles were not used to persuade the audience to start or remain listening. Using such means ('tricks') to win an audience was perceived as implying that the audience was unable to form an opinion on their own about the quality of a programme or a song and had to be 'lured' into listening [44]. As a consequence of these institutionalized ways of playing music, pop music programmes on Dutch official broadcasters did not have the appearance of speed and novelty that their increasing number of competitors had. Dutch public radio at first lost out largely because of this reluctance to adopt these and other institutional innovations. Only from 1970 onwards did the public broadcasters and Hilversum III regain their positions as the most popular radio stations [45].

Television was a different story. Here, the pressure for change was less strong and at the same time the space allowed by the broadcasting corporations (in response to overt and covert pressure from the board of directors of the broadcasters themselves as well as from the national government) for change was small. 'Top of Flop', the first programme with pop music on Dutch television presented by Herman Stok started in 1961 and was intent on establishing the intrinsic, inherent value of popular songs. A jury of mature, 'knowledgeable' experts would rate new songs and thus predict if they would become a hit (in Dutch: 'top'), or a failure ('flop'). As television was a new medium,

the institutionalized ideals for producing programmes were enforced strictly; in comparison radio programmes were allowed more freedom.

‘Commercial’ influence was not allowed in radio and television programmes. Advertisements were not allowed for a considerable number of years. Only much later, when a third radio station was set up in reaction to the activities and successes of pirates, were advertisements allowed in an attempt to ‘crowd out’ money from the pirates [46]. At VARA the prohibition of advertisements went so far that when an artist’s song was played in a radio programme, it was forbidden to mention that the artist was also going to perform on television in the near future—even if that was in a VARA television programme [47]. Accepting records from record companies was not allowed. Records had to be ordered from the ‘discotheque’—a library with records from which the official broadcasters could borrow. Pop music, however, is about new records by artists who are *en vogue* (‘hot’) at the time. Borrowing from the discotheque could take a few weeks, especially when a record had just been released and many producers of programmes wanted to borrow it. Forcing producers to borrow records from a discotheque did not work for pop music. Pop music is about playing new records and listening to them, and it is about hits. Eventually it became acceptable to receive records from record companies, a practice that is accepted nowadays, but was not until well into the 1960s [48].

The audience needed to be educated about what was good music. VARA’s ‘Tijd voor Teenagers’ was under strict scrutiny from the programme board: its makers at one point had to write a report to attest that they were sufficiently critical about pop music in the programme [49]. In the board some members were urging that ‘Tijd voor Teenagers’ to be even more critical of pop music than the producers generally were. In the report, the response by Co de Kloet (a producer of the programme) and Joop Söhne (director of youth programmes) to this objection was as follows:

As far as critical comments in ‘Tijd voor Teenagers’ are concerned: many bad teenager records are not broadcast, because it is better not to play a record than to ‘slash’ it. Pay attention [to the record] and the only consequence usually seems to be that sales figures rise. This is the reason why German tear-jerkers, American hits without anything special to them and records by, for instance: The Jumping Jewels, Jack Dens, Johnny Blanco, Bob Rocky, The Yellows birds, Winny Dobber, all kinds of sisters and brothers and a whole range of other ‘artists’ can not be heard in ‘Tijd voor Teenagers’.

Söhne, and de Kloet, suggested that the margins within which they operated were narrow. They noted that they produced a popular programme (referring to the popularity polls), but too much criticism of records on the programme would, they feared, scare off the audience. Besides, the authors observed:

Teenagers believe that they themselves are very well capable of making judgments and want to decide themselves what they like or do not like.

Songs and programmes had intrinsic value, they believed, which the audience would (eventually) recognize. While their young audience did not want to be manipulated, leaving that same audience to make decisions entirely undisturbed was equally unattractive to the producers. They sought to ‘play good records that have little or nothing to do with so-called teenage music, but by their difference stand out in “Tijd voor Teenagers”’. Maintaining some influence on a young audience would make sure ‘they will learn something’ from listening to the programme and could start to appreciate ‘serious music’. The report was discussed at the 15 January 1962 meeting of the VARA

programme board. After this discussion the minutes do not indicate that such strong critical comments about the programme were made again [50].

‘Serious music’ was an important category of music in those days, receiving a large share of the budget from each of the Dutch broadcasters [51]. It was common for broadcasters to have their own orchestras, for instance. This was not so much because the audiences wanted it—they were simply not asked about their preferences—but because it was perceived as the mission of Dutch broadcasters to educate their respective audiences to appreciate proper music. Classical, or ‘serious’, music had a central place in the programme schedules as well. Operetta was considered light music in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Later, these orchestras covered pop songs in an attempt to make pop music more serious and at the same time to make sure the orchestras could find employment and survive in what was seen as a transitory period [52].

When programmes with pop music were scheduled, these were given names that did not appeal to their audiences. Programmes produced by the pirate station Radio Veronica, or programmes by Radio Luxembourg directed at the Dutch youth initially had similar names, such as ‘Tiener Topper Tijd’. Young audiences were not taken seriously, and were not recognized as individuals who were able, or allowed, to make their own decisions freely. They were not ascribed much autonomy and independence by the producers and directors of radio programmes. From 1962–1963 onwards, other Dutch broadcasters started programmes that played pop music and were directed at a young audience. These programmes, however, were not allowed to play the ‘wilder’ songs, paying more attention to Cliff Richard, for instance, than to Elvis Presley and Little Richard. When there really was no way of getting around playing ‘wild’ music because of its immense popularity, the instrumental version would sometimes be played, and presenters would be critical of this music. Presenters would rather avoid playing a record that was considered unbecoming than criticize it [53].

People in charge of Dutch broadcasters had little clue about what should have been done to attract a young audience, and so allowed some of their employees to experiment at the margins. Changes in the names of programmes, days, times, length and frequency of broadcasts were frequent. The first broadcast of ‘Tussen 10 + en 20 –’ was on 11 November 1958; there was no presenter for the seven songs by Fats Domino and Billy Vaughn that were played in the 15 minutes between 4:15 and 4:30 p.m. [54]. In 1959, a programme by the same name was broadcast, compiled on the basis of ‘collective requests from high school students and members of fans’. This format had some success [55].

When VARA started its ‘Tijd voor Teenagers’, in 1959, which was almost an instant hit not least because of the fact that it had a presenter that did not address his audience in an overly condescending way, AVRO looked for a way to match that success. They needed a presenter who was well known to the audience, somebody able to create a sense of ‘us [pop music lovers]’ against ‘them’, someone who would present himself as equal to his listeners. Many people did not want to become a presenter, or would only take the job under an alias, fearing that it would damage their future career. It was not until 1963 that AVRO appointed Jos Brink. Brink and the programme became hits, not least because of the influence of the show’s producer Skip Voogd in the music press. Brink, for instance, made the cover of a number of magazines and was interviewed frequently. He was much more of a DJ than his predecessors. Brink, however, was no expert on pop music and relied heavily on Voogd. Voogd selected the songs and wrote the script [56].

The idea that what the audience wanted was important did not seriously influence ‘the powers that be’ in public broadcasting for a considerable time. It did not match the educational mission that public broadcasters were imbued with *and* took upon themselves, which was to confer certain sociocultural values on their audience. It was felt that the preferences of the majority of the audience should not play a role in decision making because that it would lead to the production of ‘vulgar’ music and programming [57]. The task of public broadcasting was to change these preferences for the better. When in 1961 VARA started using *Luister- en Kijkonderzoek*, a system similar to the Nielsen ratings reports in the USA, to learn how many people were listening to which programmes and how they evaluated them, it did so to ensure that the democratic voice of its members could be heard and not to find out what the audience wanted [58]. In the NCRV annual report of 1965, it was explained to NCRV’s constituency that such research could help ensure that the mix of programmes was broad and the schedule balanced so that all of its members would be served [59]. From initially being a way of expressing democratic values, the research quickly changed into a tool for producing figures that showed the extent to which a programme met the general audience’s preferences, and the degree to which it was a commercial success [60]. Slowly, then, media institutions sought to give expression to the preferences of the audience, to reflect to increasing degrees the idea that young people in the audience were autonomous and able to make their own judgements.

Music magazines also became increasingly sensitive to the demands of their readers, moving from a system of expert or peer selection to one of market selection. Over the years, as competition between magazines increased, more institutional features appeared in them that explicitly attempted to meet the demands of readers. Popularity polls, charts from foreign countries (especially from the USA and the UK), posters of ever larger sizes instead of, or in addition to, simple black-and-white photographs, and the printing of the lyrics of popular songs are prominent examples of how music magazines tried to cater to the preferences of their audience [61].

Charts were the obvious solution to the problem of how to measure and then how to cater for the preferences of the audience for particular songs. There was, however, no independent organization that collected sales figures for the Netherlands. Public broadcasters were suspicious of relying on a commercial organization to collect figures on sales. Other institutional forms of the chart were tried for various lengths of time. VARA’s ‘*Tijd voor Teenagers*’ was ingenious in this respect. Initially, the programme used a personal chart created by one of the listeners. A reporter for the programme would visit a member of the audience and ask for his or her favourite songs, which would then be played. Another type of chart was based on the amount of money in the form of extra stamps attached to postcards sent in to the station. The money in the stamps was used for good causes in line with the public service goals of the station, and the amount a song raised was treated as a measure of its popularity. The songs that were most popular would be played on the programme [62]. These institutional forms were short-lived, however: they were not popular themselves. In order to maintain its position as the most popular programme playing pop music, institutional changes were needed [63].

‘*Tijd voor Teenagers*’ eventually had to play the kind of chart based on retail sales figures more common in America, the UK, and on Radio Luxembourg. It was decided to gather the information by phoning record shops; but this process exhibited bias. Firstly, there was reluctance to trust figures provided by record companies, because commercial influences were feared. Secondly, few record shops in the eastern parts of

the Netherlands were phoned. German popular music had many fans in the eastern parts of the country, but the VARA board did not favour it. This was due, amongst other things, to resentment against Germany because of the occupation during the Second World War [64].

While the character, or institution, of the 'showman-entrepreneur DJ' fully developed in the USA in just a few years during the 1950s [65], it took many years to develop in the Netherlands. Pete Felleman, Herman Stok and Jos Brink were not DJs in the genuine sense of the word. Although they were well known, adored and received a lot of attention in the media, their behaviour on air did not communicate that they were at one with the audience, a *primus inter pares*. In one way or other, they tried to educate their audience, showing them the proper way to speak, the proper tastes in music, etc. The recollections of one of the producers of these radio programmes illustrate this. Co de Kloet, of VARA, who was producer of 'Tijd voor Teenagers' recalled, 'the really terrible [music] you did not play, of course'. It was only if that music was very popular and could not be ignored that it was played, but usually with the added comment that the DJ believed the song was 'terrible'. There was a distinct preference for Cliff Richard over Elvis Presley, for instance. De Kloet claimed that this 'played an important role in making Cliff Richard famous' [66].

Elections for the most popular DJ were organized by *Tuney Tunes*, still probably the most influential and best-known music magazine at the time in the Netherlands, and were started in 1963. There was no separate poll for foreign DJs. In this poll, Joost den Draayer, who had been influenced by American DJs in the way he presented radio programmes for the pirate station Radio Veronica, won decisively. The first real, Dutch DJs worked for Radio Veronica after this station had changed its image to become a station for the young by mainly playing pop music. Joost den Draayer had made a trip to the USA to learn how to make radio programmes. Afterwards he became a director of Veronica and made sure that Veronica DJs behaved more like their American role models. He introduced a chart based on the American example, relying on retail sales figures [67]. A good DJ had, of course, to have more than just the good looks that do well on the covers of magazines. DJs needed to know what they talked about, have a 'feel' for the music, and they also needed to talk about it smoothly [68]. Good DJs in the Netherlands also needed to be proficient in English, or at least give that impression. English and pop music were closely related in the perception of the Dutch audience. Most importantly, a DJ was not expected to act as if he were more important than his audience [69].

The music industry was interested in the possibilities that pirate stations such as Radio Veronica created as they focused more on pop music and its young audience. Earlier, when public broadcasters were dominant and deprecated any hint at commercial interests, the music industry's space for manoeuvre in media land was limited. When pirate radio Veronica's 'Top 40' started in 1965, singles sales increased by 30% that year [70]. Soon after, in 1965 the Dutch government commissioned a third official radio channel (Hilversum III), to focus on young people and which mainly played pop music. Public broadcasters imitated the institutions of the DJ and the charts in order to try to regain a lost audience. Indeed, the official broadcasters did regain those listeners, albeit that legal measures against pirate stations were needed to ensure this 'success' [71].

Although Radio Veronica was perceived by many to be the prime example of a commercial broadcaster that aimed solely to maximize its audience and profits, this was not entirely true. In the first few years of its existence, Veronica did not devote time exclusively, or even primarily, to producing programmes and playing pop music for a

young audience [72]. In addition, when in 1965 Veronica began broadcasting its Top 50 in a programme called 'Nederlandse Hitparade'—later 'Top 40'—it refused to include the German songs that many people in the Netherlands liked. When collecting the sales figures, Veronica would not call shopkeepers in the eastern parts of the Netherlands to inquire about their record sales. Similarly, Country & Western music—with folk roots and an audience that consisted of rural, working-class people—did not appear to match the sociocultural values Veronica stood for, although pop music had originated in part from folk music. In organizing its charts in this way Veronica arguably played an important role in the disappearance of both German songs and Country & Western from the minds of the Dutch radio audience.

Concluding Remarks

People's preferences for pop music are formed and take shape in a social environment that consists of interrelated institutions. The cultural environment that pop music met with in the 1950s and (early) 1960s in the Netherlands as much as elsewhere was one where the sociocultural values differed significantly from those of pop music. In the 1950s and early 1960s, however, many Western countries experienced a sudden and major change in the institutions of pop music. Peterson documents this for the USA and locates it in time in the years 1955–1956 [73]. A similar shift, though much more prolonged, happened in the Netherlands as well as elsewhere in Europe. Pop music was embraced much more slowly than in the USA and the UK. The first steps were slow and careful; from 1962–1963 developments were faster, as organizations were becoming much more responsive to their audiences. Examples from neighbouring countries such as West Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg played an important role. Most importantly, however, were the examples set in the UK and the USA.

Experiments to find the right format for radio programmes or music magazines attest that this process of institutional change was complicated. Public broadcasters sought to reach young people who were attracted to pop music. At the same time they wanted to, or had to, remain true as much as possible to their own ideals or sociocultural values as representatives of a particular social groups. This meant educating their constituency in proper taste and behaviour. The tensions between these two differing sets of sociocultural values explain why the search for the 'right' institutional format was so protracted.

Correspondence: Wilfred Dolfsma, Erasmus University Rotterdam-FBK, PO Box 1738, NL-3000 DR Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Tel: +31-10-4081948; Fax: +31-10-4089014; E-mail: w.dolfsma@fbk.eur.nl

NOTES

- [1] S. Frith, *Performing Rite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); H. Righart, *De Eindeloze Jaren Zestig* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1995); J. Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon in Aanbouw—Nederland in de Jaren Zestig* (Amsterdam: Boom, 1995).
- [2] Revulsion was apparent in reports, some of which commissioned by the government. See: J.S. Hessen, *Samen jong zijn* (Assen: Van Gorcum & Prakke, 1965); D.E. Krantz and E.V.W. Vercruysse, *De Jeugd in het Geding* (Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 1959); M.J. Langeveld, *Maatschappelijke Verwildering der Jeugd* (Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij, 1953).
- [3] C. Gillet, *The Sound of the City*, 2nd edn (New York, 1996 [1970]), 13.
- [4] J. Berland, 'Radio Space and Industrial Time: music formats, local narratives and technological mediation', *Popular Music*, 9 (1990), 179–92; S. Frith, *Sound Effects* (London: Constable, 1983); R. Kloosterman and C. Quispel, 'Not Just the Same Old Show on My Radio', *Popular Music*, 9 (1990), 151–64; K. Negus, 'Plugging and Programming: pop radio and record promotion in Britain and the United States', *Popular Music*, 12 (1993), 57–68.

- [5] G. Hodgson, *Economics and Evolution* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993) and *How Economics Forgot History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). W. Dolfsma, *Institutional Economics and the Formation of Preferences—the advent of pop music* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004).
- [6] R. Peterson, 'Why 1955? Explaining the advent of rock music', *Popular Music*, 9 (1990), 97–116; Negus (1993), op. cit.
- [7] Frith (1983), 212.
- [8] Dolfsma (2004), op. cit.
- [9] Frith (1983), op. cit.
- [10] Kloosterman and Quispel (1990), op. cit.
- [11] Berland (1990), op. cit.; Negus (1993), op. cit.
- [12] For instance when the May 1960 issue of *Tuney Tunes* asserts that Fats Domino's favourite dish is boiled elephant's trunk (*Tuney Tunes* (May 1960), 128).
- [13] *Tuney Tunes* (September 1955), 104–105 (Muziekbibliotheek, Hilversum, the Netherlands).
- [14] *Tuney Tunes* (September 1956), 198.
- [15] Righart (1995), op. cit.
- [16] Interview Skip Voogd (AVRO and NCRV producer of radio programmes on, a.o., pop music) 20 August 1996 transcript available on request; see various issues of *Tuney Tunes*, *Muziek Expres* (NPI Archives, Amsterdam, the Netherlands), *Muziek Parade* (VARA Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands).
- [17] Dolfsma (2004), op. cit., ch. 5.
- [18] Interview Voogd.
- [19] Interview Co de Kloet, VARA producer of 'Tijd voor Teenagers' and several other programmes that featured pop music, as well as children's programmes; interview Voogd; various annual reports VARA (VARA Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands) and AVRO (AVRO Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands).
- [20] R. Chapman, *Selling the Sixties* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Dolfsma (2004), op. cit., ch. 5.
- [21] CBS (Statistics Netherlands)/W. de Haan, *Radio, Televisie en Vrije-tijdsbesteding, Herfst 1960* (Zeist, 1964).
- [22] See van Gelder and Carvalho for a much more detailed, epic account of music magazines in the Netherlands; H. van Gelder and H. Carvalho, *Gouden Tijden—Vijftig Jaar Nederlandse Popbladen* (Amsterdam: Jan Mets & Stichting Popmuziek Nederland, 1994). According to Simon Frith (1983, op. cit.), the music press is important in the process by which people give meaning to music.
- [23] F. van Vree, 'Massacultuur en Media', in H. Wijfjes, ed., *Omroep in Nederland* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1994).
- [24] In addition to membership fees, membership was a basis for distributing money among the broadcasting corporations, money that was collected by the government from the compulsory contributions of people who owned a radio or television set.
- [25] A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).
- [26] G. de Wagt, ... *En niet vergeten. Zeventig jaar VARA* (Hilversum, 1995).
- [27] M. Slyser, *Hier is de VARA—25 Jaar Democratisch-Socialisme in de Omroep* (Amsterdam, 1950) and *Een Klein Mannetje met een klein potloodje—Impressies van 40 jaar VARA* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1965).
- [28] Broadcasting of Pier Sybrandy's—who called himself 'the Dutch Pat Boone'—record 'Het Ruw-houten kruis [The Wooden Cross]' in the 'Tijd voor Teenagers' radio programme shortly after the start of that programme, for instance, and was strongly criticized.
- [29] Interview Rob Out, presenter with NCRV, AVRO and Veronica, later manager with Radio Veronica; de Kloet, interview Cees van Zijtveld, Radio Veronica and AVRO presenter/DJ; interview Herman Stok, VARA presenter/DJ of radio, 'Tijd voor Teenagers', and television, 'Top of Flop'—the Netherlands' first TV programme about pop music programmes on pop music; interview Judith Dirkse-de Leeuw (aka 'Anuschka'), Radio Veronica and Radio Luxembourg presenter; interview Jos Brink, AVRO presenter/DJ of 'Tussen 10 + en 20 -'. That year growth rates for both LPs and singles were unprecedented (54.5 and 29.2%, respectively)—see Dolfsma (2004), op. cit.
- [30] M. van Elteren, 'Radio in het Televisietijdperk', in H. Wijfjes, ed., *Omroep in Nederland* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1994), 104–37; R. Vahl, *De Ondraaglijke Lichtheid van Hilversum 3. Moeizame Wording van een Popzender (1961–1969)* (University of Utrecht, 1996).
- [31] Vahl (1996), op. cit.; J. Bardoel, '“Om Hilversum Valt Geen Hek te Plaatsen” De Moeizame Modernisering van de Nederlandse Omroep', in H. Wijfjes, ed., *Omroep in Nederland* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1994), 339–71.

- [32] For example, various annual reports VARA; interview de Kloet.
- [33] Bardoel (1994), op. cit.
- [34] Peterson (1990), op. cit.; Chapman (1992), op. cit.
- [35] Various issues *Tuney Tunes*.
- [36] Interview Pete Felleman, VARA and Radio Luxembourg presenter and producer of radio programmes featuring jazz, pop music, soul from 1947 onward; various issues *Tuney Tunes*; various annual reports VARA.
- [37] Interview Felleman.
- [38] Interview Felleman.
- [39] Dick Dusters was an alias for Dick van 't Sand, an actor in radio plays chosen for his impeccable pronunciation of the Dutch language to present 'Tijd voor Teenagers'. Presenters needed such speaking skills, but were often reluctant to use their own names for fear of being associated with pop music and (thus) putting in danger their careers as actors in radio plays.
- [40] Interviews de Kloet and Stok.
- [41] K. van der Haak, '“Mededeelingen van Leerzamen Aard”—Tafereelen uit de Geschiedenis van de Educatieve Omroep', in H. Wijffes, ed., *Omroep in Nederland* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1994), 272–99.
- [42] Interview de Kloet.
- [43] Interview Hans Rosekrans (aka Peter Blom), NCRV presenter, various radio and television programmes; interview van Zijtveld.
- [44] Interviews de Kloet, Voogd, Stok.
- [45] Van Elteren (1994), op. cit.
- [46] Van Elteren (1994), op. cit.; E. de Ruijter, *Een Station Waar Muziek en Geld inzit. De Beginjaren van Radio Veronica* (Amsterdam: Free University, 1987).
- [47] Cf. scripts, 'Tijd voor Teenagers', 5 October 1962 and 8 February 1963 (VARA Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands).
- [48] Interviews Felleman, de Kloet, Stok.
- [49] VARA, 1961. [Report on 'Tijd voor Teenagers' discussed in a Programme Board meeting of January 1962. Written by Co de Kloet and Joop Söhne.] VARA Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands.
- [50] VARA, reports of programme meeting (VARA Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands).
- [51] VARA, reports of programme meeting; various annual reports VARA, AVRO, NCRV.
- [52] Various annual reports, VARA, AVRO, NCRV.
- [53] Interviews Rosekrans, Voogd, de Kloet; NCRV annual report 1969, p. 54.
- [54] Avro programme magazines, various issues (AVRO Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands).
- [55] AVRO, annual report 1959.
- [56] Interview Voogd.
- [57] Interviews Voogd, Rosekrans, de Kloet.
- [58] VARA, 1961. Verslag van de Proefneming met opinie-onderzoek in februari/maart 1961. VARA Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands.
- [59] NCRV annual report 1965, p. 38ff.; 1966, p. 78ff. (NCRV Archives, Hilversum, the Netherlands).
- [60] W. Bekkers, *Horen, Zien & Cijfers—25 Jaar Kijk- en Luisteronderzoek* (Hilversum: NOS, 1990).
- [61] Various issues *Tuney Tunes*, *Muziek Expres*, *Muziek Parade*; interview Voogd; Dolfsma (2004), op. cit.
- [62] Interviews Stok, de Kloet.
- [63] Polls in the music press in the years 1959–1962/3 consistently show a decline in the popularity of the pop music programming of the official broadcasters. These polls were manipulated to some degree, but were then widely read and believed to give genuine information. They were, moreover, not contested for a long time. In addition, the polls of different magazines were consistent with each other. Various issues of *Tuney Tunes*, *Muziek Expres* and *Muziek Parade*.
- [64] Dolfsma (2004), op. cit.
- [65] Peterson (1990), op. cit., 109–10; Berland (1990), op. cit.
- [66] Interview de Kloet.
- [67] De Ruijter (1987), op. cit.
- [68] Negus (1993), op. cit.; Berland (1990), op. cit.
- [69] Berland (1990), op. cit.; Negus (1993), op. cit.
- [70] Dolfsma (2004), op. cit.
- [71] Chapman (1992), op. cit.; de Ruijter (1987), op. cit.; Vahl (1996), op. cit.
- [72] Van Elteren (1994), 106.
- [73] Peterson (1990), op. cit.; R. Burnett, 'The Popular Music Industry in Transition', *Popular Music and Society*, 17 (1993), 87–114.