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Cultural industries of the Global South in the digital age

Diversity of actors and local reconfigurations

Presentation

Cultural industries have experienced important changes related to the development of the Internet and more broadly of information and communication technologies (ICT) (Anderson, 2004, Benghozi, 2006, Bouquillion *et al.*, 2013).The evolutions in the modes of creation, production and distribution of local and international cultural content at the heart of these industries (film, music, visual arts, performing arts, literature) are partly rethought through the new possibilities offered by the ICT: digital production tools (audiovisual, graphic, 3D printers, services, ...) social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube Channel) streaming and download platforms (Deezer, Netflix), but also personal blogs, apps for smartphones etc.

These technologies have rapidly spread worldwide and with them the idea that ICT would be the vector of a linear and inevitable globalization, tainted by a process of cultural homogenization for the benefit of the Anglo-Saxon countries. This approach has been criticized and nuanced since the 1980s through research emphasizing the diversity of national industrial structures and of choices made in terms of public policies (Mattelart and Schmucler 1983, Delapierre and Zimmermann, 1986). Moreover, studies on industrial configurations related to earlier technologies — the recorded music in Jamaica (Power and Hallencreutz, 2002) or in India (Manuel, 1991, Parthasarathi, 2013), the broadcasting in Brazil (Rivron, 2010) — have highlighted the fact that the modalities of appropriation (DeCerteau, 1980, Appadurai, 1996) of technologies linked to the development of the Internet vary considerably from one country to another.

However, the study of the diversity of digital transition policies and socio-technical configurations (Flichy, 2001) that contributed to the recent changes in cultural industries of the Global South remains relatively marginal and deserves to be better highlighted. In the continuity of these reflections, it appears that the new technologies in the Global South have led to cultural and creative industries anchored in arrangements of actors, services and uses that differ significantly from what the discourse of central market institutions or the international media on innovation can reveal (Harker, 1997). Hence, on the one hand, we observe a consolidation of representations of cultural markets in the Global South still tainted by inefficiency due to piracy (Liang, 2009, Mattelart, 2011), clientelism or corruption systems (Lobato, 2012, Forest, 2012), weak enforcement of artists' economic rights and the domination of the informal economy, while on the other hand, these spaces are becoming increasingly attractive for the creative industries due to successive rounds of economic liberalization, their large consumer population, the internet as a distribution network for

cultural goods, or the cost and flexibility of labor along with a growing number of creators of cultural content.

Hence, new dynamics are particularly interesting to explore, among which:

- The development of audiovisual production and rising South-South hegemonies as in the case of Bollywood and Nollywood, as well as the music or television production of Brazil and South Africa, which emerge from local consumption;
- The recent reinvestment in Asian and African markets by the dominant historic operators like Sony Music Entertainment, Fnac, NewsCorp/Murdoc, or Bertelsman ;
- The growing competition between international online platforms to partner with leading local players which surfaced in India with Amazon Prime partnering with Yash Raj Films and Netflix with Red Chillies Entertainment;
- The use of the latest communication technologies (facebook, instagram, Youtube Channel) in the reinvention of traditional or popular forms of visual or musical forms, the circulation and acquisition of skills, and the possibility of discourse, practices and alternative circuits (Rivron, 2014).

This special issue seeks to gather contributions to better understand the articulation between developments in the digital environment and local reconfigurations of cultural industries in the Global South. Although being a questionable term, the "South", constitutes a category of analysis that is still fertile today to consider a certain number of asymmetries and inequalities on a world scale, their construction throughout history but also their translation to finer analysis scales (Bautès and Chiros, 2012). The issue will focus on emerging and innovative forms of organization, even if they may be marginal, which allow us to consider the South as a territory to explore the relationship between digital and cultural industries, to rethink them in their autonomy, and by reflection effect, to reconsider the changes taking place in the North. While there is not one but many definitions of the cultural industries, we propose an approach that includes the most commonly recognized sectors or those belonging to the "core cultural industries" (Throsby, 2001, Unesco 2013): film, music, radio, television, performing arts, visual arts, arts and crafts, publishing and the press.

Accordingly, this issue will draw attention to three interrelated themes:

1. Digital transitions and regulatory policies

- What are the digital transition programs implemented on national or regional levels (Mercosur in South America, BIMSTEC in Asia-Pacific, CEMAC in Central Africa, or the BRICS group, etc.) and what is their impact on cultural industries? Is there a circulation of digital cultural policies models between Global South countries?
- What are the different regulatory processes (Copyrights, royalties etc.) in cultural industries from the South and what are the consequences of this regulation? Are they seen as levers for economic development or as a threat to the creation and circulation of certain artistic expressions?
- What endogenous technological clutches (Latouche, 1989) can be observed, allowing the emergence of new artistic forms which can reach local or international audiences?

2. Spaces of creation and reintermediation of artistic work

- How does this changing digital landscape affect the trajectories of artists and intermediaries? How are the previous networks of cooperation involved in the production of artworks (visual, musical, audiovisual, etc.) being rethought with the evolution of ICT? In other words, is there a

new geography of production? Do these configurations promote the emancipation or, on the contrary, reinforce the precariousness of cultural workers?

- Are digital spaces representing arenas of artistic legitimization, spaces where careers are created? Have artists faced new gatekeepers and/or barriers to entry into the profession? What is the role of digital platforms and social media in the value chain, forms of recognition and channels of distribution of cultural goods and messages?
- How do the development of local or international distribution platforms for films, music, or other cultural goods impact content producers and the historic players in the cultural industries? Are there any changes in the ownership and financing patterns in the South (concentration, differentiation, consolidation, verticalization, crowdfunding)?
- To what extent do smartphones transform the way cultural contents circulate and are economically valued? What role do telephone operators play in the supply of content and modes of remuneration of the production chain?

3. Digital cultural economies and territorial transformations

- What are the links between digital and informal economy?
- What are the territorializing strategies of the global players (iTunes, Deezer etc.) with respect to the new markets and audiences in the South?
- What are the new forms of social and territorial asymmetries (value chains, margins and exclusions of digital transition policies)? Does digital media lead to the integration and visibility of marginal territories into mainstream cultural dynamics?
- Should we consider these configurations as favorable to new forms of autonomy or dependence of the subaltern peripheries? Is there a relocation of the validation / valuation process by Northern agencies or actual independence of the industries? How can we rethink the classic model of oligopoly and fringes at this time of "cyber-space" and globalization (Bénistant, 2017)?

This special issue welcomes original contributions which will enable us to apprehend the diversity of the phenomena described above, based on recent fieldwork and with attention to their spatial and socio-anthropological dimensions (artists trajectories, mapping of different actors experiences etc.). A brief contextualization on cultural industries in the country(ies) studied and of the main issues related to the arrival of the Internet will be particularly appreciated.

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Submission

- March 1st 2018: Deadline for abstracts submission in French or English (500 words maximum, including title and 5 keywords)
- May 1st 2018: Deadline for full article submission in French or English
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