

10

Beyond Reproduction: Asymmetrical Interdependencies and the Transformation of Centers and Peripheries in the Globalizing Visual Arts

Larissa Buchholz

In 1978, the postcolonial theorist and artist Rasheed Araeen railed against what he considered a myth, namely the “internationalism of contemporary art.” In a manifesto on visual art, presented at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London, he declared:

The myth of the internationalism of Western art has to be exploded ... Western art expresses exclusively the peculiarities of the West ... It is merely a transatlantic art. It only reflects the culture of Europe and North America ... The current “Internationalism” of Western art is nothing more than a function of the political and economic power of the West, enforcing its

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L. Buchholz (✉)
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA

values on other people. The word international should mean more than just a couple of Western countries. (Araeen 1997 [1978], 98)

Only two decades later, Rasheed Araeen—who had meanwhile become the editor of the British journal *Third Text*, one of the most influential theoretical platforms for non-Western art or art produced by “Diaspora intellectuals”—had drastically changed his opinion. In his view, the recognition of non-Western artists in the globalizing art scene had decisively grown; “young, post-colonial artists from Africa or Asia” would no longer be segregated from their white/European counterparts, he remarked, adding “[b]oth of them display and circulate within the same space and the same art market, recognized and legitimated by the same institutions” (Araeen 2001, 23). Other intellectuals of the artistic field echoed this assumption of a tendency toward a more egalitarian globalism with even stronger claims, purporting either the dawn of a new “global dialogue between Western and Non-Western art” (Scheps 1999, 16ff; Dziewior 1999, 345) that would overcome asymmetric center–periphery relations, or the demise of a “Western-centric” model that would entail “essential changes to definitions, functions, and existential states of contemporary art” (Hanrou 1994, 79).

Such rather euphoric proclamations have been strongly debunked as “illusions” by Alain Quemin (e.g., Quemin 2002, 2006, 522). Based on systematic empirical research, he and other sociologists (Quemin 2002, 2006; Buchholz and Wuggenig 2005; Buchholz 2008) argued that despite important global transformations in contemporary art, this cultural realm continues to be heavily dominated by artists from select Western countries, whereas artists from so-called non-Western regions (such as Latin America, Africa, and Asia) remained highly marginalized. As Quemin poignantly summarized, “globalization has certainly not challenged in any way the US-European duopoly” (Quemin 2006, 543f).

What are we to make of such strikingly different accounts? The declaration of radical shifts versus the argument of an unchallenged reproduction of center–periphery configurations? Drawing upon and extending tools of Bourdieu’s field theory, in this contribution, I seek to propose an intermediate position that moves beyond the dichotomous alternatives of

either radical change or outright reproduction. My argument unfolds in four parts: I first provide a brief review of conceptions of center–peripheries in globalization of culture research. In this context, I discuss how a field approach could offer useful contributions to elaborate upon them, particularly in regard to the notion of the relative autonomy of culturally—in relation to economically based hierarchies in cultural fields. The second part delves into empirical analysis. Informed by the field approach, I examine the evolution of asymmetries in the global exhibition space and the global auction market. This analysis reveals that transformations of center–periphery hierarchies are underway in both global spaces, but that they follow different temporalities. In the third part—drawing from additional qualitative interview and discourse data—I show how intermediaries’ invitation strategies of artists across borders defy a simple binary logic of dominating “Western” centers vis-à-vis dependent “non-Western” (semi)-peripheries. My findings point instead to relational, albeit asymmetric, dynamics that inform multidirectional cross-border flows of valuation—and that, I argue, are best captured through the notion of asymmetric interdependencies. I conclude by making the case for a multidimensional and relational global field approach to examining (shifting) asymmetries in global cultural production, permitting to account for three key aspects: their duality, their cyclical nature, and their embeddedness in asymmetric interdependencies.

The Multidimensionality of Center–Periphery Inequalities

While the center–periphery distinction has been disqualified as a perspective to account for the directionality of flows or cultural influences in the global cultural economy (e.g., Appadurai 1990), several empirical works have shown that it fertile to engage with the unevenness of global cultural markets. This also holds true for the case of the contemporary visual arts, as the introduction indicated: sociologists have found that strong inequalities regarding the success of artists from different countries persisted well into the new millennium. For decades, very few countries from the Northwest, particularly the United States and Germany, have

dominated this artistic realm (Quemin 2002, 2006, 2012; Buchholz and Wuggenig 2005; Buchholz 2008). As Quemin concludes, “a strong hierarchy of countries controls the organization of and participation in the international contemporary art world and market ... beyond the development of international exchanges, the art world has a clearly defined center comprising a small number of Western countries, among which the US and Germany are preeminent, and a vast periphery, comprising all other states” (Quemin 2012, 70ff.). Similar conclusions regarding the persisting unevenness of globalizing cultural markets have been reached in studies that examined the market for book translations (Heilbron 1999; Sapiro 2010), world music (Brandellero and Pfeffer 2011), or entertainment movies (Moretti 2013c [2001]). In all cases, the center-periphery distinction highlights just how big a gap in macrolevel inequalities remains, and how much such gaps remain intertwined with geographic reference units, such as countries.

Nevertheless, while empirical scholarship has demonstrated the utility of the center-periphery distinction to describe persistent macroinequalities in globalizing cultural markets, to theorize them, I suggest, it is useful to refine the model in two important directions. First, it is crucial to disentangle more precisely what dimension of geographic macroinequalities one is addressing: place-based inequalities among sites of production/mediation (e.g., the hegemony of New York/United States), or inequalities at the level of cultural producers/goods (e.g., US American contemporary art)? In empirical terms, both dimensions of macroinequalities can strikingly drift apart. They should thus be kept analytically apart. For example, Phillips’ insightful study of the international market for jazz recordings revealed that locations that are at the margins in terms of place-based inequalities can be central with regard to the success of artistic creations—and vice versa. Specifically, while New York figured as a central place for the global diffusion of jazz tunes (Phillips 2013, 51f.), at the level of cultural goods, a “disproportionate advantage” existed for “recordings that emerged from more disconnected cities than when compared with more central cities like New York (...) particularly when the outputs in question are difficult to categorize” (Phillips 2013, 9, 16). In other words, “music from highly disconnected sources tended to have glob-

ally broader long-run appeal than those originating from [central] places like Chicago and New York" (ibid., 51).

Yet apart from the importance to distinguish between two analytically distinct dimensions of center-periphery inequalities, the second modification that I deem important is to take into account that center-periphery configurations at the commercial pole of a globalizing realm of cultural production can and do differ from those at the more cultural-institutional pole. In other words, one may have to deal with a dual macropower structure. At the level of places, such a duality becomes immediately apparent when one looks to the literary realm. While in the contemporary visual arts, New York City has been consistently at the very top, in literature this is not the case: Paris is the preeminent intellectual literary center, and London and New York are the major commercial publishing centers (Casanova 2004 [1999], 164-72).

Yet also at the level of cultural production, a duality between specific cultural and commercial inequalities is important to consider and theorize. One model to work with in this regard is Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production. This approach argues that cultural realms are fundamentally structured around a dual symbolic economy. It consists of the opposition between a heteronomous pole—in which competition for economic gains prevails and in which cultural producers are evaluated particularly according to their economic success—and a relatively autonomous pole (e.g., Bourdieu 1993, 115-19; Bourdieu 1996, 142-46). The latter sphere adheres to an economy of specific cultural legitimacy that does not coincide with and even reverses principles of the economic pole (ibid.). Here, the primary stake is "specific symbolic capital," that is, specific recognition by a highly specialized professional public (such as other artists, critics, curators). Artists become evaluated on the basis of culturally specific criteria that are relatively autonomous from "profane," commercial or temporal considerations (Bourdieu 1993, 29-73). Transposed to the global arena, the field approach would thus lead us to analytically distinguish and theorize two distinct modes of hierarchization, based on conflicting principles within the same cultural universe: the principle of specific symbolic recognition and the competing principle of economic success, corresponding to a hierarchy that is based on "specific

criteria of peer judgement” and a “hierarchy according to commercial success” (Bourdieu 1996, 114).¹

Nonetheless, Bourdieu formulated his autonomy versus heteronomy distinction with regard to a particular place and time: France at the end of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, alternative models have emerged that have called Bourdieu’s dualistic model of fields of cultural production into question (cf. Zahner 2006; Graw 2009; Crane 2009). With the rise of market forces, they argued that the opposition of art versus money has become blurred. Market success has become an integral factor of artistic prestige and may even precede and determine cultural evaluation. As Diane Crane (2009, 337) suggested by referring to an American art critic, “prices now determine reputations” (Tomkins 2007, 71). Is Bourdieu’s model of a dual symbolic economy outdated? There are two ways to approach this question: first, conceptually it is necessary to disentangle more precisely the different dimensions in which the distinction between an autonomous and a heteronomous pole, between art versus money has been cast. In the evolving debate, distinct dimensions have tended to be conflated, and positions to have talked past each other in view of the kinds of evidence they draw upon. Second, empirically. Often the debate has relied on particular cases or case studies (especially Andy Warhol or Damien Hirst) to argue for the dissolution of the old opposition of art versus money. However, it has not supplemented the evidence with more large-scale statistical analyses of the broader structure of an art field.

Against this background, a research study on the global context found that the autonomy versus heteronomy distinction holds on empirical grounds in view of two specific indicators: the distribution of artistic recognition and the temporality in which specific symbolic capital precedes the accumulation of economic capital in transnational artistic careers (Buchholz 2013). Specifically, drawing from statistical analysis of several hundreds of the worldwide leading contemporary visual artists, this examination discerned an overarching divergence between artists whose success is based on “specific criteria of peer judgement” and artists who rank high in terms of “commercial success” (Bourdieu 1996 [1992], 114). Only a minority group of artists is successful in both dimensions. Indeed, the stakes of symbolic artistic prestige and economic capital tend

to be inversed in the global arena: higher economic capital goes along with lower symbolic capital, and vice versa. The same Chinese artist who achieves multimillion-dollar prices at Sotheby's and joins the ranks of the economically most successful artists globally is unlikely to gain worldwide cultural esteem to the same extent. This dual constellation is also reflected in the distribution of aesthetic media, with a clear polarity between installation art versus painting. Furthermore, in all examined careers, symbolic capital came before the accumulation of economic capital. In no case did success in the global auction market precede or even strengthen global symbolic success.

To be sure, these structural findings do not mean that the autonomy versus heteronomy polarity might not prove outdated in other dimensions. In addition, in the global context, its institutional basis is a completely different one and thus has to be reformulated, also in view of the rise of new financial circuits and logics (cf. Buchholz 2013). What such findings do indicate, however, is that the contemporary visual arts in the global context have a dualistic structure in terms of the (e)valuation of cultural production—something that I depict as a dual cultural world economy. Hence, it seems fertile to transpose the distinction to an examination of center–periphery dynamics, too.

If we do so, the dualistic field model also offers us interesting hypotheses that pertain to the analysis of patterns of transformations. In fact, Bourdieu's model argues that changes in the hierarchical orders of an autonomous and a heteronomous pole follow dissimilar mechanisms and temporalities. In particular, it states that at the relatively autonomous pole, a major mechanism for change rests in the opposition between fractions of the heterodoxy and of the orthodoxy. Representatives of the former are frequently composed of new, younger entrants who dispose of relatively low field-specific recognition and seek to acquire it by challenging dominant modes of evaluation through strategies of distinction (Bourdieu 1996, 154–61, 239–42; cf. Swartz 1997, 124f.). The orthodox fractions, by contrast, tend to be older and already wield a high amount of symbolic capital, as well as to defend established norms. Importantly, this polarity implies, in turn, that changes at the relatively autonomous pole should unfold in the more gradual rhythm of cohorts or generations, since innovative strategies tend to be enacted by younger aspirants and

their peer intermediaries, who still need to build up field-specific recognition over time until they can fully establish their distinctive position-takings.

Extended to the global level, the argument of the heterodoxy versus orthodoxy polarity as a mechanism for change carries a crucial, but hitherto overlooked, implication: it leads us to hypothesize that any effects of globalization on challenging a West-centric orthodoxy would be refracted in relation to the relative power position of artists and their peer intermediaries, which in turn tends to correspond to differences in age. By implication, transformations of center-periphery inequalities in regard to the most successful artists should follow a more gradual rhythm of cohorts. Such systematic variations should not be observed in regard to the economic heteronomous pole, however. According to the field model, the heterodoxy versus orthodoxy opposition does not apply here. In this context, changes would be driven by more market driven factors and would be more susceptible to the external environment, such as broader economic boom or bust periods.

The following section will test these arguments of Bourdieu's field model by comparing how globalization has affected center-periphery inequalities at the level of cultural production in the global exhibition space and the global auction market. The last section will complement this analysis by exploring the effects of global transformations on *place-based* center-periphery relations.

Global field in literature?

The Duality of Transformations

To extend the field approach for investigating the dynamics of center-periphery inequalities in the contemporary visual arts, an important question to ask of course is whether we can presume a global field to begin with. Several indicators speak for it. Since the end of the 1980s, this cultural realm has witnessed a number of important global transformations that entailed the emergence of an interdependent global space for cross-border flows, competition, and valuation in which the ultimate stakes of contemporary art have become redefined in global terms (Buchholz 2013, 2016): first, the creation of an institutional infrastructure

for cross-border circulation and valuation that reaches across six continents. This infrastructure evolved not only out-of-the-spectacular global expansion of the art auction market (e.g., Moulin 2003 [2001]; van den Bosch 2005). It also emerged through the extension of cultural–institutional circuits to a worldwide scope, with globally recruited artists, cosmopolitan star curators, and contemporary art biennials and art museums spread around the globe. Second, the rise and proliferation of global art discourses, which, as I show elsewhere in detail, entailed the emergence of new global imaginations and meanings, and the gradual construction of a more global gaze (Buchholz 2013). Third, the establishment of global practices of evaluating artistic recognition and value, notably the rise of global artist rankings since the end of the 1990s. Although such global rankings have been quite contested within the contemporary art field, their establishment and worldwide visibility have contributed to globalize the stakes and forms of capital among players from different corners of the world (ibid.). It is the convergence and partial interaction of these three transformations over the past three decades—the establishment of a global art infrastructure, the cultural construction of a global gaze, and the institutionalization of genuinely global practices of evaluation—which, I argue, have laid the institutional ground for the emergence of a global field (Buchholz 2013, 2016).

Regarding novel global artist rankings, two of them can serve us also as sources to scrutinize whether and how center–periphery inequalities at the level of cultural production diverge between the specific symbolic and economic dimension: (1) the *Artprice* ranking, which assesses the most successful visual artists in the global auction market on the basis of their annual volume of sales. As the ranking draws from information of more than 2900 auction houses on five continents, it represents an indicator of economically based inequalities.² (2) The *Artfacts* ranking, which determines the uneven distribution of artistic recognition in the global exhibition space, relying on a vast database of more than 100,000 artists and exhibitions across 140 countries.³ The ranking thereby operates with a complex multidimensional index that assigns artists “exhibition points,” which, in turn, define their relative positions in a world artistic hierarchy. Since the index seeks to represent criteria of art professionals that operate outside of immediate market constraints (Artfacts.net 2003),⁴ the ranking

offers a suitable and reliable indicator for the evolution of specific symbolic inequalities in Bourdieu's sense (for more methodological remarks on reliability, cf. endnote 5).⁵

With each of these data sources, two kinds of analyses were pursued: first, an examination of the evolution of the hierarchies from 1998 to 2007 at the level of the top 100 artists only. The year 1998 was the earliest year for which valid data could be obtained from *Artprice* for the contemporary art category of interest (interview). The end year of 2007, in turn, represents the year when journalistically published rankings reported the rise of Chinese contemporary artists in the global auction market for the first time. Departing from prefabricated journalistic rankings, this contribution comparatively reexamines the extent of their success by drawing upon an academically informed sampling strategy that is consistent for both rankings.⁶ For each sample, the geographic origins of the 100 selected leading contemporary visual artists were identified. Afterward, the relative shares of artists' "exhibition points" or sales volumes were summarized at the level of the countries of origin (cf. Quemin 2002, 2006; Buchholz and Wuggenig 2005).

This first kind of analysis serves as a background for a second and previously not pursued examination of dynamics across cohorts. Here, the same analytical procedures as above were employed to compare developments between different age groups within *either* the global auction market *or* the global exhibition space in the last year of analysis. In this regard, the greatest available number of artists for both ranking databases ($N = 500$ for the *Artprice* ranking) was divided into four age groups of equal size. These groups were cohorts of those born in (a) 1976–67, (b) 1966–57, (c) 1956–46, and (d) <1945, and each contained 40 artists.⁷

Tables 10.1 and 10.2 show results for the top 100 tier of the global auction market and the global exhibition space from 1998 to 2007. The shares of countries are each listed from the highest to the lowest percentages. Tracing first dynamics among the three most dominant countries in the global auction market reveals considerable changes (cf. Table 10.1). In 1998, the distribution of economic success still resembled what Quemin (2006) has called a US–German duopoly, since contemporary art from the United States (36%) and Germany (32%) clearly dominated, followed by a relatively feeble third position of the United

Table 10.1 Countries of origin of the leading contemporary visual artists in the global auction market, 1998 and 2007

1998			2007	
Rank	Country	Percentage share	Country	Percentage share
1.	United States	36.0	United States	29.9
2.	Germany	32.0	China	29.8
3.	United Kingdom	8.5	United Kingdom	13.0
4.	Italy	3.3	Germany	12.5
5.	Colombia	2.4	Japan	4.3
6.	Romania	1.7	Colombia	1.8
7.	Belgium	1.6	Italy	1.6
8.	Japan	1.6	India	1.4
9.	Cuba	1.6	Spain	1.2
10.	Austria	1.5	Korea	1.0
11.	Australia	1.3	Romania	0.8
12.	Nicaragua	1.2	South Africa	0.5
13.	Chile	1.1	Ukraine	0.5
14.	Spain	0.9	Russia	0.5
15.	France	0.8	Australia	0.3
16.	Mexico	0.8	Ireland	0.3
17.	Argentina	0.7	France	0.2
18.	Uruguay	0.5	Denmark	0.2
19.	Sweden	0.5	Belgium	0.2
20.	Canada	0.4		
21.	Iran	0.4		
22.	Israel	0.4		
23.	India	0.3		
24.	Iceland	0.3		
25.	Brazil	0.2		

Source: Artprice © 2008

Kingdom (8.5%). However, this West-centric constellation has not remained unchallenged ten years later. In 2007, art from China rose up to the league of central countries (29.8%), while approaching the leading position of the United States rather closely, with a share that is only 0.1% lower. In the same year, the position of Germany weakened (32–12.5%). It fell back to the fourth position, being excelled by the rise of artists from the United Kingdom (8.5–13%).

In comparison, such strong changes are not evident in the global exhibition space, which is marked by more inertia (cf. Table 10.2). While one can recognize shifts within the US–German duopoly from 1998 to 2007,⁸

Table 10.2 Countries of origin of the leading contemporary visual artists in the global exhibition space, 1998 and 2007

1998			2007	
Rank	Country	Percentage share	Country	Percentage share
1.	United States	38.5	United States	33.0
2.	Germany	15.1	Germany	18.8
3.	France	8.5	United Kingdom	12.6
4.	Switzerland	5.8	France	5.0
5.	United Kingdom	4.7	Austria	4.0
6.	Italy	4.6	Belgium	3.6
7.	Japan	3.6	Switzerland	3.5
8.	Denmark	3.0	Japan	2.1
9.	Austria	2.6	South Africa	1.8
10.	Belgium	1.9	Canada	1.7
11.	Romania	1.7	Slovenia	1.4
12.	Netherlands	1.7	Mexico	1.4
13.	Sweden	1.5	Ukraine	1.2
14.	Ukraine	1.3	Denmark	1.0
15.	Canada	1.2	Serbia	0.9
16.	Argentina	1.0	Romania	0.8
17.	India	0.9	Netherlands	0.8
18.	China	0.9	Spain	0.8
19.	Australia	0.8	Poland	0.8
20.	Lebanon	0.7	Lebanon	0.8
21.			Italy	0.8
22.			Cuba	0.7
23.			China	0.7
24.			Argentina	0.6
25.			Albania	0.6
26.			India	0.6

Source: Artfacts.net © 2008

the overall dominance of these two northwestern countries has remained largely unchallenged. They continued to command most specific symbolic capital, with a share of more than 50% (from 53.6% in 1998 to 51.8% in 2007).

The impression of inertia is amplified if one further interrogates how much countries outside the Northwest could improve their overall share from 1998 to 2007, as summarized in Table 10.3. It rises by merely 2.9% (from 10.9% to 13.8%). This stands in stark contrast to the global auction market, where the share of non-northwestern countries almost

Table 10.3 Share of non-northwestern countries among the leading 100 contemporary visual artists of the global auction market and the global exhibition space, 1998 and 2007

(a) Global auction market		(b) Global exhibition space	
1998	2007	1998	2007
14.5%	40.9%	10.9%	13.8%

Sources: Artprice © 2008 | Artfacts.net © 2008

triples in the same period, increasing from 14.5% to 40.9%. This remarkable change is mainly due to the dramatic rise of China (0 to 29.8%), as detailed above. Yet it also results, to a lesser degree, from the rise of other Asian countries in the upper ranks, such as India (0 to 1.4%) and Korea (0 to 1%). And while South Africa (0 to 0.5%), Ukraine (0 to 0.5%), and Russia (0 to 0.5%) have also improved their position, the rise of non-northwestern countries in the global auction market can thus be largely attributed to the ascension of countries in Asia, most notably China.

The comparison between the upper tier of the global auction market and of the global exhibition space thus reveals that the latter is marked by a stronger tendency toward the reproduction of older center-periphery asymmetries. However, once one directs the focus to an analysis between cohorts, as reported in Table 10.4, one can discern changes in the structure of hierarchy in the specific symbolic dimension of inequalities in the global exhibition space, too. However, these changes follow a more gradual rhythm across cohorts. Indeed, as the field model would predict, one can find systematic variation between different age groups: the younger the cohort, the more decentralized and dewesternized the structure of hierarchy among countries.

For one, the number of the included countries more than doubles from the oldest to the youngest cohort, rising from 11 to 14, then to 20, and, finally, to 21. Moreover, the presence of non-northwestern countries rises significantly from 8.8% in the oldest cohort to 16% and 22.8% among the two middle cohorts to, finally, up to 27.9% in the youngest. Interestingly, a closer look reveals that the strongest jump occurs for the age group of artists born between 1957 and 1966. While it is outside the scope of this contribution to provide a complete explanation, it is helpful to keep in mind, as stated at the beginning of this section, that the

Table 10.4 Countries of origin of four cohorts of the leading visual artists in the global exhibition space, 2007

Cohort	Country	%	N Countries of origin	Percentage share of non-Western artists
<1945	United States	46.0	11	8.8
	Germany	19.9		
	United Kingdom	9.0		
	France	6.2		
	Austria	4.1		
	Japan	3.3		
	Ukraine	3.2		
	Canada	3.0		
	Serbia	2.3		
	Greece	1.5		
	Italy	1.5		
1946–56	United States	41.4	14	16
	Germany	22.3		
	Austria	6.2		
	South Africa	5.9		
	Italy	4.8		
	Japan	2.7		
	Switzerland	2.4		
	France	2.4		
	Lebanon	2.4		
	United Kingdom	2.4		
	Canada	2.1		
	India	2.0		
	Hungary	1.6		
	Chile	1.4		
1957–66	United Kingdom	19.4	20	22.8
	Germany	16.0		
	United States	12.9		
	Belgium	12.2		
	Switzerland	5.4		
	Netherlands	5.4		
	Argentina	3.4		
	Algeria	3.0		
	Mexico	2.4		
	Romania	2.4		
	France	2.3		
	Spain	2.2		
	Cuba	2.1		
	China	1.8		
Brazil	1.7			

(continued)

Table 10.4 (continued)

Cohort	Country	%	N Countries of origin	Percentage share of non-Western artists
1967-76	Bulgaria	1.6	21	27.9
	Lithuania	1.6		
	Australia	1.4		
	Ireland	1.4		
	Japan	1.4		
	United Kingdom	23.0		
	United States	13.7		
	Germany	10.6		
	Poland	8.6		
	Denmark	6.0		
	Austria	5.1		
	Mexico	3.0		
	China	2.9		
	Albania	2.7		
	Brazil	2.4		
	Netherlands	2.4		
	Italy	2.3		
	Sweden	2.3		
	Belgium	2.2		
	Switzerland	2.1		
Estonia	2.1			
Israel	2.0			
Algeria	1.7			
Venezuela	1.7			
South Africa	1.7			
Romania	1.5			

Source: Artfacts.net © 2008

globalization of the art field has gained momentum since the end of the 1980s—regarding both the formation of global institutional circuits and the rise of global art discourses. This coincides with the period when the artists in this cohort stood largely at the beginning of their careers. Thus, in view of the global transformations that were underway at that time, this age group can be considered as the first actual “global generation” regarding the globally expanded context in which it could operate.

In the global auction market, by comparison, similar systematic variations across cohorts cannot be observed. Here, there are no linear transformations, but rather volatile patterns (cf. Table 10.5). The

Table 10.5 Countries of origin of four cohorts among the top 500 visual artists in the global auction market, 2007

Cohort	Country	%	Number	Percentage share of non-Western artists
<1945	United States	43.3	13	23.0
	Germany	26.1		
	China	7.6		
	Colombia	5.1		
	Japan	4.3		
	United Kingdom	3.8		
	Italy	2.2		
	Romania	2.0		
	Russia	1.7		
	Australia	1.7		
	Spain	0.8		
	Ireland	0.8		
	Korea	0.6		
1946–56	United States	52.0	12	33.3
	China	21.7		
	Germany	9.2		
	India	4.3		
	Japan	3.7		
	Italy	3.5		
	South Africa	2.2		
	United Kingdom	0.9		
	Cuba	0.7		
	Serbia	0.7		
	Denmark	0.6		
	Austria	0.5		
	1957–66	China		
United Kingdom		25.4		
Japan		3.7		
United States		3.1		
Germany		2.3		
Spain		2.3		
Australia		0.6		
Switzerland		0.5		
Italy		0.5		
Brazil		0.5		
France		0.4		
India		0.4		
Ireland		0.4		

(continued)

Table 10.5 (continued)

Cohort	Country	%	Number	Percentage share of non-Western artists
1967–76	China	29.5	12	48.6
	Germany	15.3		
	United States	15.2		
	United Kingdom	15.2		
	India	10.2		
	Denmark	4.7		
	Indonesia	2.8		
	Poland	2.6		
	Korea	1.3		
	Kenya	1.2		
	Italy	1.0		
	Japan	1.0		

Source: Artprice © 2008

overall number of countries changes from 13 to 12, then to 13, and, finally, to 12. And although the share of countries outside the north-west increases between the oldest and the youngest age group, a non-linear pattern is virulent, beginning from 23% to 33.3%, and 65.1% down to 48.6%. While such more volatile dynamics might be the result of an array of complex factors, they confirm the hypothesis that the commercial pole principally differs in patterns of change across cohorts.

Taken together, the findings of this section suggest that changes of center-periphery asymmetries at the level of cultural production have occurred in both the specific symbolic and the economic dimension, but that they follow different temporalities. Whereas the global auction market is characterized by a comparatively rapid, yet principally more volatile pattern, the global exhibition space is marked by cycles of *longue durée*, characteristic of more autonomous subspaces with charismatic structure in which change tends to unfold across cohorts. In this sense, the field model of a dual symbolic economy—with its theoretically grounded distinction of different dimensions of hierarchies and respective logics of change—leads us to question a totalizing dichotomy between change and reproduction. By distinguishing different segments of a globalizing art

field, one can discover more complex dynamics of change, marked by the simultaneity of shorter and longer cycles in which transformations of center–periphery configurations at the level of cultural production occur.

Asymmetric Interdependencies and the Globalization of Strategies

Having explored dynamics of center–periphery asymmetries at the level of cultural production, this last section illuminates how globalization in the contemporary visual arts has affected place-based center–periphery relations. In this regard too, I propose to go beyond a reproduction perspective. The latter holds that, despite globalization, the overarching locus of control has remained in Western centers, and that intermediaries from these centers—which group into “informal academies” with shared conventions—continue to prefer artists from central Western countries as a strategy to minimize the risk of selection in a highly uncertain evaluation process (Quemin 2002, 131ff., 147–55).

By contrast, directing the focus from a small elite in Western centers to globalizing field-level dynamics leads us to a more dynamic and relational view in two ways: first, an artistic field is a space of constant contestation over specific forms of capital which no group can control permanently. In global fields, such struggles assume cross-continental dimensions. Indeed, in the contemporary visual arts, globalization has entailed the morphological and geographic expansion of intermediary and institutional players that seek to position themselves in an emerging global game, both from the centers and from the peripheries (Buchholz 2013). Thus, instead of the perpetuation of one-sided control at Western centers, a global space of rivalry is emerging. Second, and related, in the wake of such global transformations, the strategies of selection and support among gatekeepers can themselves globalize. This applies both to intermediaries at the centers, which support artists from (non-Western) peripheries, and, conversely, to more peripheral locations, which support art from the centers to enhance their legitimacy in the global arena and

to promote their own artists more effectively. These field-level dynamics—which I will illustrate next with regard to the global exhibition space—indicate that it is fertile to go beyond a binary and deterministic view of dominating Western centers versus dependent (non-Western) peripheries. Rather, in a period of accelerated globalization, we can conceive of both as becoming increasingly interdependent through an emerging global logic and related competitive exchanges, leading to complex, multidirectional, and yet *asymmetric* interdependencies (Straubhaar 1991).

To consider at first transformations in regard to (semi-)peripheries: over the past decades, art institutions for exhibiting “international” contemporary art have considerably spread around the world, beyond the traditional Western strongholds. Indeed, by 2011, they reached 92 countries on six continents (Buchholz 2013). Yet, crucial is not just the mere fact of diffusion. More importantly, this development entailed that (semi-)peripheral locations have assumed a greater share in the dynamics of cross-border flows and valuation of successful “international” contemporary artists. For example, if we examine the exhibition activities of US American artists who were part of the top 100 league in 1998 and 2007, we see a clear dynamic of territorial expansion, with an increasing involvement of exhibition institutions at more peripheral sites. Whereas in 1998, the leading US American artists were exhibited in 24 countries, in 2007, their exhibitions considerably expanded to 45 countries.⁹ More important in this context, the number of exhibition sites outside the dominant Northwest significantly increased in the same period from 8 to 21. To be sure, these locations’ relative significance in the global culture game should not be overestimated. Yet such figures signal that the conditions of cross-border flows and valuation of art from the centers have become more global, encompassing the increased involvement of exhibition institutions beyond the Western centers.

At first glance, these dynamics may suggest simply an expansion of art institutions in dependent peripheries that dutifully adhere to reproducing dominant Western aesthetic positions. However, interviews with representatives of art institutions that exhibited US American art in 2007 suggest a more complex competitive impetus, which even lends itself to usurpation.¹⁰ All of the interrogated exhibition spaces understood

themselves as “international” in their mission and practice, both in view of self-presentations on their website and of statements made during the interviews.¹¹ Yet while respondents remained generally vague about the criteria that qualify an institution as “international,” several converged with the assumption that it is important to stage exhibitions with artists who are “internationally” acclaimed.

When asked more specifically about the reasons for exhibiting art from the United States, most rejected the idea that the institution’s choices would be based on explicit considerations of the “nationality” of an artist; that is, that specific artists would be chosen because they are US American. Nevertheless, at the same time, interviewees stated that it is crucial to present “US American” artists, saying, for instance, that it is “very important to have them,” that “of course we try to get them,” or that “it is very significant, of course ... one cannot claim an international position without showing them.” Thus, in a globalizing art field, the most successful national art traditions seem to be credited with more universal cultural legitimacy. This intricate symbolic mediation between dominant “national” artistic positions and their assumed “universal” artistic authority becomes more apparent in remarks that justify the importance of US American artists with reference to nonnational categories, stating that they have assumed a “very strong cultural influence over the world since the 1950’s and 1960’s,” that “modern art history is very focused on US American art,” or, as one respondent put it, that “they have a very high quality; [that] they were and to some extent still are in the contemporary spearhead of art world culture, which means that our artists are sort of in a dialogue with American artists, which means that they are close to new thinking in the arts, which we of course are.”

Given the universal aesthetic authority attributed to established US American art and statements that the “international” legitimacy of an exhibition space is partly defined by the kind of internationally acclaimed work it shows, the interviews convey that art institutions in more peripheral non-northwestern contexts import dominant Western art to also enhance their own symbolic standing. Importantly, such dynamics do not stand in opposition to local loyalties. On the contrary, most institutions saw it as one of their tasks to support the work of artists from their own countries. The import of aesthetic positions

with “universal” appeal would thereby allow to build up a “context” for their promotion in the first place—creating greater visibility, while constructing a symbolic bridge for a “dialogue” between established global and more emerging local aesthetic positions. In this sense, art institutions at (semi-)peripheries that display globally recognized aesthetic positions do not so much operate within a simple logic of dependency. By thereby striving to strengthen their own symbolic position and to become more forceful in supporting “local” artists, they actually engage in intricate strategies of usurpation.

Conversely, to direct the focus to developments at centers: here, a closer analysis of the exhibition sites of non-northwestern artists from the two youngest cohorts of globally leading artists (cf. Table 10.4) reveals the globalization of strategies among intermediaries. In the period from 1998 to 2007, 93% of the leading non-northwestern artists had the highest number of exhibitions in a dominant Northwestern country. In fact, the United States and Germany figure clearly as the two most important contexts for the showcasing of their work: 60% among them had the majority of their exhibitions in the United States, 18% in Germany, and 11% in France.¹² These proportions imply that globalization did not go unnoticed among gatekeepers in Western core countries, too. It affected also their logic of competition and position-takings: the extension of the field and growing interculturalization in the arts (Zijlmans 2007) seem to have contributed to a greater propensity for heterodox choices and strategies of distinction vis-à-vis West-centric artistic orthodoxies.

The emerging global outlook and its cohort-related support can be illustrated by paying attention to the evolution of global art discourses (Buchholz 2013). Since the new millennium, such discourses gained in momentum and greater take-for-granted status, signaling a growing belief in the global as an actually existing (immanent) condition for contemporary art and its institutional landscape. In this vein, they also became associated with stronger appeals to rethink institutional strategies and curatorial methodologies and norms. A ground-breaking and widely discussed example in this context was the global restructuring of the prestigious *Documenta* exhibition in 2002. By breaking up the exhibition structure into a “series of events” that crisscrossed “the globe,” the *Documenta XI* was interpreted to contribute to the invention of a new

“global exhibition” genre. Importantly, the curators explained their innovative approach not only with reference to a critique of the Documenta’s Eurocentric past. They justified it also in relation to an actually existing global present and future, for example, when they argued that it was the current “global moment” that required a “reevaluation” of this institution’s “methodology.”

Interestingly, the director and lead curator Okwui Enwezor (born 1963) was not only Nigerian in origin, but also falls into the same age group as the first, more global cohort of leading contemporary artists (cf. Table 10.4). As the established *Artforum International* reported, in the new millennium, other curators from the same age group too underlined their plans to pursue a “global perspective” or “global issues” at the time of their appointment to established art exhibition spaces in London and Paris—as if such an expanded vision was seen as a critical component for innovative curatorial work. Yet, the strengthening of an emerging global outlook is perhaps nowhere more discernible than in the way in which the accusation of the *lack* of a “global perspective” against the curator of the 2007 Venice biennial—the established and older Robert Storr (born 1949)—could inflame a whole controversy in the same prestigious *Artforum*, involving heated justifications, counterarguments, and clarifications among other more established exhibition-makers, too. To be sure, while further systematic research is required to specify the globalization of curatorial strategies at Western centers, these findings implicate that an account of artistic selection processes in Western centers that relies on the idea of risk-averse “informal academies” is not sufficiently complex. It implies a too consensual and static model of strategies of aesthetic selection and distinction among cultural intermediaries that operate in the artistic core.

Conclusion

Taking the contemporary visual arts as a case, this chapter has addressed a central question in debates about the globalization of culture, namely as to what extent global transformations affect older center–periphery hierarchies in realms of cultural production. Theoretically, I argue that to

engage with this question, it is necessary to analytically distinguish clearly between inequalities in terms of geographic places and in view of the cross-border success of cultural producers from different parts of the world. Additionally, I argue for the importance to theorize more specifically how dynamics of inequalities can diverge in different segments of the same globalizing cultural universe. In this regard, I make the case for a globally extended field approach as one fertile path for developing a more differentiated understanding in view of differences between cultural–institutional and economic global art spaces.

Against this background, the chapter has empirically examined the evolution of country inequalities in the global exhibition space and the global auction market. This analysis reveals that transformations of center–periphery hierarchies at the level of cultural production have occurred in both cultural and economic cross-border art spaces, but that they follow different temporalities. Characteristic of relatively autonomous subspaces with charismatic structure, changes in the global exhibition space tend to unfold more gradually in cycles of *longue durée*, mediated across cohorts.

Finally, the chapter also explored how globalization in the contemporary visual arts has affected place-based center–periphery relations. Focusing on dynamics of cross-border flows in the global exhibition space, I argue that, in a period of accelerated globalization, geographic center–periphery configurations in the arts do not have to remain static and one-sidedly determinist. A holistic field-level approach reveals increasingly interdependent dynamics, albeit in a principally asymmetric constellation. Peripheries can employ strategies of usurpation that simultaneously strengthen the established artistic orthodoxies of the centers, but may also challenge their status in the long run. Centers in turn remain not completely independent and static. They are themselves affected by an emerging global logic, which also manifests itself in the rise of cosmopolitan strategies of showcasing art from “non-Western” peripheries.

Overall, the chapter underlines that the question of whether globalization has affected older center–periphery configurations cannot be answered in a totalizing fashion. A global field approach offers a multidimensional and relational perspective. It allows to uncover a variety and, partially, even contradictory set of processes. Together, they suggest

going beyond the dichotomy between reproduction and radical change. The intermediate, transformational view that I advocate acknowledges that global transformations over the past three decades have had effects on an older West-centric order and related practices of mediation, without, however, going into the opposite extreme and proclaiming its complete demise.

Notes

1. Sapiro (2010) has demonstrated the usefulness of this distinction for examining effects of globalization on diversity in the French and US American national book market, but has not extended its implications to an examination of center–periphery dynamics at the global level.
2. Information on the database as provided in 2008 in an interview with a specialist working for *Artprice*.
3. *Artfacts* assigns “exhibition points” on a multidimensional basis according to the logic of a weighted index for visibility and reputation, mainly considering: (a) the number of artists participating. It thereby assigns the following weighing of points: solo shows > duo shows > group shows; (b) the type of institution: public institutions with a permanent art collection (usually international art museums) > no permanent collection (such as contemporary art centers); (c) geographic location: capital cities with vast numbers of museums and galleries > small cities or towns; (d) the international reputation of other artists who participate in the exhibition. These dimensions are related in a series of equations for determining the weighed sum of an artist’s exhibition points, which yields a ranking of his or her international visibility. For a theoretical and methodological justification of this international reputation index, see *Artfacts.net* (2003).
4. As the director of *Artfacts* underlined in an interview in Spring 2012, the index seeks to represent the evaluation of professional curators, that is, “the curator’s point of view,” and not the judgment of dealers. Thus, *Artfacts* deliberately excludes information on the market success of artists.
5. In contrast to an alternative indicator for international artistic prestige (the *Kunst-Kompass* ranking), the *Artfacts* ranking seems a more reliable source. Instead of drawing from surveys of subjective judgments by art

professionals (whose design may change over time, such as in the *Kunst-Kompass* ranking), the *Artfacts* list is derived from a set of objective algorithms that are deployed across all exhibitions and years in a consistent way. Thus, the data source offers a more reliable indicator of artistic recognition for analyzing trends over time. Another benefit is the relational logic of the database in the sense that artists are qualified by the status of the exhibitions, cities, other artists, and so on with which they become associated as well as by the strength of these relationships. Such a measurement logic does not only correspond with the relational perspective of the field approach (cf. Bourdieu 1996, 166–73); it also has been empirically validated for understanding “the dynamics of artistic prestige” at a more local level (De Nooy 2002).

6. The sample included only living visual artists who were born in 1925 or after, corresponding to the birth year of Robert Rauschenberg, the oldest core member of Pop Art. This style was chosen as a reference point for defining the selection of artists because it represents a turning point for the historical emergence of “contemporary art” (cf. Crane 1987) as defined by Moulin (2003, 39).
7. That was the maximum size that could be obtained for *all* age groups in *both* rankings. More specifically, as the *Artprice*'s base source for sampling contained only 500 ranked visual artists (modern and contemporary) for 2007, the youngest cohort that could be sampled reached the number of 40 artists only.
8. In view of the relative position of artists from the United States, which changed from 38.5% to 33%, and from Germany, with an increase from 15.1% to 18.8%.
9. Information about the geographic distribution of exhibitions of US American artists was derived from *Artfacts*, which lists for each artist the institutions and locations by year in which they have presented their work.
10. In 2008, ten semi-structured phone interviews were conducted with directors or leading representatives of the group of art institutions in non-northwestern countries that exhibited US American artists in 2007. These art institutions were selected at random among the total of respective exhibition spaces. The interviewees included English-speaking art professionals in China, Estonia, Israel, Hungary, Singapore, Brazil, Poland, and South Korea. Each interview lasted at least half an hour.

11. The prevalent emic term used was “international,” rather than global. The findings from the interviews suggest however equivalency with the way the term global is used in this contribution, namely as referring to a scale that is multicontinental, that is, covers several continents. For this territorial qualification of the concept “global,” see Held et al. (2003).
12. The data are again derived from the documentation of exhibition activities and respective locations in the *Artfacts* database.

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11

“It’s a Mad Mad Mad Mad (Men) World”: National and Corporate Strategies in the Global Audiovisual Market

Diane Barthel-Bouchier

In 2014, the French-produced film *Welcome to New York*, directed by Abel Ferrara, made waves by opening online rather than by means of the customary theater run. The producers saw this marketing maneuver as a protest against French legislation that requires a delay of several months from a film’s theater opening to its availability in alternative formats (DVD or online) and an additional delay before it appears on television (TV). The producers were able to use this maneuver only because the film had not received a *centime* of French funding. With its 100% funding by American sources, it was able to open simultaneously in theaters and online in the United States, where regulation of the audiovisual industry differs from that of France.

This is only one example of how the global audiovisual industry has assumed a complicated pattern of national and international marketing techniques. It also suggests some of the innovative strategies facilitated by the introduction of new technologies and alternative outlets. Some of these strategies revolve around the classic tension between film as art and film

D. Barthel-Bouchier (✉)
Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY, USA