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Circulation transnationale de modèles d'action culturelle

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- 1 How do mechanisms, instruments, and norms of cultural action circulate globally? How do cultural policy “models” spread? Are there favoured processes, “routes,” and types of actors in the circulation of cultural policy? By adopting various disciplinary approaches, such as the sociology of protest and public action as well as international relations and cultural history, this issue will shed light on the dynamics of the transnational circulation of public cultural actions, which is seen as a process of hybridization, appropriation, and resistance at different levels (transnational, national, and local). To do this requires an understanding of the development of concepts and instruments of public action as well as norms and cultural schemes in different contexts; but we must also understand circulation as a political issue between the different categories of actor involved in the process (such as government, experts, community networks, artists, and intermediaries).
- 2 Let us first clarify what we mean by public cultural action, cultural policy, and culture as a category of public action. At the national level, cultural policy is more than the sum of specific actions in the field of arts and culture (Saez 1985)¹. It is “a moment of convergence and coherence between, on the one hand, representations of the role that the state plays in art and ‘culture’ in society, and furthermore it is the organization of

public policies” (Urfalino 2004: 385). “Public cultural actions” are diverse, diffuse actions that circulate more easily than cultural policies because they are not linked or ordered by a guiding objective or “philosophy of action” (Bayardo & Bordat-Chauvin 2018; Urfalino 2004). Thus, the European Union (EU) has various programmes and funding available for culture, but is not strictly speaking responsible for cultural policy²; it merely plays a supporting role towards member states in this regard. Culture as a category of public action covers heritage as well as contemporary cultural expression and objects created by artists, and produced and distributed by the cultural industries. In its so-called “anthropological³” meaning, culture refers to traditions, customs, and values—a collection of lifestyles and representations. Culture therefore oscillates between the symbolic and the material spheres and between intrinsic and market value, raising a series of political issues relating to economics, society and/or identity for the actors involved in the transnational circulation of cultural action.

- 3 Analysis of transnational cultural action is linked to three types of interconnected issue, the definition of which is the subject of disagreement and debate between actors with different or even conflicting approaches. First, on the global scale, there are industrial and commercial issues related to the importance of cultural goods in trade since the late 1980s. These combine with socio-institutional issues linked to cultural industries which have increasing importance both symbolically and in terms of media coverage, and professional cultural organizations which exert political pressure on public authorities. There is, in many contexts both in Europe and the Americas, opposition between political actors who consider culture to be a sector in need of protection, and others who consider it to be in need of liberalization. Finally, the third type of issue is of a political and cultural nature, in the sense that cultural expressions are instruments for promoting identity—national, regional, local, or community—and thus become potential objects of tension and competition between actors defending different registers of identity (Calligaro & Vlassis 2017). For example, promoters of cultural diversity risk coming up against actors seeking a common identity and culture, both within the EU and nationally in multicultural and multilingual countries.
- 4 First, we will discuss two of the central concepts of the issue: that of *circulation* and that of the *transnational* dimension in cultural policy studies. We will then examine the main aspects proposed by this issue for collaboration and development in the context of the existing scientific literature.

1. The Concepts of “Circulation” and “Transnational”

1. 1. Genesis and Scope of the Concept of “Circulation”

- 5 Ideas travel, in the words of Edward Saïd, “from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another” (Saïd 1983: 226) following a four-step process described by Charles Forsdick: “(i) departure from a point of origin, (ii) passage through different contexts, (iii) transplantation into a new context, with its own conditions of acceptance, and (iv) re-emergence of the initial idea, transformed by its displacement and new uses” (Forsdick 2001: 13). The transfer of ideas depends on “conditions of acceptance and meets “resistance.” According to Saïd, theories never travel unhindered.

- 6 The concept of circulation was also used by Pierre Bourdieu, who proposed a programme for a “science of international relations in matters of culture” (Bourdieu 2002: 3). Bourdieu underlined the absolute necessity of considering the contexts of creation and reception when texts travel: “The meaning and function of a foreign work are determined at least as much by the field of reception as by the field of production they come from” (*ibid.*: 4). When it crosses borders, a text is indeed subject to three social operations: first “selection” (of author or text); then “marking” (by a publisher, a translation, a preface, etc., which give it a new dimension and meaning); and finally, “interpretation,” which is conditioned by categories of perception specific to the new context. P. Bourdieu draws our attention to the “distorting prism effect exerted on production as much as on reception by national intellectual fields and the categories of perception and thought they impose and inculcate” (Bourdieu 2002: 7). Similarly, Michel Espagne, in analyzing transfers between France and Germany, stresses that by changing context, cultural objects undergo a “process of re-semanticization” which is assessed by taking into account the historical conditions of the transfer. For the historian, “transferring is not transporting, but rather metamorphosing” (Espagne 2013: 1), and it is this “reinterpretation” of cultural goods which this issue will address.
- 7 Other works have highlighted the significance of the concept of circulation. Antoine Vauchez (2013) shows that it is particularly useful in comparative studies, where it allows us to go beyond the single frame of reference of the nation-state. While policy transfer studies often reasons in terms of import by the countries of the South of policies and instruments created in the countries of the North (Allal 2010), the concept of circulation makes it possible to overcome the dichotomy between importers (of the South) and exporters (of the North). Understanding the “circulation” of culture therefore requires us to question the scope and the objectives of this process, to examine the reception of the object that is circulated, and observe the resistance generated by this process.

1. 2. From the International Comparison of Cultural Policies to Consideration of the Transnational

- 8 While there are many works comparing national cultural policy (Audet & Saint-Pierre 2010; Bonet & Négrier 2008; Bordat 2014; Cray 2009; Poirrier 2011; Saez & Saez 2012), and studies of the “migration” of certain cultural goods (Marchetti 2015), there has been little investigation into transnational dynamics and the circulation of public cultural actions. Research focuses on the adoption of cultural policy “models” in national spaces (Dubois 2010; Menger 2011). Starting from the Ideal Types of Cummings and Katz (1987)—the models of the state architect, patron, and engineer—Monica Gattinger and Diane Saint-Pierre (2011) propose a typology of British, French, American, and ‘hybrid’ cultural policy models. However, they do not reveal the processes by which these models circulate between these spaces. The same is true in the comparative analysis of Mariano Zamorano, Joaquim Rius Ulldemolins, and Ricardo Klein (2014), which seeks a “South American model of cultural policy” by comparing the cases of Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay; or in the work of Marco Chávez-Aguayo (2011), which compares the principle of “arm’s length”⁴ and the administrative role of the arts council in Catalonia, Scotland, and the Mexican state of Jalisco. In this respect, Patrick Hassenteufel (2005) shows that, by focusing on national specificities

and international comparisons, the existing literature favours continuity and underestimates the possibility of change while paying little heed to transnational phenomena. An issue of *Pôle Sud* journal investigated the “possibilities of, methods for, and consequences of change” in the field of cultural policy, and the way in which “contemporary worldwide changes, such as globalization, the digital revolution, economic crises, and the widening of socio-economic inequalities have affected them” (Bordat & Teillet 2014: 7-8). However, the processes of transnationalization were only considered through the prism of Europeanization, and only as triggers or consequences of change. The consequences of Europeanization in cultural policy have been studied by David Alcaud in the case of Italy (2004), Jean-François Polo and Füsün Üstel in the case of Turkey (2014), and Dyonisia Tzemopoulou (2020) in the case of Greece. This issue aims to study the phenomena of the transnational circulation of cultural action specifically—and not only of those of Europeanization—taking into account a wide variety of contexts and actors.

- 9 Moreover, while policy transfer studies, which dominates analysis of the transnationalization of public action, reasons in terms of borrowing and learning, beginning from a presupposition of the rationality of the actors and effectiveness of policies implemented, we would like on the contrary to make room for “failures,” trial and error, misunderstandings, and struggles between actors, and to show the back and forth, the floating, and the hybridizations.

2. Three Areas of Focus for the Transnational Circulation of Cultural Action Models

- 10 This issue sets out to analyse the dynamics of the transnational circulation of cultural actions, by expanding on three central themes of the existing literature, namely: 1) the circulation of cultural policy paradigms—in particular that of the “creative industries” and “diversity”; 2) the roles of actors in this circulation process; 3) the link between the circulation of culture and the construction of imagined communities and cultural spaces.

2. 1. The Circulation of Cultural Action Paradigms: From Creative Industries to Cultural Diversity

- 11 How do public action benchmarks and paradigms emerge and internationalize? What impact do they have on cultural policies implemented?
- 12 The concepts of creative industry and creative economy are central to the literature on cultural action paradigms. They emerged in the “Creative Nation” report published by the Australian Labour government, and were taken up by Tony Blair’s government in the United Kingdom in the late 1990s. These concepts became more widely known after the publication of *The Rise of the Creative Class* by Richard Florida (2002). This book enjoyed great success among political actors, particularly regarding urban and cultural policy at a local level, during the period when the field of cultural policy was expanding (Rindzeviciute, Svensson & Thomson 2016). The creative economy became a “paradigm” (Rius-Ulledemolins *et al.* 2019), or even a “doctrine” (Schlesinger 2009). According to these ideas, the creative industries are supposed to nurture and develop

the creativity present in each individual and enable her or him to achieve business goals and generate wealth (McRobbie 2009; Orlando 2010). The promotion of the creative economy is therefore associated with a political positioning, even though its proponents refer to it as a neutral, objective, and “depoliticized” public cultural action (see Bordat-Chauvin 2022 for the Argentinian case). Intergovernmental organizations—such as UNESCO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)—have incorporated the concept of the creative economy into their respective agendas, interpreting it according to their strategies and adapting it to their normative pool, before spreading it globally (Vlassis & De Beukelaer 2019).

- 13 The international circulation of this “creative economy” model shows that there is a leap between a model and its development and implementation as public cultural action in a given space. Can a category of public action be applied in different socio-political contexts and lead to the same effects and results? The notion of creative economy has sometimes been transferred from one national context to another without taking into account socio-economic and cultural particularities or adapting it to the peculiarities of an institutional framework (Pratt 2009). Annabelle Littoz-Monnet (2012) analyses the transition from the “cultural industries” paradigm to that of “creative industries” in the institutional context of the EU. Through study of the “European agenda for culture in a globalising world,” which was adopted in 2007⁵, she highlights the paradigm shift in “community cultural action,” the emphasis put on economic competitiveness and the marketable nature of culture in line with the Lisbon Strategy, and the subordination of culture to economic objectives. A. Vlassis (2015) focuses on the international debate around the “trade-culture” interface in the context of deeper international and regional economic integration, and studies the factors that have contributed to the transition from the “cultural exception” paradigm to that of “cultural diversity.” He examines the organizational, societal, epistemic, and diplomatic mechanisms that have contributed to the spread of the latter as an international norm and to its institutionalization. To do this, he looks at the development of the Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (CDCE) which, beyond the “state versus non-state actors” dichotomy, brought together the French and Canadian governments, cultural professionals from the two countries, and national experts within a strategic and interdisciplinary entrepreneurship perspective. Other research analyses how the EU has incorporated cultural diversity into its political agenda (Pauwels & Loisen 2016), highlighting efforts to impose cultural diversity in the face of other dominant norms, such as free trade (Vlassis 2016a), in non-European spaces such as the Caribbean (Garner 2017), Latin America (Vlassis 2016b), and South Korea (Loisen & De Ville 2011). One of the questions underlying these works is why and how the EU has made the paradigm of cultural diversity the cornerstone of its external policy, including in the areas of trade, development, and digital technology. This issue of *Symbolic Goods* aims to go some way to answering this question.
- 14 In this regard, Jonathan Paquette, by focusing on demands for the restitution of cultural heritage and human remains, highlights the central role of Zaire and Nigeria in the “movement to build the principles and norms of a post-colonial approach to restitution.” He identifies three frames of reference related to the restitution of cultural property which have emerged and then circulated since the end of the 1970s: authenticity; restitution-reparation; and human and spiritual rights. Each embodies a distinct logic, but all question the legitimacy of the ownership of cultural property acquired during European colonization. These frames of reference, applied in different

ways according to the type of cultural good, have contributed to the creation of a specific and transnational “field of cultural action,” within which discourse circulates and is appropriated in different national contexts. The contribution by Lionel Arnaud, Léo Fortaillier, and Julie Lourau focuses on the extent to which cultural policy takes into account culturally excluded populations’ capacity to express themselves. It focuses on the actors, spaces, and mechanisms that have enabled the emergence and circulation of cultural rights by focusing on their “translations” into local cultural policy in Cape Town (South Africa), Salvador de Bahia (Brazil), and Toulouse (France). The question first arose at the moment of the UNESCO Declaration of 2001 and the CDCE. Cultural rights were then comprehended, translated, and applied in a variety of ways depending on the national context. They can fall within the principle of cultural democratization, the recognition of the legitimacy of all cultures, and/or the promotion of community cultural practices. Cultural rights are also the subject of criticism, and vary according to context. Réjane Sourisseau and Cécile Offroy (2019) identify three levels of concern relating to cultural rights: 1) that culture is segmented, calling the freedom of cultural programming into question; 2) that communities must satisfy and finance too many specific demands; 3) that artist and programmer are prevented, in the name of respecting cultural rights, from freely taking a position. Paradigms take on new meanings when they circulate depending on the actors who mobilize them, and on the institutions and contexts in which they are applied. Thus, the risk of “*communautarisme*” for cultural rights is above all a concern in France (Meyer-Bisch 2022). Lionel Arnaud, Léo Fortaillier, and Julie Lourau show in this issue the way “cultural movements” seize cultural rights in order to fight for the values, lifestyles, and cultural productions of minority groups and to question André Malraux’s postulate that cultural policy should grant access to “high culture” to these groups that would otherwise lack it. In doing so, they strive to shift the cognitive lines and frameworks of public action, and show that the richness of their culture is not limited to the sale of goods and services.

2. 2. The Multiple Actors of Circulation

- 15 The circulation of norms, tools, and public actions takes place via different individual and collective actors: elected representatives; activists; political actors; diasporas; border groups; members of associations; experts; international professional networks; universities; and cultural intermediaries. This issue will study their respective roles at different points along the circulation process, linking them to the positions they occupy, thereby continuing the approach undertaken by other works.
- 16 In her analysis of the circulation of the Brazilian cultural programme *Cultura Viva* in Latin America, Élodie Bordat-Chauvin (2024) focuses on the roles, positions, and spaces of different non-profit and political/administrative actors. By tracing the biographical trajectories (educational, professional, and activist) of actors in this circulation, she reveals the various positions they occupy in the process and the impact of their multiple and changing affiliations (between voluntary and political spaces) on the elements that are put into circulation in Brazil and those adopted in Argentina. Jean-François Polo and Romain Lecler (2017) show how the French Ministry of Culture’s *Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée* (CNC, the agency responsible for the production and promotion of cinematic and audiovisual arts) sought to export the French model of film industry policy to Turkey, and why this strategy did not succeed

(owing to institutional and social conditions and the desirability of national policies to support film-making). Violaine Roussel (2018) explores the “transnationalization of Hollywood” and cultural circulations between the United States and France in the film and television industries. The logics of these circulations differ according to cultural sector. Gisèle Sapiro (2016) thus shows that, in the publishing industry, circulation takes place *via* translation in a global market dominated by English.

- 17 In this issue, Thomas Richard focuses on other countries and networks that have internationalized the Lebanese film landscape. Based on analysis of a corpus of films and directors, he explores the conditions for directors starting out and gaining recognition abroad, as well as the means of distribution, funding, and the international circulation of works, which takes place at the expense of the national circuit. These films, which focus both on a director’s country of birth and on their new homeland, are mainly funded by Europe and broadcast outside Lebanon, at festivals or cinemas in rich countries, which explains their “deterritorialized” and “transnational” identity.
- 18 Moreover, since the social conditions of the reception of cultural goods vary according to the “contexts and individuals introducing them” (Picaud 2017), analysis of circulation must take into account transnational experts and agents as well as the national context. Thanks to their positions and their practical, and theoretical knowledge, some of these actors are “experts,” brokers or intermediaries between different cultural worlds, but also between administrative, voluntary, and political spaces on multiple scales. Through the example of the Paris Jazz Festival, Myrtille Picaud shows the “prevalence of recurring references to geographical and national origin” (2017: 77). Social actors move between transnational institutional bodies and between non-profit networks; but translation, hybridization, and metamorphosis take place in national contexts in which national actors act as “filters” (Dumoulin & Saurugger 2010). This is revealed in Anne Monier’s contribution, which analyses the trajectory of “go-betweens” within American Friends associations in France. Acting as public agents, experts, and mediators, these “go-betweens” enable philanthropists to act within French institutions, thus participating in transformations of the state and the reconfiguration of roles between public and private. Jonathan Paquette’s article also shows the importance of the participation of non-state actors (such as associations for heritage professionals or reparations-for-slavery activists) in the development of collective action for the restitution of cultural property in the English and French-speaking world. He focuses in particular on their role in the development of new benchmarks, such as that of “restitution-restoration,” which has been enriched by circulation throughout African diasporas, or that of the “cultural and religious rights” of indigenous peoples.

2. 3. Imagined Communities, Cultural Spaces, and Public Cultural Action

- 19 Benedict Anderson has shown, by studying the construction of Latin American nations, that the nation is not an objective element rooted in distant history, but an “imagined community” (1983). Cris Shore (2000) examines how the EU has created and consolidated an “imaginary community” in Europe, using culture as an instrument to forge and promote a sense of cohesion and belonging, *via*: the dissemination of “euro-symbols” (flag, European anthem, Europe Day); the production of statistics (Eurostat);

the creation of a single currency; the launch of a channel (Euronews) that disseminates a European vision of information; and finally, the establishment of European citizenship. Other works look at the reasons why culture has become a political issue of the EU and highlight the dynamics of the negotiation of culture as an issue of European integration. Christine Cadot thus focuses on European collective memory (2019) and the “production of a compulsory European collective memory” (2022) in local spaces. Oriane Calligaro (2013) has shown that promotion of the feeling of belonging to the EU does not constitute an identity policy that imposes a homogeneous interpretation of European identity. Her analysis of the iconography of the euro reveals that the definition of “Europeanness” is the subject of negotiations between member states, which produce different representations of Europe. In this issue, Calligaro examines the dynamics of cultural policy transfer between the Council of Europe and the European Commission and shows how culture has become a negotiating issue between the two institutions. To this end, she looks at three case studies: audiovisual policy (1970-1980); European funding of cultural projects (such as the “European Capitals of Culture” in the 1990s); and the enlargement and neighbourhood policies (1990-2000). By contributing to reflections on the nature of European integration and that of Europe as a cultural space, her contribution highlights the role of informal networks as well as the multipositionality and circulation of certain agents between the two organizations, but also the progressive institutionalization of collaboration in cultural policy between two institutions whose relations are, however, historically structured by forms of competition.

- 20 Taking Latin America as his field, sociologist Manuel Antonio Garretón investigates “cultural spaces” (communities, countries, or groups of countries) which bring together “cultural institutions and manifestations, symbolism, knowledge, creativity, cultural values and orientations, forms of behaviour, traditions, and historical memory” (Garretón 2003: 36). He envisages Ibero-America as a cultural space created from ancient colonial dynamics. Composed of Latin American countries, Spain, Portugal, and Andorra, this space is represented by an Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), which leads many cultural programmes, such as IberMedia (created in 1997), which is directly inspired by European programmes⁶. Similarly, the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), a partial customs union that “aspires to encompass the cultural, political, and social dimension in the construction of a space” (Garretón 2003: 269), is inspired by the project, culture, and spirit of the European community (Bayardo & Lacarrieu 1999). Within this space, the “Mercosur Cultural Integration Protocol” (1996) is a scheme that aims to promote the circulation of works and artists, as well as audiovisual production and co-production of cultural events (Bordat 2014).
- 21 In this issue, Solène Marié also addresses the question of borders. She shows that the circulation of cultural goods such as books and musical instruments comes up against complex administrative processes in the cross-border spaces between Brazil and Uruguay. The equipment and goods necessary for cultural activities must then cross the border by clandestine means, on foot or on horseback, passing over or under a bridge. This is despite the many schemes implemented to promote the free movement of cultural goods and services in the region, including the “Mercosur cultural label” (*sello Mercosur cultural*), the Cultural Information System of the countries of the region (SICSUR)⁷, and the Mercosur Cultural Fund (established in 2010) for the creation, circulation, and promotion of cultural goods and services. These various initiatives,

relating to Mercosur or in the Ibero-American and European spaces, are the manifestation of the circulation of cultural ideas, instruments, and actions. The programme of the “Ibero-American Capitals of Culture” thus even takes its name from the “European Capitals of Culture.” Marié lastly describes cultural projects founded by different types of individual and collective actor which aim to highlight “border culture” through film festivals, food festivals, and book fairs. Using photographs to support her case, she shows that the cultural actions studied—while promoting “cross-border integration”—in reality make borders central to their communications and visual identity, but also to their organization. She reveals how models circulate, the roles that different actors play in this circulation, but also how both spaces and imagined spaces are drawn. This issue of *Symbolic Goods* invites us to reflect on this threefold focus: on the means and conditions of circulation of the models of cultural action; on the roles of the actors; and on imaginations that are deployed.

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NOTES

1. This work extends that of Jean-Claude Thoenig (1985), who distinguishes public policy from one-off, diffuse, and isolated initiatives.
 2. Anne-Marie Autissier refers to “cultural Europe” (2016).
 3. This expression, according to S. Wright, “avoids explanation by asserting that there is a meaning of culture... that is both too obvious to justify an explanation and too profound for non-anthropologists to delve into” (1998: 7). Several anthropologists—Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marshall Sahlins, and Lourdes Arizpe—helped develop UNESCO’s definition of culture.
 4. The principle of arm’s length designates “both a structure and a management principle that places public organizations and their agents away from direct political interventions” and “offers a reference for organizing the financing of the cultural action of the state” (see Jonathan Paquette’s article in this issue 13 of *Biens symboliques/ Symbolic Goods*).
 5. This text is the first EU policy framework on culture submitted by the European Commission to the Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee of the Regions.
 6. There is Iberescena for theatre (2006); Iberbibliotecas for libraries; Iberarchivos for archives; and the latest addition, IberCultura Viva for community-based cultural initiatives and culture, which launched in 2014 (on this programme see Bordat-Chauvin 2024).
 7. This allows for the creation of comparable data in the region, such as Eurostat.
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