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The Empire, the Northwest and the Rest of the World

Ulf Wuggenig

Translated by Aileen Derieg

1. Cultural Globalization

Anthony Giddens is one of the authors who started circulating the term of globalization in the early 90s.[1] As one of the organic intellectuals of the "Third Way", he contributed to promoting the "politics of globalization" (Bourdieu), which in turn led to the development of a transnational social movement, which today, for the most diverse motives, meets globalization under neoliberal auspices with resistance. For some, globalization outside the realm of special fields (such as the financial markets) still appears to be a myth, or at least a less impressive phenomenon than in the years from 1890 to 1914, the age of the gold standard regime, also called the "Belle Époche of Globalization". Others, who believe in the reality of globalization, hardly see anything in it other than an accelerated dissemination of US American or western models.[2]

Globalization is defined in very different ways today, whereby either material, cultural, temporal or spatial aspects are emphasized. Elements of these kinds of definitions include "trade or the effects

of trade over distance", "space-time compression", "global integration" and "accelerated interdependence", the "new order of interregional power relations", and sometimes also a growing awareness of the "global condition".[3] Michael Hardt and Toni Negri tend toward a "globalist" position in the sense of the meta-theory of globalization[4], when they presume an "inexorable and irreversible globalization of economic and cultural processes of exchange".[5] Whereas Giddens sees nothing other than "cultural globalization"[6] behind the different institutional dimensions of globalization - capitalist international economics, the system of nation-states, the military world order, and the international division of labor - Hardt and Negri assign the regulation of the global exchange to a new sovereign, global power - Empire. According to one of their central arguments, "[i]n contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers."[7] Tying into postmodern theories, Empire is instead understood as a decentral and deterritorialized apparatus of domination.

Hardt and Negri do not devote particular attention to the cultural sphere or the discourse of "cultural globalization". This discourse emerged against the background of the insight that individual spheres of society (e.g. economy, politics, ecology, culture, art) are characterized by specific patterns of development, which cannot simply be transferred to other spheres. Malcolm Waters, for example, maintains that the cultural field, and high culture in particular, more clearly bears features of globalization than the spheres of economy and politics, for instance.[8]

Against the background of the dissemination of these and similar assumptions in conjunction with wide-ranging theses of deterritorialization and decentralization in the contemporary literature of cultural studies and art theory, I would like to focus on

developments in the field of art. The position is often taken that this cultural sub-field is marked to a particularly high degree by globalization. Some people today go so far as to maintain that "there is hardly another sphere of culture, in which the interlocking of north and south, of east and west is as intensive, as it is in fine arts."[9]

2. Art and Cultural Imperialism

Among the proponents of the globalization thesis, there is widespread agreement that the beginnings of this process are to be located in the 19th century or even earlier.[10] As the term "globalization" was not yet available for these developments, "internationalization" or "transnationalization" was often mentioned in this context. In the 1970s, the British artist Rasheed Araeen, for instance, presented his sharp criticism of the art field' exclusions by still taking recourse to the term "internationalism". Similarly to the critics of the globalization thesis apostrophized today as "skeptics" or "traditionalists", at that time Araeen turned against what he regarded as a myth, namely the "internationalism" attributed to contemporary art. In his Manifesto presented in 1978 at the ICA London, he states:

"The myth of the internationalism of western art must now be destroyed. (...) Western art expresses exclusively the particularity of the west (...). It is merely transatlantic art. It reflects only the culture of Europe and North America. The current `internationalism' of western art is not more than a function of the political economic power of the west, which foists its values on other people. (...) The word international should mean more than just a few western countries (...)."[11]

What Araeen contended was nothing other than a version of the theory of cultural imperialism. In its most common variant, this presumes that global culture is actually a particular culture, namely a western, capitalist or US American culture.[12] More general versions of the theory do not simply identify imperialism with its western variations and formulate more complex assumptions about mechanisms and effects. In Galtung's center-periphery theory, for instance, imperialism is considered a highly differentiated type of domination relationship, for which "bridgeheads" - of the "center of the center" in the "center of the periphery" - are especially important.[13]

What is characteristic for imperialism in the sense of Galtung's "structural theory" is a form of domination that leads to a splitting of collectives and to certain relationships, patterns and structures of interaction. Several parts of the system are set in relationships characterized by a harmony of interests to one another, others in relationships characterized by a disharmony of interests.[14] One of the things that a harmony of interests means is that an elite forms in the periphery, which is closely connected to the elite of the center. Cultural penetration is therefore an important mechanism. Part of the elite from the periphery is coopted and rewarded or develops needs that can only be satisfied by the center. The coopted local elite take on lifestyles, culture and ideologies of the center. This process of intellectual penetration takes places through attending universities in the center and the import of cultural artifacts, knowledge and theory.[15] The bridgehead thesis is found, in part, in Araeen's manifesto, when he refers to the dominant role of western values in the urban milieus of the Third World and stresses the divided loyalties of the indigenous elite, who show an interest in the "mishmash of western techniques and local images", which he calls "neocolonial art".[16]

3. Transformation of the Art Field

The question arises as to whether and to what extent this kind of domination model is still able to adequately describe reality. At the time of Araeen's intervention in the art field, Galtung exemplified it at the macro level with the relation between the USA or the Soviet Union respectively and the countries within their spheres of influence. According to Galtung's theory, following the end of the Cold War, the partly bipolar, partly tripolar constellation (with the "Third World") of the 70s turned into a seven-poled world, whose regions "are dominated to a certain extent by the hegemon of hegemons, the United States of America."[17] In addition, Galtung postulates that under the conditions of forced globalization, the elite of the periphery tend to lose significance as bridgeheads for the center.[18] In contrast to Hardt and Negri and other postmodern theorists[19], the concept of imperialism as well as the center-periphery model is maintained despite this transformation.

Changes have taken place in recent decades in the art world as well, although none are as comparably profound as in the world system. Araeen, for instance, in a more recent text, notes an opening of the art field with regard to "other" artists since the mid-80s, which he links to the change of context from Eurocentric modernism to postmodernism.[20] The "young, postcolonial artists of African or Asian origins" are no longer segregated from their "white/ European contemporaries": "Both of them display and circulate within the same space and the same art market, recognized and legitimated by the same institutions."[21] These and similar observations indicating a transformation in the art field are found

more and more frequently in recent times in texts by critics and curators.

In an essay that convinced a number of cultural studies authors[22], Marc Scheps, for instance, curator of the large-scale exhibition "Global Art" in Cologne in 2000, posits an accelerated globalization of art in the past two decades. In 1980 art entered the "global present", following a long history of "intercultural dialog" in the 20th century, a phase that others, such as Adrian Piper, interpret in a less euphemizing way as a history of the appropriation of non-western cultures through "Euroethnic art". [23] Since 1989, according to Scheps, art has been conducting a "global dialog", which has become possible through newer visual language, in other words media and praxis forms such as video or computer, but also installation art and performance. Scheps ties the globalization of the art field particularly to an increased mobility of artists, to exhibitions of non-western art in the west, and the spread of art biennales and art institutions in non-western countries, which are symmetrically integrated in worldwide network connections.[24]

Hou Hanru, who also refers to the proliferation of art biennales outside Europe and North America since the 1980s, cites as an example of the globalization of art institutions the expansion plans of the New Yorker Guggenheim Museum.[25] Georg Schöllhammer notes a "multitude of exhibitions with African contemporary art, for example" in European art institutions and speaks of the "recently extolled artists from Africa, Latin America and Asia".[26] Yilmaz Dziewior underscores a greater participation of non-western artists in the 90s at large mainstream exhibitions in the art field, such as the Venice Biennale and Documenta in Kassel, a trend that was even more conspicuous at the Documenta 11 in 2002.[27]

Placed in the frame of reference of the globalization theory, these texts by curators and critics indicate a spatial expansion of social relationships among actors in the art field, an increase in the density of interactions, which is based, not least of all, on new electronic communication networks, the growing cultural interpenetration in the art field in the form of a heightened inclusion and mobility of actors and products, as well as the globalization process in the area of infrastructure.[28]

Against the background of these changes, some already seem to see the dawn of a global era liberated from old structures, which would make thinking in categories of center-periphery obsolete.[29] Other assessments of this transformation range from ambivalent to critical. Schöllhammer, for instance, emphasizes that although exhibitions and trade transports make art scenes visible that were previously not exposed in the west, he maintains that they also contribute to overshadowing the relations of inclusion and exclusion in the art world.[30] Taking the example of the "arrival of identity politics and multiculturalism in the art world", Martha Rosler laments a fashionable inclusion of marginal groups and comes to the conclusion that "these marginal shifts (...) do not change the `white' power structure (...)."[31] And Araeen perceives a continuity of apartheid, despite the opening of the system, because the inclusion of postcolonial artists is linked with their stigmatization, as their works must still show "identity cards with African or Asian characters".[32]

4. The Perseverance of the Center

Cochrane and Pain are among the proponents of the globalization theory that primarily focuses on processes of the extension,

intensification and acceleration of the interdependence and integration of social life. A distinction should be made between process-oriented approaches and theories that understand globalization as more of an ideal type state of a global order that can also be used to measure the degree and limitations of processes of globalization.[33] Based on data on economic parameters of the world economy and an ideal type measure of globalization, Hirst and Thompson, for instance, arrived at their assessment of the myth of a globalization of the economy.[34] The process-oriented approach to globalization tends to exaggerate the extent and range of globalization, because it compares the present with the (recent) past and dispenses with taking ideal type models of globalization into account. The question of the relevance and the effects of the changes in the art field that have taken place since the 80s, which point in the direction of globalization, is therefore treated here according to the logic of the process-oriented approach in conjunction with taking ideal type models into account.

The first obvious empirical indicators would be the data from the ranking list of artists from the economics magazine Capital, published every year (with few exceptions) since 1970. This ranking list of the top 100 artists in the art field claims to cover the symbolic capital of artists according to their visibility in international exhibitions. At the same time, in this way the center of the art field - artists highly recognized by the art establishment - is separated from the periphery of the broad mass of producers.[35] Despite some problems, the procedure for determining artists' symbolic capital appears to be sufficiently valid and reliable to allow well-founded conclusions about processes of globalization that do not take place only at the level of symbolic politics or in the more secular areas of the art field.

The artists' country of origin has always been listed in the Capital Art Compass since the beginning, so that it is possible to pursue questions of inclusion and exclusion according to territorial criteria. An ideal type concept of globalization implies a high degree of entropy in the social-spatial recruitment of actors that assume important positions in the art field. In a globalized world ultimately intended to create a "world people"[36], territorial limitations and spatial fixations should not be overly important, none of the populations of the larger world regions should clearly dominate the others in this respect.

To determine the extent of social-spatial concentrations and their changes over time, it is sufficient to make use of a simple model of space. It therefore seems reasonable to use a world map by Galtung, in which the north and the south intersect with the east and the west so that "four corners of the world" can be distinguished. The "Northwest" comprises North America and Europe, in keeping with the cartography it is based on, the "Northeast" comprises the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Turkey, the former Soviet Republics with a mostly Muslim population, Pakistan and Iran. The "Southwest" includes Latin America, the Caribbean, West Asia, the Arab world, Africa, southern Asia and India, the "Southeast" South East Asia, East Asia, the Pacific islands, China and Japan. 20% of the world's population lives in the north, 80% in the south.[37]

In a process-oriented, diachronous interpretation, the globalization thesis implies an increase in entropy with regard to the origins of artists from the four world regions. A possible ideal type measure would be the irrelevance of territorial origins, in other words an equal recruitment of successful artist from the four corners of the world, contrary to their origins from "only a few western countries", as Araeen formulated it in the 70s. The proportion of

artists placed among the top 100 of the world, who are not from the "northwestern" countries, could thus serve as an indicator for the globalization of the art field.

Chart 1 displays the proportion of the top 100 artists according to the ranking list from the Northeast, the Southwest and the Southeast of the world individually and in sum for the period 1970-2001, which was particularly dynamic on a world scale.[38] It also includes a trend line for the "rest of the world" that does not belong to the Northwest, based on the "moving average". It may be seen as the central statement that the summed proportion of all the artists not from the Northwest even in the years 2000 and 2001, the peak of the curve, does not amount to more than 10%. This only surpasses the proportions already achieved in the 1970s by 2%. In comparison, the proportion of female artists rose from 4% in 1970 to 22% in 2000.[39] Even in the "global age" (Albrow) at the beginning of the 21st century, the proportions of artists from three of the four corners of the world only amount to 2 - 4%, a blatant picture of exclusion that includes Eastern Europe, Latin America, Australia, and Asia and Africa with their "post-colonial" artists that Araeen particularly calls attention to. Statistically, however, this does indicate a marginal inclusion process, at least in terms of the dynamic in the center of the field.

A striking counterposition to the globalization theory is the thesis of "trilateral regionalization". This is based on the findings that the "capitalist triad" of the USA, the EU and Japan comprises only 15% of the world population, but was able to concentrate between two-thirds and three-quarters of all economic activities worldwide to itself.[40] Chart 2 illustrates the high degree, to which the center of the art field is recruited from two of these three economically powerful triad regions, specifically the USA and the EU.[41] A tally across all the triad regions results in proportions

ranging from 95% to 82% for the relevant period. These figures clearly surpass the triad's share in worldwide economic activities. In analogy to economic globalization (outside the financial markets), this would thus be a foundation for speaking of the myth of the globalization of the art field.

Details are worthy of attention, too. Despite the economic rise of Japan in the 70s and 80s, the global visibility of artists from this country did not increase. It appears no less interesting that the change in the position of US art did not directly follow the change of the position of the USA in the world system. Thus the ascent to "hegemon of hegemons" in the late 70s could not halt the onset of the relative loss of significance of US art. The proportion of artists from the USA in the center of the art field reached its peak in 1978 with nearly 50%, but it has decreased since then to one third. Despite a slight loss in significance in the second half of the 90s, on the other hand, EU art remains in an especially strong position with shares around 50%.

The center of the field still remains firmly in the hands of the Northwest, dominated by the US-EU dyad. In recent years there have been signs that the extremely high concentration in this region could be slightly diminishing and that there is a trend toward globalization that seems to be more striking now than in the late 60s and early 70s. It should be taken into consideration, however, that the data presented overestimates the spatial inclusivity of the art field in one respect: the majority of the artists who do not come from the Northwest, nevertheless live(d) and work(ed) in its art metropolises, primarily New York, but also London, Paris, Cologne and Berlin. A precondition for recognition in the field is still the real integration in these territorially delimitable centers of artistic production and communication.

For globalization theories that emphasize the dislodgment and extension of social relationships, and for postmodern theories (including that of "Empire") that maintain a comprehensive deterritorialization of social relationships, strong spatial concentrations like those indicated are "anomalies" that are difficult to integrate. In some versions of the globalization theory, spatial concentrations of power - such as in the "global cities" - are simply reinterpreted as indications of a growing globalization.[42] In the models that do away with center-periphery ideas and emphasize deterritorialization, on the other hand, there is a propensity to ignore evidence for spatially delimited centers of power.[43] Center-periphery models recall the condensation and spatial concentration of power, whether in financial markets or in fields such as that of art. They lead to other interpretations than the typical approaches within the framework of globalization theories. Thus the migrations of scientists and artists from the periphery to the centers of the Northwest follow classical brain-drain patterns from the perspective of center-periphery theory, from which the center and the center of the periphery profit more than the periphery of the periphery. Nor does the proliferation of art biennales[44] and art institutions outside the countries of the Northwest simply appear to be an indication of increasing globalization to be celebrated. Instead, this raises questions such as to the extent that this involves the establishment of bridgeheads of the Northwest with the help of the culturally penetrated indigenous elite, and to what extent it involves the development of counter-power[45] in countries, whose elite tend to lose power due to globalization.

I would like to thank Sophia Prinz (Lüneburg) for preparing the charts.

[1] Cf. Giddens 1990.

[2] Cf. e.g. Bourdieu 2001.

[3] Cf. Held/McGrew 2000, p.3. Mensel's (2001, p. 226) definition covers temporal and spatial aspects, when he regards globalization as a "process of deepening and accelerating border-crossing transactions (...)while they are spatially extended at the same time."

[4] A distinction is made in Anglo-Saxon literature today between globalists who believe in the reality of globalization, although judging it differently, traditionalists or sceptics, who regard the thesis of globalization as a myth or at least highly exaggerated, and transformationalists, who take a position more in the middle and often emphasize the contradictoriness and the open-endedness of the processes. Cf. e.g. Cochrane/Pain 2000, p. 22ff.

[5] Hardt/Negri 2000, p. XI.

[6] Giddens (1990) is oriented, however, to a technologically constrained concept of culture and identifies culture in this context with communication and media technologies. For a critique, see Tomlinson 1999, p. 20.

[7] Hardt/Negri 2000, p. XII.

[8] According to Waters (1995, p. 142f.) cultural globalization came into effect earlier in the field of high culture than in the area of popular culture, for which technological developments, such as film and electronic media, first created the preconditions for overcoming nation-state boundaries and orientations.

[9] Kramer 2001, p. 178.

[10] According to Dürrschmidt (2001, p. 25), the beginning of globalization is frequently fixed as early as the 16th century.

[11] Araeen 1997, p. 98.

[12] Cf. Mackay 2000, p. 56, Tomlinson 1999, p. 89.

[13] Galtung 1972, p. 29.

[14] Imperialism implies the following constellations: a harmony of interests between the center of the center and the center of the periphery, a greater disharmony of interests within the periphery than within the center, and a disharmony of interests between the periphery in the center and the periphery of the periphery. These are supplemented by vertical interaction and exchange relationships. They contribute to the increase of inequality between the center and the periphery through asymmetrical exchange and differential intra-actor or "inchange" effects of interaction, especially with regard to the particularly striking differences between center and periphery of the center, because between the center and the periphery "inequality is itself unequally distributed" A special structure of interaction secures the reproduction of inequality, whereby the mechanism of fragmentation is especially important. Cf. Galtung 1972, p. 35ff.

[15] Galtung 1980, p. 113ff.

[16] Araeen 1997, p. 98.

[17] According to this theory, the seven "one-poled regions in conflict and cooperation" are the USA, the EU, China, Japan, and Russia+, Turkey+ and India+, whereby "+" means that other regions are also part of these centers. Cf. Galtung 1997, p. 104-106.

[18] Under the conditions of transcontinental real-time communication, "local representatives are no longer needed; purchasing is carried out via Internet directly through the center, and supply is carried out through distribution channels controlled by the center. This represents a huge threat to the elite of the periphery." Galtung 2000a, p. 132. In light of the limited significance of e-commerce and the marked "digital gap" between the center and the periphery, however, what this describes is more the distant future than the present.

[19] On the aversion of "postmodern" theorists with regard to models of this kind, cf. Featherstone 1990.

[20] "The situation now is very different. The young generation of artists of non-european origins, whom I would call here `other'artists, are today very much around as part of the contemporary art scene, not only within the national boundries of the West - such as in Britain - but globally." Araeen 2001, p. 15.

[21] Araeen 2001, p. 23.

[22] Cf. Wagner 2001, Kramer 2001, Hippe 2001.

[23] "By the appropriative character of Euroethnic art, I mean its tendency to draw on the art of non-Euroethnic cultures for inspiration." Piper 1996, p. 209.

[24] Scheps 1999, p. 16ff.

[25] Hanru 1999, p. 337ff.

[26] Schöllhammer 1999, p. 40.

[27] Dziewior 1999, p. 345. On Documenta 11 cf. the list of participating artists in the appendix of the catalogue on Documenta 11_Plattform5.

[28] From the perspective of Cochrane/Pain (2000, p. 15ff.) globalization comprises an *extension of social relationships* across nation-state and regional borders, an increase in the *density of interaction around the world* based on electronic flows and communication networks, a *growing interpenetration* of people and products from cultures that are far apart from one another through import and export processes and migration, and the strengthening of a *global infrastructure* enabling the operations of globalized networks.

[29] Scheps, for instance, writes (1999, p. 20) that "a network takes the place of the center-periphery structure, the nodes of which are cultural and artistic centers that are able to communicate with one another at any time in non-hierarchical ways. (...) With the disappearance of the concepts of center and periphery, the division into a west and a non-west will also be just a historical memory." Dziewior (1999, p. 345) also notes a "slow but continuous dissolution of the traditional division of center and periphery".

[30] Schöllhammer 1999, p. 41.

[31] Rosler 1997, p. 41.

[32] "The white/European artist has no obligation to the multicultural society and he does not require any sign of identity for the work to be recognized; the `other' artists must carry the burden of the cultures they have originated from, and they must indicate this in their art works before they can be recognized and legitimated." Araeen 2001, p. 23.

[33] Cf. Held/McGrew 2000, p. 4.

[34] Hirst/Thompson 2000.

[35] The ranking list is based primarily on artists' presence in solo exhibitions in institutions that the art establishment considers important, and/or group exhibitions and only secondarily on their presence in certain art magazines. In 2001, for instance, 160 art institutions, 130 group exhibitions and 5 art magazines were considered. First these art institutions are weighted according to an expert rating and the group exhibitions selected; then in a second step, the artists most frequently shown in these institutions and exhibitions are determined. Cf. Rohr-Bongard 2002, p. 134.

[36] Cf. Galtung's definition (2002a, p. 42): "At the end of globalization (stands) a unified world, marked by a humanity that understands itself as one nation (or as world people)."

[37] Cf. Galtung 2000b, p. 14.

[38] The values for the years in which the ranking was not carried out or carried out according to different criteria than usual (1980, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1987) were determined with the help of the method of linear interpolation.

[39] On gender inclusion, cf. Quenzel 2000.

[40] Thompson 2000, p. 110ff.

[41] The proportion for the EU covers the 15 EU member states today for the entire period. It should be taken into consideration that Switzerland, an important country for European art, is missing.

[42] Cf. e.g. Cochran/Pain 2000, p. 17, who see nodes of power in certain world cities, but interpret this as an indication of globalization.

[43] Cf. Sassen 2000.

[44] These include the biennales and triennales, for instance, in Brisbane, Dakkar, Havanna, Tirana, Vilnius, Johannesburg, Istanbul, Cairo and Kwang Ju. On the boom of biennales of this kind, cf. also Boecker 2002.

[45] This is the interpretation to which Hanru tends, Hanru 1999, p. 347.

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Chart 1: Three corners of the world. The visibility of their art 1970 - 2001 (percentages of top 100 artists, secondary analysis "Art Compass" Capital)

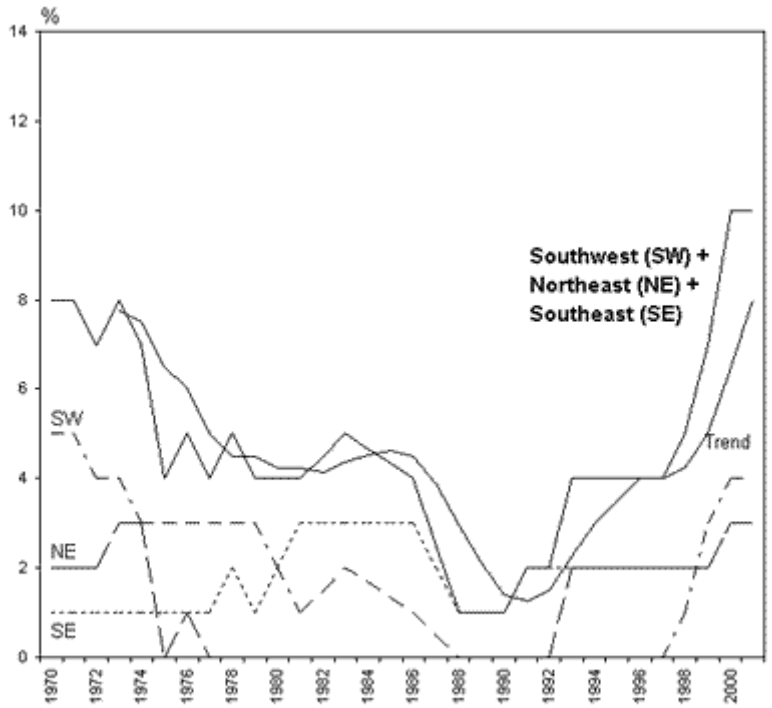
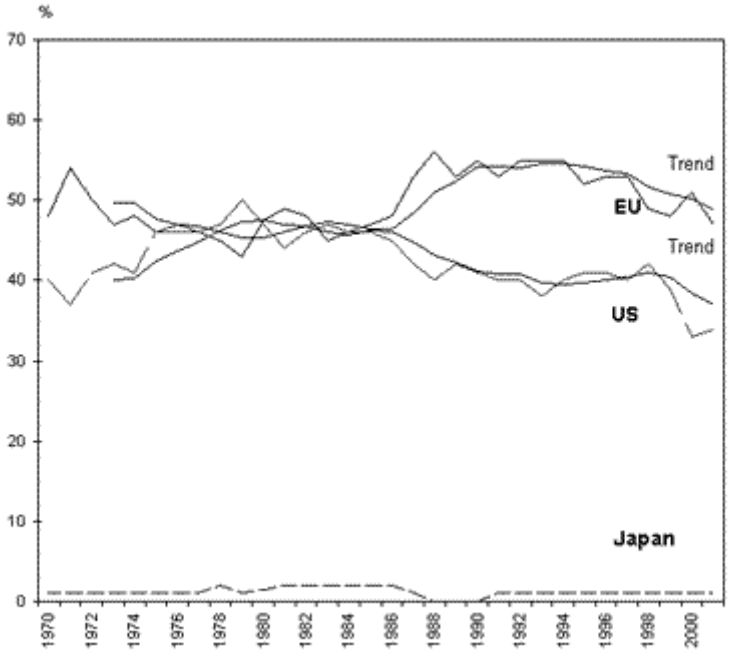


Chart 2: The visibility of the art of the triad 1970 - 2001 (percentages of top 100 artists, secondary analysis "Art Compass" Capital)


%
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1970
1972
1974
1976
1978
1980
1982
1984
1986
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