

National platforms and the global art market: Art Basel 2005-2010

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1. Premises and design of the research

In the last decade the international visual art market has been characterized by a dimensional “take off”, coupled with a challenging shock of its organisational stability. A significant growth of the exchanged volumes, a long-lasting upgrade of the overall market values (2000-2008) followed by a sharp decrease (2008-2009),¹ an increase in the number of dealers, mediators and institutions (fairs, biennials, auctions, museums, kunsthallen etc.)² came along with a glaring globalization of the market, the rise of new scenes of art production and collection (Asia, Central and South America), and the advent of a dense new generation of artists (born after the Seventies and now the Eighties) and a overwhelming transformation of the ways in which cultural contents are transmitted and reproduced at global level through the web and the social networks.

If the overall picture is clear in its main features, there is a less systematic knowledge about the way in which the transformation occurred within the specific reality of visual arts worlds. How and in which direction the globalization altered the structure of the art system and its relations with the markets? Which consequences affected the single national scenes and their mutual relations? Which challenges shook the professional life of artists and dealers?

These questions are especially relevant because of the multidimensional functions carried by the dealing system within the overall art production and exchange activities.

Since the Seventies, but surely earlier (even if not in the same systematic way), the art gatekeeping system merged economic and cultural functions. Museums, galleries, dealers, curators, auctions and fairs formed a dense, global and hierarchical network, within which the cultural/artistic and the economic value of art pieces have been simultaneously assessed.³ Even if some roles are more explicitly connected with the definition of the economic and market value (auction houses, dealers and galleries), it is possible to affirm that most of them are also engaged in establishing and sustaining strategies aimed at creating the status, the visibility, the cultural recognition of the artists and their work.⁴ Only few of them are mere brokers in the sense proposed by Bruno Latour, “*that transport meanings without transformation*”; most of them are true mediators “*that transform, translate, distort and modify the meanings or the elements that they are supposed to carry*”.⁵ The life of market value and the life of cultural value of art pieces are therefore intertwined along patterns influenced by a variety of elements that are still waiting for a formal reconstruction.⁶ In this sense the transformation of the market dimension in the arts

¹ Polveroni A. (2009).

² Baia Curioni S., Forti L., Martinazzoli L. (2010).

³ The issue has been emphasized already in the early work of Raymonde Moulin on the French Art market: “*L'évolution propre de l'art contemporain et l'incertitude des jugements esthétiques portés sur lui d'une part, l'accélération du processus capitaliste qui a investi le marché de la peinture actuelle d'autre part ont contribué de concert à l'enchevêtrement des valeurs esthétiques et des valeurs financières.*” Moulin R. (1967). The interconnection between cultural and economic value of art has been theoretically recognized: “*The more we insist the aesthetic and economic systems as clearly separate, the more we are forced to focus upon the connection between them*”. Thorsby D., Hutter M. (2008), Thorsby (2010)

⁴ Velthuis O. (2005).

⁵ Latour B. (2005), p. 39.

⁶ Theories in art and culture today foster the consideration of the contextual existence of the artwork. For example, George Dickie's institutional perspective states that “*Works of art are art because of the position they occupy within an institutional context*” Dickie (2000), p.93. Art is a conferred status, the status being conferred by “*some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain institution*” (the art world). Harris R. (2010), p.15.

“*When the diversity in art first came to general awareness, there was an understandable tendency to say that objects are works of art when the artworld decrees them to be. This is the gist of the so-called institutional theory of art [...]. The act of conferring the status of art must seem as arbitrary as the bestowal of grace according to Calvinist theology. [...] But it would be hardly be suitable to view the artworld as a status conferring institution in this inscrutable terms.*”

– most likely provoked by globalization and by the market take off - is related to the shift of the specific meanings and qualities that contemporary art is able to offer to our world. The recognition and the understanding of this complex relation are the ideals offering the horizon of this research.

Many have written about the influence of national (sometime nationalistic) cultural policies in the art system. The theme has been openly raised already during the Fifties and the Sixties, when the debate provoked by the advent of abstract impressionism overlapped the harsh polemics raised by the aggressive take over made by the American art dealing and collecting system against the French ancient hegemony⁷, but surely was in the agenda largely before⁸. Later, in the Seventies, the emergence of the conceptual art movement in the international visual art system has been directly influenced – or, more precisely, managed - by the presence of interconnected agencies ostensibly belonging to specific countries or cultural environments, prominently English / North American and German.⁹

The issue is highly problematic and stratified. These “national” policies are not easy to detect. They are not univocally declared, nor necessarily developed by States, political bodies or public institutions (like museums). More often these movements – if existing at all - are driven by implicit intentions, shared and promoted by small groups of influential private dealers, working simultaneously at national and international level through networks of peers.¹⁰ The way in which the arts production scene functions – through the development of space agglomeration or clusters of artists – induces an overlap between the presence of artistic qualities, commercial policies, city development, and broader issues of competition involving national cultural production scenes.

This complexity does not reduce the relevance of the theme, particularly if it is considered within the context of an increasing globalization of the world art system. Does the market take off affect the positions and relations mutually established between the different national platforms of art dealers, galleries, collectors? Is the globalization transforming the inner structures of the global contemporary art system?

The research presented in this paper is focused on the information publicly available about Art Basel fair between 2005 and 2010. After 40 years of existence, this contemporary art fair held yearly in the Swiss chief town is recognized as the most selective commercial, social and cultural

So, as in moral judgement, the designation of something as art must be justified through a discourse of reason, and cannot, without becoming unacceptably arbitrary, consist simply in declaration”. Danto R. (1999), p. 7.

⁷ In 1967 Raymond Moulin clearly stated the point “*L’existence d’une Ecole de New York, la prolifération des galeries, la puissance de l’achat et le dynamisme des collectionneurs, des musées et des fondations, le système fiscal favorable aux donations, les ontrats signés par des marchand américains à des artistes européens, enfin la volonté nouvelle d’“acheter américain” sont autant de menaces pour le marché français. Jusq’aux recentes années , L’Amerique assumait, à l’égard du marché parisien , une fonction utile, celle d’un acheteur armé d’un fort pouvoir d’achat et accueillant à tous les recherches artistiques. Que l’Amerique tente de devenir à elle meme son propre fournisseur c’est incontestablement un danger économique. Et ce d’autant plus que les Americains se son mis en devoir ...d’imposer la suprématie de leurs artistes dans les rencontres internationales et de leur gagner le marché europeen. Le financement par des capitaux americains de galeries européennes, l’installation sur la rive gauche de la Seine de marchands americain constituent autant de tetes de pont.”* Moulin R. (1967) p.473.

⁸ Just to offer an example Alfred Barr, the founder of the Moma, explicitly affirmed in a letter to Dorothy Miller (10 oct. 1940) “*I think that statistics will show that we have been more concerned with the American art than with the art of all foreign countries combined*”. Dorothy Miller herself, will be later “*among those responsible for diverting the course of modern art from Europe to America...*” . Gordon Kantor S. (2002), p.237.

⁹ Richard S. (2009).

¹⁰ This is definitely the case tracked by the patient research of Sophie Richard (ivi.)

venue of the global art system¹¹. Only 270 galleries, recognized at world level, are selected over 900 pretenders by a peer committee and are invited to a five-days gathering of the *élites* of collectors, curators and museum directors. Recently the success of Art Basel, scheduled in June, suggested the creation of a mirror event in Miami (Miami Basel), driven by the same organization, in late November. Moreover, during Art Basel, an official counter-fair for emerging and young galleries takes place (List).¹²

On the one side the choice to concentrate the observation on Art Basel is efficient because it allows a direct and synthetic observation of the higher segment of the world dealing activities (in terms of reputation of the galleries, acknowledgment of the artists and, more arguably, in terms of quality of the art pieces). On the other side this same choice introduces a bias related to the nature of the Basel institution. Even in very general terms markets are not neutral spaces, they are institutionally shaped through intense negotiations between intermediaries and regulators¹³. Each specific marketplace reflects, in different ways, the intentions and the policies of the dealers that are in charge of its organization and existence. This is even more evident in the case of the art market, which is regulated through informal practices and privately managed. Art fairs, in particular, have been created by the dealers as a competitive tool against the growing power of auction houses¹⁴ and Art Basel is traditionally ruled by a small *élite* of dealers. What is happening in Art Basel cannot be intended as an unbiased representation of the global art market competitive behaviour.

Nevertheless the dynamics recognizable within this venue coincide with the policies implemented by the top segment of the world art dealing. The commercial and cultural intention embedded in these policies shape the way in which the art system interprets the globalization and find an answer to the dimensional growth of the market, with all the possible implication on the meanings and the nature of the visual arts as a whole.

The purpose of this research was therefore to use Art Basel in order to understand in which ways the globalization process in the last six years influenced the behaviour, the role and the reciprocal influences of the national platform of dealers acting in this elite fair.

Using Art Basel catalogues from 2005 to 2010 as a source, we collected data on about 6,200 artists and 450 galleries. We were able to draw the relationship between galleries and artists in the six years of our observation, monitoring variables such as the number of years of participation to the fair of artists and galleries, the total appearances at the fair, the average number of galleries each year and their nationality. Such data was also pivoted in order to trace the evolution of the countries' presence at the fair.

¹¹ "Art Basel is held each June in the medieval city on the Rhine. Nine tundra galleries apply for 290 spaces, \$ 2 million is spent on advertising and 50.000 people attend. NetJet , a shared –ownership jet aircraft company, provided 198 flights to Basel for the 2007 fair. Dealer fees for the smallest stand start at eu. 17.000 and total costs are about eu.40.000. The selection committee is made up of six art dealers. Galleries that are rejected go to an appeal process with a different jury. Those accepted keep their best work for the fair....Five to 10 percent of galleries are dropped each year, usually for not showing their best work." . Thompson D. (2008), p. 174 ; Interview with Sam Keller, in Lindemann, (2006), pp.274-277.

¹² A complete history of Art Basel has not been published yet, and literature lacks of contributions on the subject. Some researchers in social science have nonetheless published researches on the art market using Art Basel information as a source, notably Quemin A. (2002; 2006).

¹³ North D. (1989)

¹⁴ "in their ongoing battle against Christie's and Sotheby's branding, money and private dealing, art dealers needed a slingshot to combat Goliath. They needed some relative competitive advantage. The weapon they found was not mergers or blockbuster gallery shows but branded and heavily marketed art fairs." Thompson D. (2008) p. 270.

Furthermore, we gathered personal data on artists (complete names, date of birth and death, birthplace, affiliations to groups or collectives) on our database by referring to the online databases Artfacts and Artnet.¹⁵ For each category our data set contains.

Figure 1 –Structure of the dataset

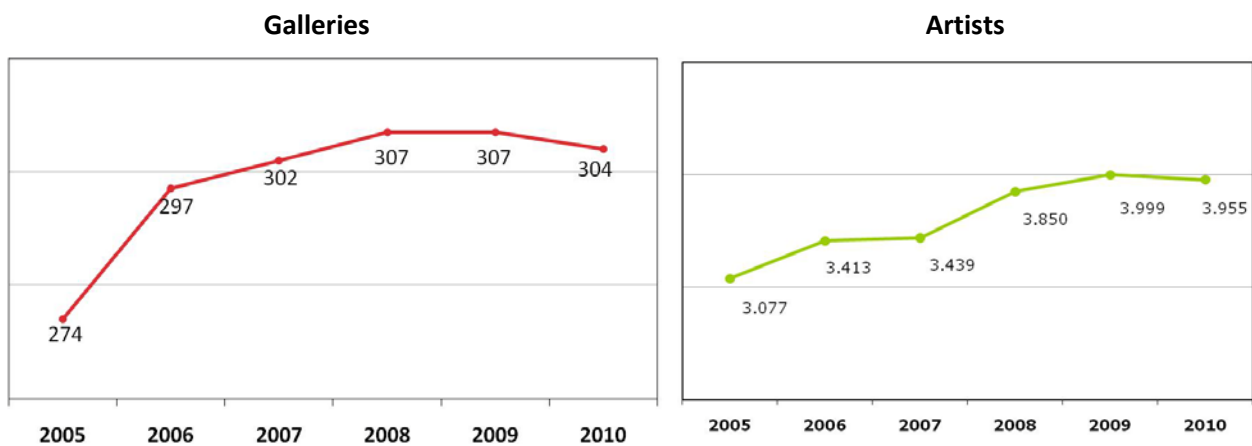


2. The resilient elite

2.1 Art Basel: an overview

From 2005 to 2010, an average of about 300 galleries per year took part to Art Basel. Even if this number is quite stable in the considered time span, over the years we observe an increase of 30 galleries (+9,8%). Consequently - and reasonably as an answer to the overall growth of the system - the average number of artists per year increases as well, with a slight deceleration in 2007, and reaches nearly 4,000 in 2010 (+28%). The difference between these dynamics suggests the evidence that the number of artists in the galleries portfolio increased in the time considered.

Figure 2 – Galleries and artists at Art Basel from 2005 to 2010

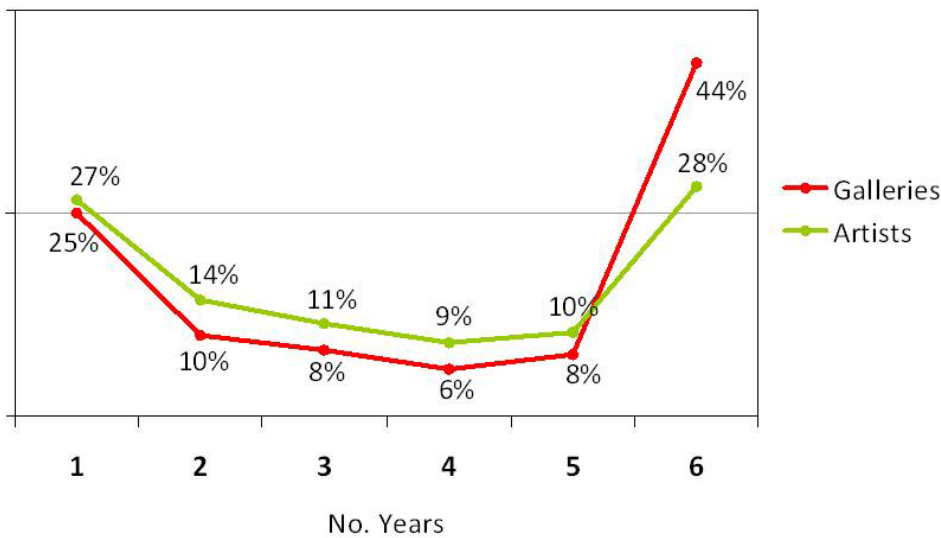


On the whole, 455 galleries and 6,183 artists are involved. On average the artists are brought to the fair 3,5 years but, as shown in Figure 3 - the distribution is split between a 41% of artists staying less than 3 years and a 38% staying more than 5 years.

A similar distribution, even more concentrated on the stable positions (44% 6 years), is recognizable for the galleries.

¹⁵ <http://www.artfacts.net/>; <http://www.artnet.com/>

Figure 3 – Stability of galleries and artists over the period 2005-2010



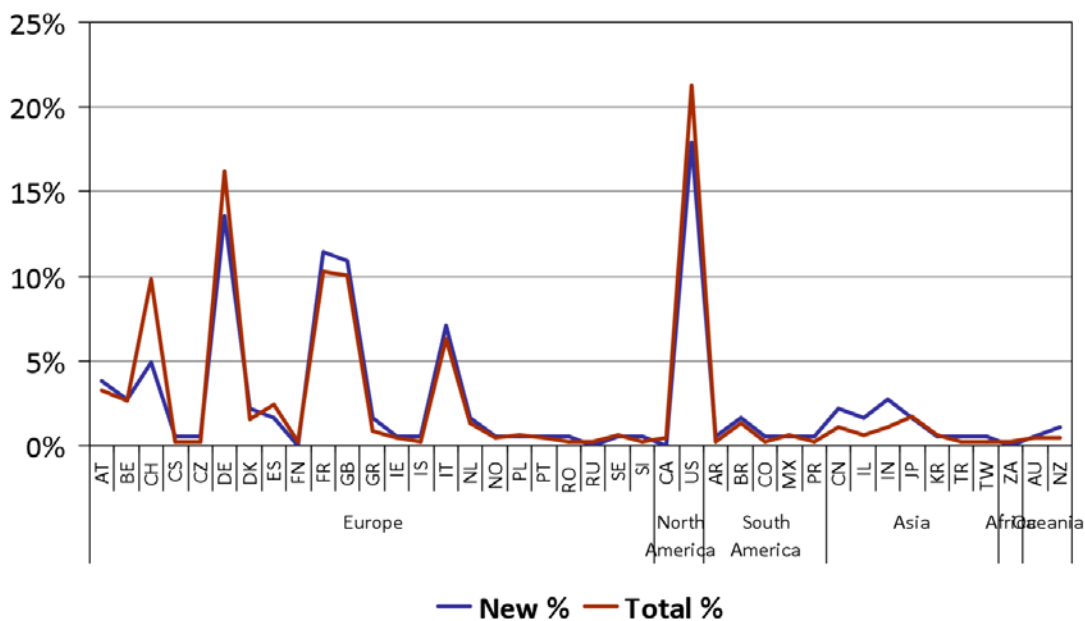
Considering the total number of galleries, a good majority comes from Europe (70%) and North America (22%), while Asian galleries account only for 6%; the other continents are residual. In this sense it is clear that this élite mainly represents western agencies.

Among the European galleries, the most relevant countries are those whose art system have the strongest tradition, particularly of contemporary art: Germany (16% of the total), France and Great Britain (10% each), Switzerland (9,8%) and Italy (6%).

If we compare the galleries' distribution by country and the distribution of new galleries entering the fair (Figure 4),¹⁶ we notice an almost complete overlapping. This evidence suggests the hypothesis that the selection of new entries is negotiated among a number of players taking care of the balance among national groups in order to maintain the existing national representation.

The fair is therefore frequented by a stable group of galleries, bringing a growing number of artists and paying attention to the equilibrium between the presence of the single national scenes.

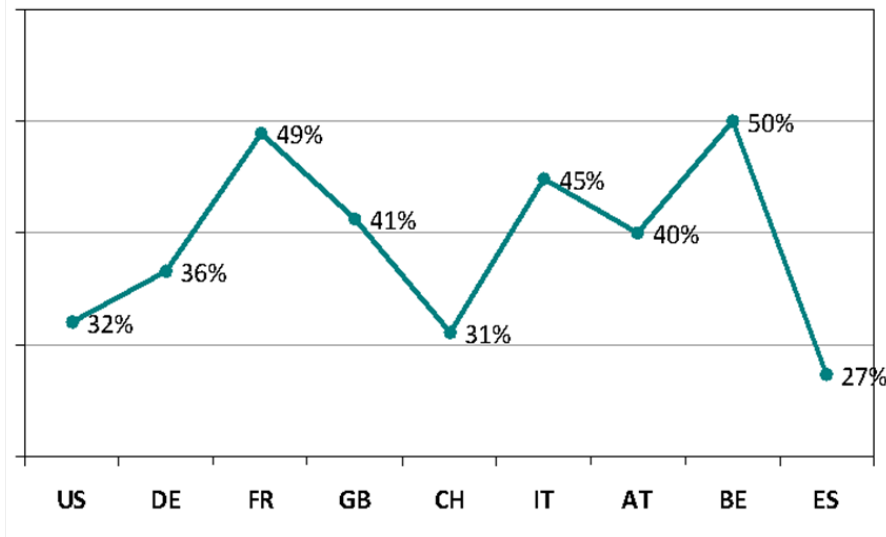
Figure 4 – Existing and new galleries distribution



¹⁶ New galleries are the ones entering the fair in a given year that did not participate in the previous.

Figure 5 represents the galleries' turnover of the nine countries presenting more than 10 galleries from 2005 to 2010. Unites States, Switzerland, Spain and Germany are the systems in which the volatility of the gallery presence is lower, suggesting the hypothesis of a higher control on the fair activities.¹⁷

Figure 5 – Volatility of the galleries



2.2 The artists: birthplace and generation

Focusing on the artists listed in the galleries portfolios, it is possible to add further evidence to this overall picture of stability.

The artists' population has been categorized in seven geographical areas (Europe, North America, Central America, South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania) on the basis of their birthplace.¹⁸ In parallel, we considered four different generational groups: the first including artists born before the XX century, the second artists born from the beginning of the century until the Fifties (basically the productions influenced by the first European avant-gardes), the third the generation of the Fifties and the Sixties, and the fourth the generation born after 1970.

¹⁷ Volatility is estimated for each country as follows: (Number of new galleries + Number of galleries leaving the fair) / Total galleries.

¹⁸ Birthplace is a proxy, as it evidently does not take into account the influence of the other countries in which artists may live and work in the course of their artistic career. However, it is the simplest and more reliable information. A further analysis could precise, basing on single curricula, in which cases to assign a different country to artists.

Table 1 – Number of artists by area and by generation, 2005-2010¹⁹

Artists' Area / Birth	< 1900	1900 - 1949	1950 - 1969	> 1970	Total	Total %
Europe	358	919	1431	884	3640	59%
North America	58	458	490	327	1354	22%
Central America	2	14	43	39	98	2%
South America	5	50	102	70	233	4%
Asia	3	82	312	269	675	11%
Africa		16	49	37	102	2%
Oceania		10	39	11	63	1
Total	426	1549	2466	1637	6078*	100%
Total %	7%	25%	41%	27%	100%	-

* Over the total of 6,183 artists, 107 do not have specific information about the nationality or the year of birth.

From Table 1, it appears that 80% of the artists come from Europe or North America.

In 2010 the total number of artists at the fair raises significantly by nearly 900 unities compared to 2005 (a 28% increase) (see Tables 5 and 6 in the Appendix).

Despite this dynamic, the overall distribution by country of origin is stable with a relatively marginal exception due to the number of Asian artists that nearly doubles (219 – 428).

The stability of the gallery distribution per nation, that was already highlighted in Figure 4, is therefore mirrored by the stillness of the distribution per nation of the artists.

If we consider the distribution of the different generations of artists over the same years (2005-2010), we observe that the post-1970 generation shifts from a 13% to a 27% of the total (from 403 to 1,062 artists): a sign that a growing attention has been placed on the younger generation. This specific growth is due to the “new” art scenes of South America, Asia and Africa, that increase by 55%, 95% and 153% respectively.²⁰ Nevertheless North America and Europe maintain their position and even increase their presence in the system from 2005 to 2010 (by 28% and 20% respectively; see Table 2).

Even under the pressure of the globalization process that occurred during the observed years, the highest part of the gatekeeping and market activities seems to preserve the traditional geopolitical distribution of galleries and artists.

Table 2 – Percentage variation of the number of artists from 2005 to 2010

Artists' Area / Birth	< 1900	1900-1949	1950-1969	> 1970	Total
Europe	-17%	9%	5%	137%	20%
North America	-7%	16%	5%	196%	28%
Central America	-100%	17%	-15%	56%	7%
South America	-50%	-7%	34%	244%	55%
Asia		16%	56%	249%	95%
Africa		83%	106%	329%	153%
Oceania		-71%	-67%	67%	-58%
Total	-16%	11%	10%	165%	28%

¹⁹ Values in Table 1 represent the number of times in which an artist is presented by a gallery (thus including repetitions if an artist appears in more than one gallery's portfolio in a given year).

²⁰ We should also observe that, in comparison to 2005, in 2010 we detect in Art Basel 5 new African and 5 new Asian nations.

3. The evolving national strategies

The in-depth analysis of the different areas and national strategies will be limited in this research to the following specific objectives.

- a. The first is to understand if it is possible to identify a systematic difference in the way in which the different areas organize the relationship between local galleries and local artists.
- b. The second is to clarify these differences at the national level by looking at mutual relations between countries.

3.1. A taxonomy of the national platforms

In order to qualify the presence of the different national clusters of galleries we considered two dimensions:

1. the first one is the intensity of the **nationalistic concentration of the galleries' portfolio**, which is the percentage of national artists in the overall portfolios of galleries of a single country. The weighted average of the dimension is 39%, but a high number of nations (23) is strongly above the average (see Table 10 in the Appendix);
2. the second one is the intensity of the **control exercised by national galleries on national artists**. The value is the percentage of the artists (on the total number of the artists of the nation) represented by galleries of their birth nation. The weighted average of the dimension is 42%, while the number of nations strongly above the average is low (5).

Figure.6 – Nationalistic concentration of galleries' portfolio: distribution

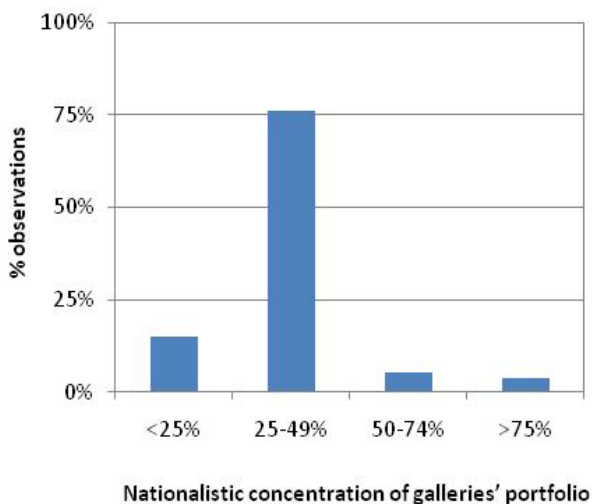
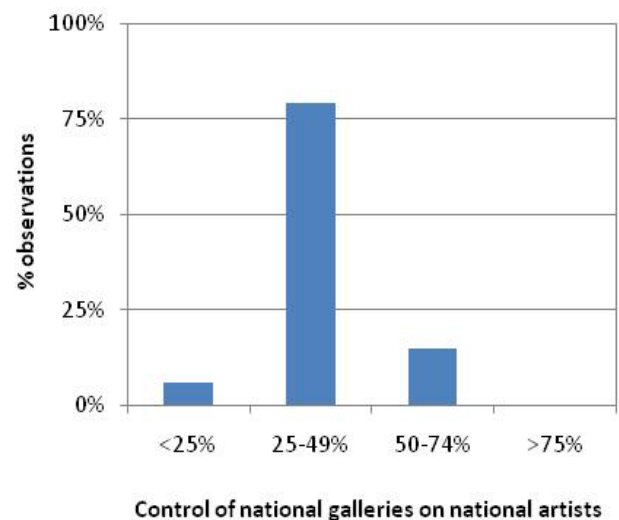


Figure 7 – Control of national galleries on national artists: distribution

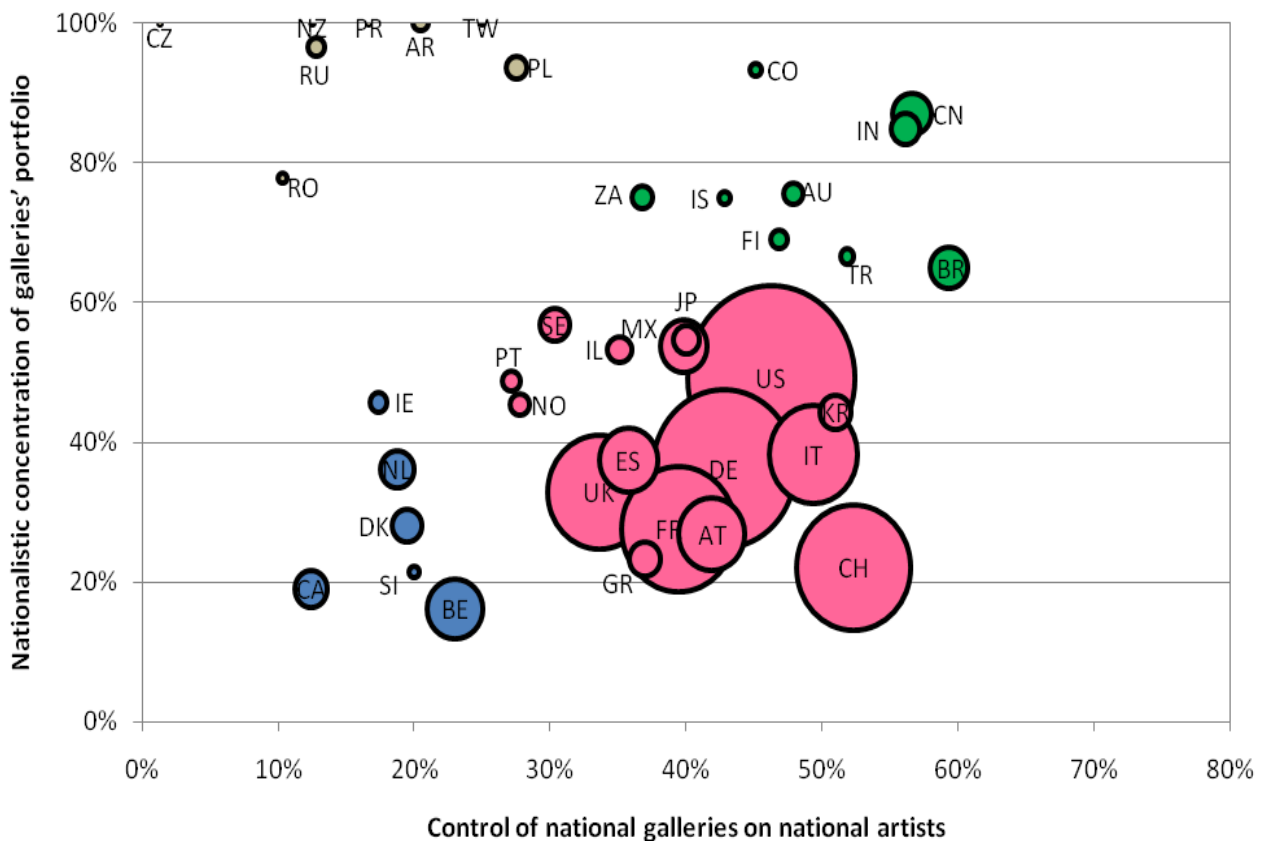


The system, as shown in Figures 6 and 7, is characterized by an average homogeneity of behaviour among the different galleries: both distributions are skewed around the average value.

Nevertheless, Table 8 in the Appendix reveals the presence of a significant number of countries (23) with a nationalistic concentration of galleries' portfolio that is 10% higher than the average, hence suggesting the need for further specifications.

We have plotted (Figure 8) the behaviour of the system as a whole from 2005 to 2010, considering on the X axis the "control of national galleries on national artists" and on the Y axis the "nationalistic concentration of galleries' portfolio". The surface of each bubble is proportional to the overall number of observations for each country's galleries²¹ and is therefore a proxy of the level of activity.

Figure 8 – National platforms at Art Basel, 2005-2010



It is possible to identify four main situations:

1. **weak national platforms:** this group (in light grey) includes countries characterized by a strong nationalistic concentration of galleries portfolios, a weak control of the galleries on national artists, and a fairly low level of presence (Russia, New Zealand, Poland, Taiwan, Argentina, Romania, Czech Republic, Puerto Rico). These platforms are peripheral and nationalistic;
2. **stronger national platforms:** this group (in green) includes countries whose galleries show a strong nationalistic concentration, a high control on the national scene and again a lower level of activity (India, China, Brazil, Australia, Iceland, South Africa, Turkey, Colombia);

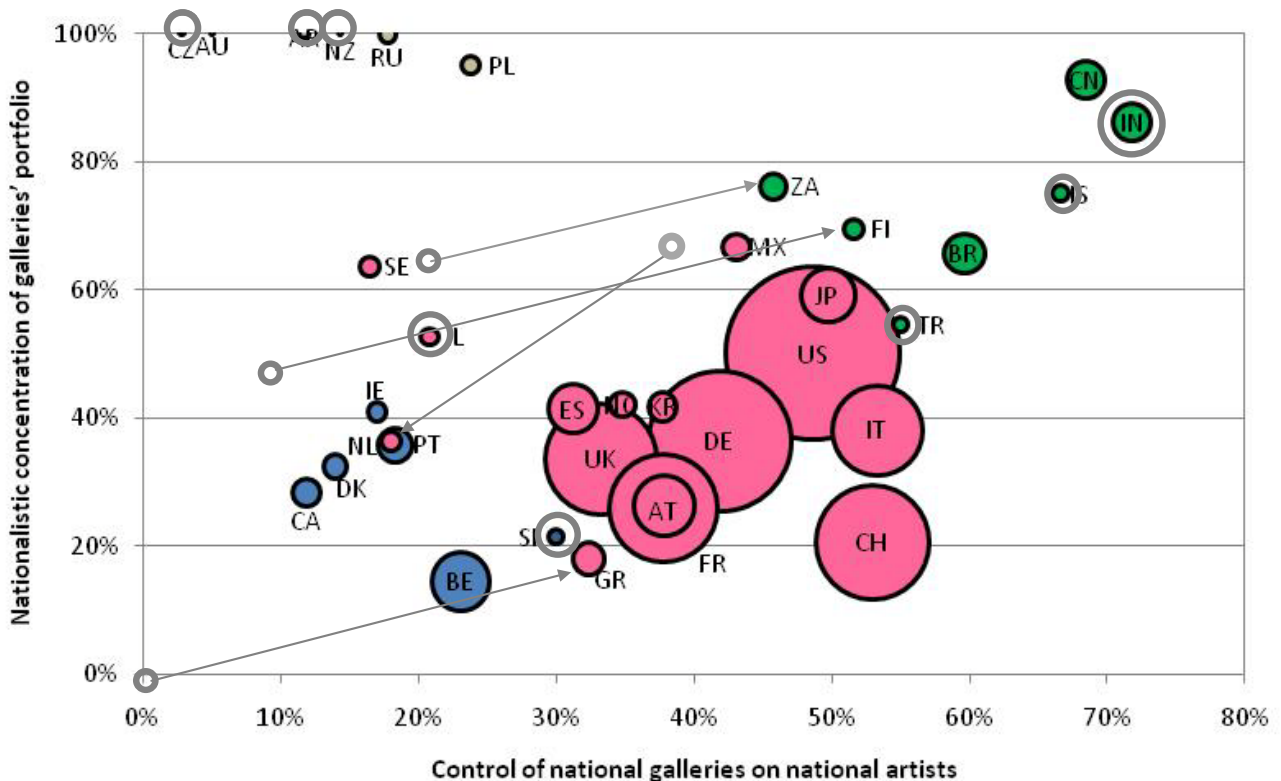
²¹ Here the result is particularly biased by the number of galleries participating at the fair for each country. A few outlier cases are: RU=1; CO=1; CZ=1; IS=1; ZA=1; FI=1; CA=2; AU=2; IE=2; NO=2; PT=2; NZ=2.

3. **weak international platforms:** this group (in blue) includes countries whose galleries show low levels of activity, low levels of control and low nationalistic orientation. Basically, these platform can be considered as peripheral and internationalized (Netherlands, Denmark, Canada, Belgium, Ireland, Slovenia);
4. **strong international platforms:** this group (in pink) includes all the big players with an average behaviour; the galleries' portfolios are composed of national artists by 30 to 50%, while the artists are significantly present both in the national and in the international scene. Such cluster is heterogeneous in its composition, as it is evident from the cases in the figure (UK, US, Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Spain, Korea, Japan, Mexico, Greece, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, Israel).

The following figure (Figure 9) shows the dynamic of the different countries from 2005 to 2010. We observe a general stability of the main players: US, Switzerland, France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy keep their positions almost inaltered.

Two tendencies may be highlighted for smaller countries: on the one hand some newcomers appear on the scene (India, Iceland, Turkey, Slovenia, Israel, Czech Republic, New Zealand and Argentina). On the other, we observe some significant shifts in the level of control on the national scene: South Africa, Finland and Greece move upward in this direction, while Portugal loses the level of control on the national scene approaching the weak international platforms.

Figure 9 – Changes and shifts at Art Basel, 2010



3.2 Trade relationships within the central cluster of national platforms

In order to have a better understanding of the way in which the system is working, we also need to specify the intensity and the results of the relationship among national scenes. We focused on the most relevant strong international platforms, in terms of number of artists presented.

Table 3 summarizes the inflows and the outflows to and from the different national platforms; the numbers represent the time in which a national artist is represented by a gallery (national or not) the balance is positive if the outflows prevail. The other feature of the table are:

- The green cells represents the overall flows of each nation with all other countries represented at the fair. These results show if the single national platform is net exporter or importer of artists.
- The grey cells count the flows related to the central cluster nations.
- The white cells count the flows between the single platforms.

The main evidences are:

- United States is by far the most important platform (3.346 treated artists), followed by Germany, United Kingdom and France (1.939,1.160,1.029 treated artists), Italy and Switzerland (691, 619), Austria and Spain (315,397)
- Globally considered, all central cluster nations are net “exporters” of artists with the exception of Switzerland (-5%) that shows a strong unbalance toward the central cluster nations (-50%). This means in the Basel Fair a group of central national platforms prevails in the overall flows of artists.
- Within this group, United States and Great Britain (even if centrally positioned in terms of nationalistic control on their national artists) are able to maintain an unchallenged power position on the global scene represented at Basel.
 - US have an overall positive balance of 7% and show a relative dominance toward all the gallery platforms of the central cluster (+17%);
 - Great Britain has a stronger capability of distributing its artists in the overall system (+33%), and is also relatively dominating the central cluster of nations (+9%) with the exception of Spain;
- From 2005 to 2010, United States and British art systems are exporting, using other nations’ galleries (particularly the ones of the central cluster) as distributors.
- Germany shows a substantial equilibrium between the incoming and outgoing flows a part from a dominant position toward Austria and Switzerland;
- Spain, even if on smaller numbers, shows a good performance (+28%) both in general and within the central cluster (+32%) particularly toward France and Italy;
- Italy, France and Austria are relatively weaker (importer) inside the central cluster (-7%, -9%, -21%);
- Switzerland is acting as a distribution platform, particularly for the central cluster, and for the whole international system.

Table 3 – Trade balance of seven strong international platforms

Artists' country	Net balance toward all nations	Balance toward US	Balance toward DE	Balance toward UK	Balance toward FR	Balance toward IT	Balance toward CH	Balance toward AT	Balance toward ES	Balance within the group of the central platforms
US In	1548		343	253	171	87	57	82	42	1035
Out	1798		414	253	280	136	285	27	59	1454
Balance	7%		9%	0%	24%	22%	67%	-50%	17%	17%
DE In	829	414		175	109	63	68	87	41	957
Out	1110	343		126	128	60	209	54	24	944
Balance	14%	-9%		-16%	8%	-2%	51%	-23%	-26%	-1%
UK In	400	253	126		64	30	21	22	28	544
Out	790	253	175		65	59	74	13	15	654
Balance	33%	0%	16%		1%	33%	56%	-26%	-30%	9%
FR In	406	280	128	65		48	71	10	66	668
Out	623	171	109	64		38	149	18	14	563
Balance	21%	-24%	-8%	-1%		-12%	35%	29%	-65%	-9%
IT In	336	136	60	59	38		25	18	12	348
Out	345	87	63	30	48		57	11	5	301
Balance	1%	-22%	2%	-33%	12%		39%	-24%	-41%	-7%
CH In	324	285	209	74	149	57		24	40	838
Out	295	57	68	21	71	25		35	0	277
Balance	-5%	-67%	-51%	-56%	-35%	-39%		19%	-100%	-50%
AT In	132	82	87	22	10	18	24		4	247
Out	183	27	54	13	18	11	35		4	162
Balance	16%	-50%	-23%	-26%	29%	-24%	19%		0%	-21%
ES In	142	59	24	15	14	5	0	4		121
Out	255	42	41	28	66	12	40	4		233
Balance	28%	-17%	26%	30%	65%	41%	100%	0%		32%

A further analysis focused on the set of artists born after 1970 (thus considering 1,637 artists out of 6,183, the generation on which has been produced most changes in the galleries portfolio from 2005 to 2010), the scenario is fairly stable with few major shifts:

- US, DE, UK are still net exporters toward all the other national platforms particularly in the central cluster. Only the US are increasing their exporting power within the central group (+32% instead than +17%)
- France, Italy, Spain, Austria worsen their position both toward the whole system and within the central cluster.
- Swiss is improving its position operating as a trading platform for the US, UK and Germany.

Table 4 – Trade balance of seven strong international platforms for artists born after 1970

Artists' country	Net balance toward all the nations	Balance toward US	Balance toward DE	Balance toward UK	Balance toward FR	Balance toward IT	Balance toward CH	Balance toward AT	Balance toward ES	Balance within the group of the central platforms
US In	221		40	46	8	9	9	1	1	114
Out	283		55	57	56	22	14	12	3	219
Balance	12%		16%	11%	75%	42%	22%	85%	50%	32%
DE In	150	55		34	14	13	6	5	1	128
Out	195	40		33	21	10	24	25	1	154
Balance	13%	-16%		-1%	20%	-13%	60%	67%	0%	9%
UK In	99	57	33		4	5	4	2	2	107
Out	143	46	34		9	17	6	2	1	115
Balance	18%	-11%	1%		38%	55%	20%	0%	-33%	4%
FR In	63	56	21	9		5	13	4	1	109
Out	62	8	14	4		7	8	3	4	48
Balance	-1%	-75%	-20%	-38%		17%	-24%	-14%	60%	-39%
IT In	60	22	10	17	7		4	3	0	63
Out	40	9	13	5	5		2	4	0	38
Balance	-20%	-42%	13%	-55%	-17%		-33%	14%		-25%
CH In	38	14	24	6	8	2		2	0	56
Out	43	9	6	4	13	4		3	0	39
Balance	6%	-22%	-60%	-20%	24%	33%		20%		-18%
AT In	22	12	25	2	3	4	3		1	50
Out	20	1	5	2	4	3	2		0	17
Balance	-5%	-85%	-67%	0%	14%	-14%	-20%		-100%	-49%
ES In	17	3	1	1	4	0	0	0		9
Out	10	1	1	2	1	0	0	1		6
Balance	-26%	-50%	0%	33%	-60%			100%		-20%

These data are consistent with the hypothesis that the national platforms are playing a role in the global art system and that the globalization process that occurred over the last years enforced strong national positions in the high segment of the global art market.

4. Conclusions

The first and main evidence of this observatory is that Art Basel is a system characterized by the central and dominant position of a small number of countries: United States, Great Britain, Germany and France. Swiss galleries operate as a trade platform for other nations; Italy and Spain have a minor even if still central position. Between 2005 and 2010 these central positions do not shift significantly. Art Basel interacts with the globalization through a highly controlled dynamic of expansion of its activities both in terms of absolute number of artists, in terms of the presence of the youngest artists, and in terms of new national platforms (see Table 7 in the Appendix) acting against any form of disintermediation.

Major shifts have been noticed outside of the central group of nations: China, South Africa and India developed as nationalistic platforms, Greece joined the central group, Portugal declined.

Considering the overall balance of activities of the central group of national platforms our results highlight the central role of the United States that not only is a net exporter considering all the artists and all the nations, but it is playing the strongest role within the central cluster. The position of the United States is even increased considering the population of young artists, the one on which the globalization is producing the strongest consequences.

Germany and Great Britain flank – with different strategies - the United States in the dominant position increasing their role under the pressure of the transformation.

Italy, France and Spain, despite belonging to the strongest group, are challenged by the globalization weakening their positions.

Such considerations point to the conclusion that Art Basel is an institution helping the strongest platform in the management of the opportunities raised by the globalization by fostering, in the medium-term, an enforcement of the traditional national players, steadily present at the fair.

Even if the quantitative relevance of the central players is apparently preserved, only the strongest ones seem to gain an effective advantage. Italy, France and Spain are possibly less capable of protecting their positions with the younger generation of artists. This means that their positions may be challenged in the next future by other emerging platforms.

It is possible that a further effect of the globalization could also be the creation of international networks of galleries operating independently from any single national platforms. This effect will be the focus of further research analysis.

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Appendix

Table 5 – Number of artists by area and by generation, 2005

Artists' Area / Birth	< 1900	1900-1949	1950-1969	> 1970	(vuoto)	Total	Total %
Europe	251	556	847	239	18	1.911	62%
North America	44	299	298	67	4	712	23%
Central America	2	6	33	18		59	2%
South America	4	27	50	16	1	98	3%
Asia		44	123	51	1	219	7%
Africa		6	17	7		30	1%
Oceania		7	33	3	2	45	1%
Total	301	945	1.401	401	26	3.074	100%
Total %	10%	31%	46%	13%	1%	100%	

Table 6– Number of artists by area and by generation, 2010

Artists' Area / Birth	< 1900	1900-1949	1950-1969	> 1970	(vuoto)	Total	Total %
Europe	209	606	892	567	28	2.302	58%
North America	41	347	314	198	9	909	23%
Central America		7	28	28		63	2%
South America	2	25	67	55	3	152	4%
Asia	2	51	192	178	5	428	11%
Africa		11	35	30		76	2%
Oceania		2	11	5	1	19	0%
Total	254	1.050	1.539	1.062	50	3.955	100%
Total %	6%	27%	39%	27%	1%	100%	

Table 7 – Variation of the number of artists from 2005 to 2010, emerging countries

Country	2005	2010	Gap	Total %
MX	38	43	5	13%
AR	18	32	14	78%
BR	58	75	17	29%
CO	3	19	16	533%
CN	58	96	38	66%
IL	14	33	19	136%
IN	6	70	64	1067%
JP	90	151	61	68%
KR	21	34	13	62%
ZA	13	45	32	246%
AU	40	14	-26	-65%

Figure 10 – National platforms at Art Basel, 2005

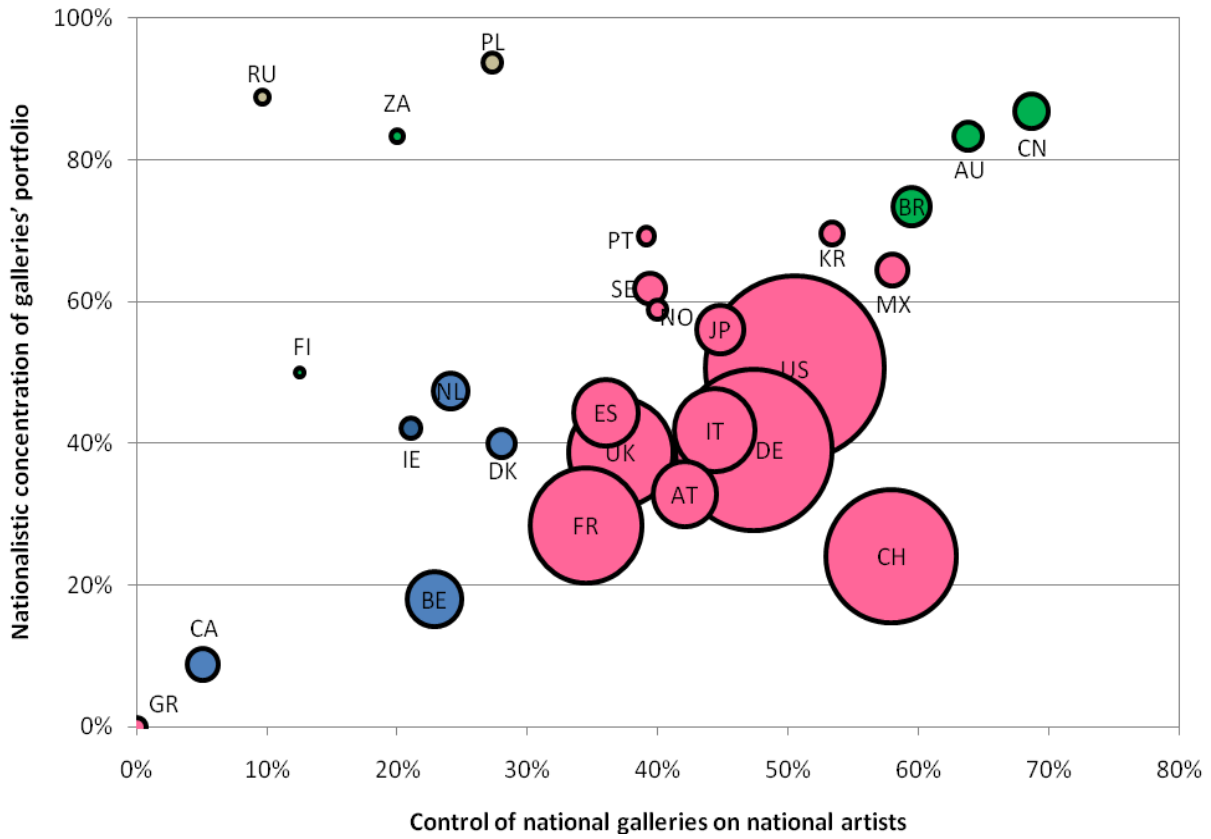


Figure 11 – National platforms at Art Basel, 2010

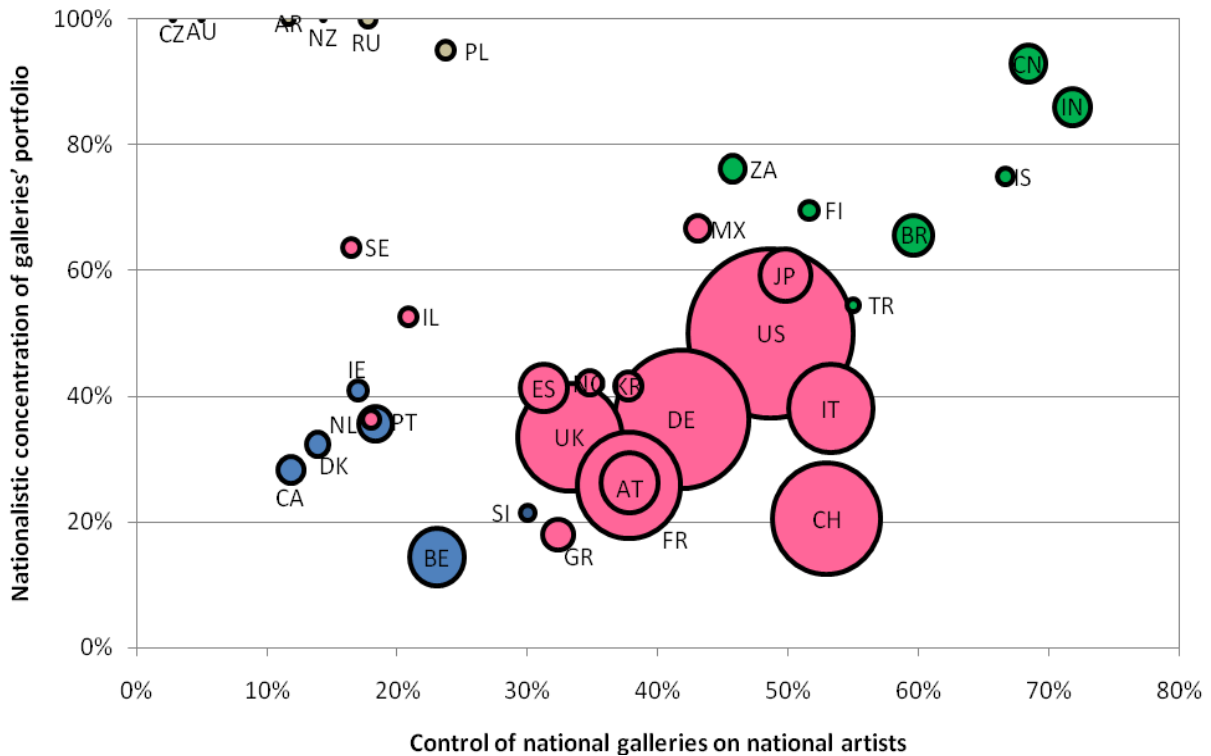


Table 8 – Nationalistic concentration of galleries' portfolio

Country	%	N observations
TW	100%	2
AR	100%	25
PR	100%	1
NZ	100%	2
CZ	100%	1
RU	97%	29
PL	94%	47
CO	93%	15
CN	87%	162
IN	85%	92
RO	78%	9
AU	76%	45
IS	75%	16
ZA	75%	48
FI	69%	32
TR	67%	21
BR	65%	157
SE	57%	95
MX	55%	75
JP	54%	255
IL	53%	62
US	49%	3,149
PT	49%	39
IE	46%	35
NO	45%	44
KR	44%	106
Weighted average	39%	
IT	38%	878
ES	37%	380
DE	36%	2,288
NL	36%	127
UK	33%	1,218
DK	28%	100
FR	28%	1,470
AT	27%	492
GR	23%	107
CH	22%	1,470
SI	21%	14
CA	19%	119
BE	16%	340

Table 9 – Control of national galleries on national artists

Country	%	N observations
BR	59%	157
CN	57%	162
IN	56%	92
CH	52%	1,470
TR	52%	21
KR	51%	106
IT	49%	878
AU	48%	45
FI	47%	32
US	46%	3,149
CO	45%	15
IS	43%	16
DE	43%	2,288
Weighted average	42%	
AT	42%	492
MX	40%	75
JP	40%	255
FR	39%	1,470
GR	37%	107
ZA	37%	48
ES	36%	380
IL	35%	62
UK	34%	1,218
SE	30%	95
NO	28%	44
PL	28%	47
PT	27%	39
TW	25%	2
BE	23%	340
AR	20%	25
SI	20%	14
DK	19%	100
NL	19%	127
IE	17%	35
PR	17%	1
RU	13%	29
NZ	13%	2
CA	12%	119
RO	10%	9
CZ	1%	1

Table 10 – Abbreviations used for countries

Europe	
AL	Albania
AT	Austria
BA	Bosnia Herzegovina
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CH	Switzerland
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FO	Faroe Islands
FR	France
GR	Greece
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
KS	Kosovo
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MD	Moldova
MK	Macedonia
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
RS	Serbia
RU	Russia
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovak Republic
UA	Ukraine
UK	Great Britain
North America	
CA	Canada
US	United States
Central America	
BB	Barbados
BS	Bahamas
CR	Costa Rica
CU	Cuba
GT	Guatemala
HN	Honduras
JM	Jamaica
MX	Mexico
PR	Puerto Rico
Oceania	
AU	Australia
NZ	New Zealand

South America	
AR	Argentina
BO	Bolivia
BR	Brazil
CL	Chile
CO	Colombia
PE	Peru
UY	Uruguay
VE	Venezuela
Asia	
AF	Afghanistan
AM	Armenia
AZ	Azerbaijan
BD	Bangladesh
BH	Bahrain
BY	Belarus
CN	China
CY	Cyprus
GE	Georgia
IL	Israel
IN	India
IQ	Iraq
IR	Iran
JP	Japan
KR	Korea
LB	Lebanon
MY	Malaysia
PH	Philippines
PK	Pakistan
PS	Palestinian Territories
SG	Singapore
TH	Thailand
TR	Turkey
TW	Taiwan
VN	Viet Nam
Africa	
AO	Angola
BJ	Benin
CD	Congo
CI	Cote d'Ivoire
CM	Cameroon
DZ	Algeria
EG	Egypt
ER	Eritrea
ET	Ethiopia
GH	Ghana
KE	Kenya
MA	Morocco
MG	Madagascar
ML	Mali
NA	Namibia
NG	Nigeria
UG	Uganda
ZA	South Africa
ZM	Zambia
ZW	Zimbabwe