

# Identity, cinema and diversity: dialectics towards digital convergence

## *Identidade, cinema e diversidade: dialéticas frente à convergência digital*

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### ABSTRACT

The claim of cinema as structural piece in the construction of diversity and language(s) as the ground and a catalyst for intercultural dialogue is the starting point of a work that investigates the new uses and consumption of cinema in the search for new strategies – political, creative, distributive – in order to overcome the marginality of a globalized and monopolized market by great multinational distributors. An initiative that is directly connected to the protection of cultural exclusion and appeals to the obligation to guarantee the access to other cultures/nations which claim for the right to circulation, demand visibility in order to be recognized.

**Keywords:** Cinema, identity, diversity, imaginary, cultural consumption

### RESUMO

A consideração do cinema como peça estrutural na construção da diversidade e da(s) língua(s) como alicerce e elemento favorecedor do diálogo intercultural são o ponto de partida de uma publicação que analisa os novos usos e consumos cinematográficos na procura de novas estratégias – políticas, criativas, distributivas – para superar a marginalidade na qual as propostas de culturas/línguas minorizadas vem sendo conduzidas em um mercado globalizado e monopolizado pelas grandes distribuidoras multinacionais. Uma iniciativa que está diretamente ligada à defesa da exceção cultural e apela à obrigação de garantir o acesso para outras culturas/nações que reclamam o direito de circulação, que exigem ser visíveis para serem reconhecidas.

**Palavras-chave:** Cinema, identidade, diversidade, imaginário, consumo cultural

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**C**INE, *DIVERSIDADE Y Redes. Pequeñas Cinematografías, Políticas de la Diversidad y Nuevos Modos de Consumo Cultural* takes the Galician case in the study of a national cinematography, in the intersection of two geolinguistic spaces, the lusophone and Hispanic, a condition for which constitutes the ideal context for dialogue with culture-languages surrounding it. Communication subject of a national culture with its own language, the Galician language, intrinsic value in the configuration of its identity, that takes the risk of being exiled from its own territory. In the search for new audiences, new forms of visibility for its own cinema, the book places the Galician industry towards the possibility of looking into the diaspora, moving towards spectators beyond the Atlantic with whom it shares certain signs in terms of identity. It appeals to migrant communities of Galicia, with the right to vote in the country, who claim for access to the creation of an identity which belongs to them because

identity is the skin of a culture, it is contained within it, what represents it, what demonstrates it and articulates it. It is non-transferable because it is not only an innate attribute as the skin, but a knowledge construction which is the results of multiple cultural interactions processed through the sieve of perceptions and the values of each individual and collectivity (p. 14).

Does Galician cinema have possibilities to be diffused in Latin America? What are the commercial, technological, cultural and linguistic barriers that restrict such distribution? How new digital networks can contribute to the improvement of this and other minority movies? These are questions to which the authors of *Cine, Diversidade y Redes. Pequeñas Cinematografías, Políticas de la Diversidad y Nuevos Modos de Consumo Cultural*. The work contains the results of a research project developed by the Audiovisual Studies research group at the Universidade of Santiago de Compostela, with the collaboration of the Instituto Universitario Nacional del Arte and the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (Argentina), the Pontificia Universidade Católica de Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), Universidad de la República de Uruguay, the Museo da Emigraición Galega in Argentina and the Patronato da Cultura Galega of Uruguay. Under the title “Cine, Diversidad y Redes” (ref. CSO2009-13702), and funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness through the National Plan I+D+i, the research aimed at “looking into and examining the reception of Galician cinematographic productions from the perspective of specific variables such the language, topics [...] or expressive modalities, together with technological issues that affect the access and the new forms of

circulation and consumption of cultural assets” (p. 27) in reception groups formed in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.

The current work of researchers from the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela who intervene in the study gathers scientific contributions of scholars from different universities worldwide and well-known theorists in the field of communication and culture. With Alfonso Gumucio, author of the preamble of the volume, Drs. Martín Becerra, Oscar Traversa, Carlos Gerbase, Ruy Farías and the researcher Nicolás Bermúdez, add unique contributions to the compendium of texts structured in two parts. The first, *Imaginaríos en Pasaje*, offers the theoretical framework necessary for the development of the research project. In the paper “Propuestas para pensar la diversidad desde el Cine Nación”, Dr. Margarita Ledo Andión, coordinator of the volume and director of the research, addresses the discursive complexity of the term *nation* and makes use of Anderson’s theories (Anderson, 1983) to refer to it as a dialectic process –as (re)construction- in the hands of an *imagined community* beyond the binomial nation-State, whose constitution as “national group relies on how its members share messages and rituals to elaborate a collective identity” (p. 27). The author addresses notions of identity, diversity and cinema, in the articulation of a research that aims the commitment of the academy, cinema industry and public institutions in the openness of new channels of access to cultural outskirts (see also: Ledo and Castelló, 2013).

The contributions of Traversa, Bermúdez and Farías provide an approximation of the creation of a collective imaginary for Galician people living abroad and address the process of reconfiguration of the identity of multicultural societies in which individuals see the need “to partially adopt others’ identity to live in harmony, in synthesis” (p. 38), and highlight the importance of the cooperation and connective labor with migrant communities within its intensive cultural, political and social commitment in the maintenance of identity signs which are similar to sampling nation.

Becerra draws special attention to the dialect relationship between cinema and identity. From this perspective, he explores the opportunities of existing diversities in the actual Argentinian cinematographic industry, where thanks to “digital convergence and the subsequent circulation of films via Internet shared by its own users, versatility in the forms of exhibitions and reduction of costs to create and produce films” (p. 56) give rise to “alternative strategies to allow productions to circulate worldwide, assigning greater importance to a common cultural tradition that compensates the weakness of policies on the implementation and marketing typical of significant studies” (p. 56).

Finally, Gerbase coincides in highlighting the advantages of conveying audiovisual works in multi-platforms as an effective strategy for the diffusion of low-cost films in Brazil, in a study that recovers the notion of authorship in the conceptualization of relations between cinema and diversity.

*Para saber cómo nos ven*, the second part of the work, provides a detailed description of the development of the research project. An in-depth outline of the methodology employed is offered, with a clear cooperative and multi-centric commitment whose main contribution relies on the design of an online platform “capable to provide a synergic management of many types of sample and data processing” (p. 100). A detailed explanation of the functioning of the management platform is provided and a contextual approximation to the proliferation of new networks in the configuration of research projects is carried out. This second part allows the reader to learn about the formation and qualification of the reception groups collaborating with the study, as well as the definition of variables and the study sample. Finally, research members provide a critical discussion of the results and the conclusion of the study, and graphic compilation of the most significant data.

The volume *Cine, Diversidad y Redes* constitute an exercise of scientific transparency and accomplishes with its three main goals proposed in the abovementioned lines. It is also consistent with engaging in the “theoretical and political debate in favor of diversity practices as a common asset concerning proposal that address the relevance of performances in the international public sphere and elaboration of knowledge experiences in the cyber space” (p. 27). In short, it requires from readers to take a position and the commitment “to make it visible and place other cultural objects in one single space of participation” (p. 20). ■

## REFERENCES

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