Chapter 13
Globalization and the Dynamics of Work Markets

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ABSTRACT

In proposing an analysis of the professionalization and the occupations of cinema based on the discoveries of interactionist sociology, The Filmic Factory defines film practices in concrete terms. Taking a look at the other side of the scenery allows us to grasp the interior processes at work in the fabrication of a film. How does one describe these different categories of audiovisual and film occupations over a long period of time through the lens of more complex professional constructions at the intersection of French public policy since 1936 and current evolutions in a market based on intermittent employment? On the basis of numerous inquiries in various studios (France, Central Europe, United States, India, Russia, and others), this chapter proposes a new perspective on this specific market in the context of globalization in order to better understand the anonymous history of those who have created cinema.

INTRODUCTION

The Relevance of an Organizational Model

How can we explore beyond a socio-economic understanding of reality, based on organizational models of technicians, to decipher the forms of mediation practiced in the professional domain around the pivotal role of the production manager?

How to understand the real economy of the world of work which unfolds in globalized work markets? This economy moves relatively uniformly or similarly across different work markets, thanks to a strong international tradition unique to careers in cinema. This system of a cinema without borders is based on an already venerable tradition (Cosandey and Albera, 1995).

How can we comprehend the whole process made up of fragmentary observations that come from a great variety of situations in which these shared forms of work are appropriated during studio shooting? A film set is a space created for different uses and from a world of differentiated activity (Cohen,1986). In the framework of institutionalized management, paradoxically, the set resembles the workshop layout of an atelier (Moulin,1983). Although the set constitutes the

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essential locus of redistributed disseminated information, we may ask ourselves how this information circulates within the micronetworked filmic enterprise.

This perspective of the "reproducible organizational model" does not claim to detail exhaustively the entire branch's functioning, but it could help to explain certain aspects of the professionalization process in the cinema and more generally in the work market.

Workers' groups, no matter the studio visited, mainly traffic in the cultural model of traditional cinema, which remains potent if not mythic. The perspective adopted here delineates the particularities of certain labor markets and updates certain endogenous determining factors, as well as exogenous ones intrinsic to the labor mark and the ferocious competition in film making

This perspective helps us understand the dynamic of activity in the cinema industry by describing the logic of these different interactions in film shoots. Can we understand in greater depth the organization of this establishment and the cyclical yet variable interpenetration of work markets? In France, an understanding of technical occupations' evolution, based on the public policy regulating them, is necessary context. The history of these occupations is, in fact, multifaceted (institutional, political, economic aspects, etc.) -- unlike in Hollywood, where the deciphering of activities today is linked differently to the production of massively delocalized films, or Bollywood, an alternative model with overabundant sources of labor and an essentially national market (Crisp, 1994).

The collective aspect of cinema and its workflow according to project have a direct impact on the division of labor and on the symbolic hierarchy of different participants in the chain of command. From a functional point of view, the division of labor seems relatively flexible on the set, demanding a certain versatility from the individuals chosen by the production manager.

BACKGROUND

A Work System

The idea of "activity" assumes its specific meaning in the context of the specific work apparatus, confined to the studio setting. Based in this bounded apparatus, exterior shoots may also take place. Producers today may choose from a range of available exterior locations which allow them to reconstitute historical or contemporary settings. The delocalized studio is a strategic area wherein a major portion of professional activity is accomplished. The earliest cinema anticipated the first studios in factory courtyards (in Montreuil, for example) where filming took place half of the time on open-air sites (Mannoni,2004). Méliès created his film sets in a hangar. With the advent of the talkie 1929, the beginning of the 1930s saw the introduction of temporary work for sound technicians and managers, who worked in studios newly equipped for audio. This kind of work was regularized with the labor agreement of cinematographic production, signed in 1937. Workers, still employed by production studios, would be hired as permanent employees until the practice changed in the 1960s. But studios never truly fully assured full-time work for its labor force, nor the constant usage of its installations. The chronic instability of production meant that the productivity resulting from the use of the sets was not guaranteed. In the 1960s, fiction films were still shot for an average of 8 to 10 weeks, including 6 weeks in the studio. Each shoot required a crew of 70 to 80 people, with the exception of productions with large built sets, which sometimes necessitated 150 supplemental workers—thence the importance attributed in the postwar years to construction workers in film. These numbers diminished after 1970, when film shoots were shortened to 6 weeks and the crews lessened by half. The number of shoots grew after 1980, but their length was