Abstract

North America constitutes a free trade area where Canada and Mexico have opposing stands regarding the protection of cultural industries in the face of American cultural products dominance. While there is an abundance of research of the US dominance in the audiovisual market in Canada and Mexico, for the music sector, there are no empirical assessments that simultaneously compare the music consumption patterns of the three countries. The central argument of this paper starts by asking if, as in the film and television industries, American pop music dominates pop music markets in Mexico and Canada and, if so, to which degree Mexican and Canadian artists participate in their national markets and the North American market as a whole. To track down music consumption patterns in North America, we analyzed Spotify’s daily lists of the top 200 songs in the three countries. We found that the United States does indeed dominate the market for popular music in the region. However, the data also show significant differences in Canada and Mexico’s music consumption ratio relative to the United States. Empirical evidence demonstrates the coexistence of diversity and homogenization patterns in popular music consumption in the region’s three countries as well.

Methods

The data used for the analysis comes from the daily lists of the 200 songs with the largest streams of Spotify in Canada, Mexico and the US from 01/01/2017 to 08/04/2020. First, we analyze how many artists are shared or not in the rankings between the three countries and between country pairs. This comparison is made first concerning the total for the North American region and then to each country’s total. These measures allow us to know the relative weight in which artists are or are not shared at the regional and national level.

The analysis was conducted at three levels. The first level took as its unit of analysis the total number of artists in the North American region in the three countries’ combined lists. The second level was an analysis of the aggregate lists at the national level, which allows for the observation of each country’s patterns separately. Finally, we analyzed the nationality of the artists who entered the rankings in each country, which allows for a more refined analysis of the participation of domestic and foreign “production” in each country.

Discussion

We found that the United States dominates the market for popular music in the region, but the data also shows significant differences in the music consumption ratio of Canada and Mexico relative to the United States. The analysis was conducted at three levels.

(a) The first level took as its unit of analysis the total number of artists in the North American region in the three countries’ combined lists. In the first level of analysis, it stands out that the market intersection of the three countries is not very wide, covering less than 20%. In this sense, there is a limited “regional” convergence pattern. However, if we take out Mexico, Canada and the United States, they show a wide margin of homogeneity that reaches up to 50% of their music market.

(b) The second level was an analysis of the aggregate lists at the national level, which allows for the observation of each country’s patterns separately. As for the level of analysis of the national markets separately, it should be noted that the Mexican market is distinguished by having a wide group of artists who are only heard in Mexico (56.7%) compared to 21.3% in Canada and 15% in the United States. This data explains why the Mexican industry has not been active in seeking protection quotas or promotional instruments. In this sense, the data also clarifies the need for Canada to seek protection and promotion of its artists in the face of the musical torrent coming from the United States.

(c) Finally, when analyzing the nationality of artists in domestic markets, we find that the region’s homogenizing trend is led by the United States, again with greater strength in Canada and less strength in Mexico. One interesting finding, which should be explored in more detail, is that Canada manages to penetrate the U.S. market much more strongly than Mexican artists. This fact is somewhat counterintuitive since the broad presence of a population with Mexican ancestry or recent migration would suggest that Mexican artists’ presence could be greater in this market. In fact, we find that the Latin music with the largest entry into the mass music markets in the United States is not Mexican but rather Puerto Rican.

We conclude that the Latin music with the largest entry into the mass music markets in the United States is not Mexican but rather Puerto Rican. Further evidence from the eurovision song contest. Creative Industries Journal, 10(2), 168-187.


References