

Geopolitical Approach in Media and Comics Studies¹

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Geopolitical Approach in Media and in Media Studies

The geopolitical approach tries to make a political use of geographical expertise and *vica versa*: directs attention to international political and political perspectives in geography. The connection between space and power has shaped the activities of rulers, soldiers and merchants since the ancient times, however, it has only emerged as a separate modern discipline towards the late-nineteenth century, hand in hand with colonisation and the full realisation of the European international system. Later, the German National Socialists' superpower ambitions and the related responses, the Cold War, and finally the strengthening of globalisation and the emergence of a multipolar world inspired a renaissance of geopolitical thinking.

On the one hand, in the twentieth century the geopolitical perspective has been frequently discredited by its ties with imperial ideology (one just have to think of "Lebensraum" connotations associated with the concept of "Lebensraum" [living space] as the space necessary for survival, progress, and expansion, designed to legitimise conquest). On the other hand, the geopolitical approach kept resurfacing in connection with international relations, offering explanation not only to experts but to the wider public as well. For example, through the work of geopolitical superstars like Henry Kissinger (1994, 2001) and Zbigniew Brzezinski (1997, 2012), former National Security Advisors, or the author of a "New York Times Bestseller", political risk analyst George Friedman (2010). Yet, as István Szilágyi highlights, the discrediting and discontinuity of geopolitical thinking is not universal. In Spain, Portugal, and

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newsstands of thematic atlases and cartographic-infographic publications related to different journals (*Alternatives International, Courrier international, Diplomatie, Le Monde, Le Monde diplomatique...*), as well as the institutionalisation of media geopolitics as a discipline.

Besides the mediated public sphere, media studies have also been influenced by problems of space and power in earlier periods. There are precedents for an exploration into the complex relationship between media and geography, and media and politics as well. Hungarian examples for the former are delivered by Árpád Borsos in connection with film, especially in his research on "space-specific phenomena in the infrastructural background of the film industry" (Borsos, 2011:15), focusing particularly on film distribution and the networks of festivals and multiplexes. The latter is exemplified by recent trends to think in terms of media systems. Daniell C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini explore the aggregation of media institutions into media systems, and the relationship of this process to political systems and environment, on the level of nation states and in its comparative dimensions as well. They propose three models to describe the media systems of the investigated countries: the Mediterranean or pluralist model, the North-/Central-European model, and the North-Atlantic or liberal model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Somewhat earlier, but from a geopolitical perspective definitely bolder is the analysis of Jérôme Bourdon, professor of Tel-Aviv University, who focuses on television as a medium, and analyses the spread of television in different countries. He manages to represent the proliferation of television within a historical, but also historically-geographical framework. He successfully demonstrates the interactions and transnational trends which facilitated the spread of the technology of television, its politics (institutional models and regulatory practices), its editorial processes and genres from a handful of centrally positioned countries (former colonisers, and the industrial giants of the postcolonial period) into the rest of the world. Besides, he manages to reveal the media-political aspect of neo-television built on the promise of ephemerality. The deregulatory, liberalising and privatising wave of the 1980s-1990s led to the further propagation of the North-American television model, previously in minority, which in turn resulted in the dominance of large-scale general

Latin-America, one cannot talk about a "disruption in continuous presence", while in "East-Central Europe, the Soviet Union and in the regions dominated by socialist establishments, the first tentative steps towards the revitalization of geopolitical thinking as a science were only made after the political change" (Szilágyi, 2013:121).

For example, in Hungary the previous two decades saw the launch of several journals (*Grotius, Geopolitika a 21. században, Külgügyi Szemle, Kül-Világ, South-East Europe International Relations Quarterly*), and the publication of comprehensive monographs and essay collections, which have facilitated the reinvention of geopolitical thinking. (Some examples: Bárdos-Féltoronyi, 2006, 2015; Csizmadia, 1998; Szilágyi, 2013; Csizmadia, Molnár & Pataki 1999; Fischer, 1996a, 1996b, 2005). However, no textbook, essay collection or reference work dedicated to the geopolitics of media has been published in Hungarian so far. Even though international journalism has lost grounds in U. S. press, and probably in Hungary as well. (More specifics about the U. S. state of affairs: Marthoz, 2008.)

One might ask whether now the processes have been reversed in the public sphere, due to the local significance and the juxtaposition of the international and the global as a result of migration, international terrorism, cyber war, or the emerging European transnational media. (For more on the latter see: Panž, 2014.) It seems that in the last few years, international sections of conventional media have become more interesting and important, and the internet-based popularisation of international politics seems to be growing (in places like *Kitekintő, Diplomaci, Magyar Diplo...*), and a specialised organisation dedicated to instruction was also born, the Pallas Athene Innovation and Geopolitical Foundation (PAGEO). In some places - like in Francophone areas - the change is less spectacular because of the long-standing institutionalisation and mediatisation of geopolitics (exemplified by the journal *Hérodote*, published without interruption since 1976, and the television programme *Le Dessous des cartes*, which has been running for more than twenty years on Arte), but even here, interesting developments occurred in the last few years: one example is the publication of *Carto*, a journal reporting on current affairs via maps, and the proliferation at

mediological perspective: she focuses on the interference of developments in transportation: road, railroad, bicycle, automobile, aeronautic; social organisations and institutional systems: inns, travel agencies, associations, publishing houses, camps, and cultural representations: travel guides, travelogues, itineraries, advertisements, media texts (Bertho Lavenir, 1999). Although not an "official" mediologist, Jean-Dider Urbain anthropologist follows a similar approach, and reveals an open attitude towards mediology from the time when his book was published in the early 1990s (Urbain, 2002a [1991]): cultural and media texts, sometimes literary fictional narratives and touristic practices are compared, while he also considers the historical development of mediatic representations and transportation, for example, in his analysis of beach holidays (Urbain, 2002b [1994]), trips gone wrong (2008), or the birth of the "summer Mediterranean" (Urbain, 2014).

However, the most important predecessors of the institutionalising geopolitical examination of media must be those analyses which discuss the globalisation, mondialisation, internationalisation and transnationalisation of media. The majority of media-geopolitical terms, for example, "deterritorialization," "cultural imperialism," or "media city" stem from these works. In the case of the third term, another tradition comes into play: the public sphere, the new communications technology, and urban studies (further details to this: Szijártó, 2010). All in all, media geopolitics dwells on a wide range of traditions, from the German transcultural communications and media research, combining the perspective of British cultural studies with an emphasis on matters of interculturality (Hepp & Löffelholz, 2002; Hepp, 2006), to studies offering a combination of media criticism and the experience of processes of globalisation. Armand Mattelart's books belong to the latter group, which were published first in French or Spanish, but were later translated into multiple languages. Mattelart, consistently publishing from the 1960s, is among the most widely cited Francophone author in media studies, and this is equally true of his writings on media geopolitics. (An excellent overview of his life and works is provided by Mattelart, 2010.)

A comprehensive overview of media geopolitics as an independent discipline, and its vast range of topics is provided

commercial television channels on the European market, among others. Simultaneously, television, understood as the symbol, an integrative force and the representative of the nation as a community, became - at least in part - a formative power of nation itself, conceived in transnational capitalism as a "marketing space". (It must be noted here that in the case of cultural products, not only the nation state, but the cultural nation can also become a "marketing space". This is revealed by the popularity of Hungarian tabloid media in the Carpathian Mountains, notwithstanding borders.) It is also remarkable that the author does not stop here, but in the closing parts of his essay, he calls attention to questions like "the deterritorialised", "the diasporic reception" and "postnationalism", thus his arguments are open to further deliberation from the perspective of 2010s hypertelevisualisation and media convergence conditions (Bourdon, 2003:59-91).

The precedents of the historical-geographical approach utilised by media geopolitics are primarily located in those media histories which connect technological, economical, political and cultural processes and thus occasionally represent the history of mediatic communication together with the developments of "physical communication", that is, the history of traffic (Briggs & Burke, 2002; Barbier & Bertho Lavenir 1996). The same linking is also present in some older and some more recent media theories which were accused of "technological determinism", particularly in mediology, which simultaneously examines the complex systems of transmission and traffic (Debray 1991, 1992, 1994, 2000). (Furthermore, the founding father of mediology, Régis Debray, has shown an interest in international relations for decades, and became an agent in them during his adventurous life, particularly in the sixties as a guerrilla, then in the eighties as an official adviser for the government.) The mediological approach has exerted a great influence since the 1990s among the Francophone representatives of communication and media studies, and it even contributed to contemporary tourism studies with its focus on processes of cultural transmission, which provided models for the relation between spatial organisation and the media. Catherine Bertho Lavenir, also known for her work on media history, in her path-breaking work gave an account of the birth and the historical development of modern tourism from a

by Philippe Boulanger's handbook from 2014. Inspired by this panorama, utilising the terminology proposed by the author, I call attention to potential subjects for interpretation and inquiry from a media geopolitical perspective in relation to the complex set of questions and problems within the comics media. The more specific focus of my paper is the shift in emphasis and the question of media cities.

Centres and peripheries - shifting biases in the world?

Geopolitics expert Philippe Boulanger identifies three centres of gravity (centre de gravité) in his inquiry into the chronological development of media technologies, institutions and cultures, concerning the spatial progress of communication technologies and uses. From the middle ages to the early twentieth century, the heyday of a European centre, the North-American centre prevailing in the twentieth century and in certain areas (like on the internet) still dominant today, and a newly emerging Eastern-Pacific condensation (Boulanger, 2014:33-57; represented on comprehensive maps on page 34). Immense data sets demonstrate that the emergence of such centres are dependent on multiple factors: scientific and technological innovation, increasing demographical weight, and different economical, social and political circumstances. In the case of Europe, the rise of capitalisation and colonisation facilitated the networking of media, and the internationalisation on the colonies.

In connection with the North-American media centre, Philippe Boulanger (focusing on the advertising industry and multiplex film distribution) suggests that its birth was fuelled by the prominent role of the freedom of speech and the consumer culture driven by liberal capitalism. While in the case of Asia, neither the economic growth of recent decades, nor the affinity between current media and traditional written cultures can be neglected (it is no coincidence that eight out of the best-selling newspapers are Asian - Boulanger, 2014:54).

Similar centres can be identified in the realm of comics, whose focal points seem to align with the contours of media at large: with some generalisation, European comics, North-American comics and Asian manga can be distinguished. Of

course, demographical factors also shape the opportunities of the comics market, and technological developments also play a significant role. For example, the invention of European (proto-)comics by Rodolphe Töpffer went hand in hand with the spread of autographic lithography, a new print technology (Gaudreault & Marion, 2000; Odaert & Tilleuil, 2011). The demographic growth and the proliferation of literacy certainly played a role in the success of satirical journals (or humour magazines) in the nineteenth-century European, and after the turn of the century, in the American newspapers, which provided space for comics, while today, it is facilitating the institutionalisation of Sub-Saharan African comics culture. (For more details about this, see for example: Cassiau-Haurie, 2013).

Nonetheless, what we have seen in the last two centuries cannot be simply described as a shift or movement of centres. The intersection between the tradition of nineteenth-century (proto-)comic characterised by the work of Rodolphe Töpffer, Wilhelm Busch, Nadar, Caran d'Ache, Christophe, and the North-American press of excessive print-runs gave birth to comics culture understood as a journalistic genre, its start usually reckoned from Richard Felton Outcault's *Yellow Kid*. The first comic strips were created by Rudolph Dirks, who was influenced by the work of the German Wilhelm Busch (Dirks himself has emigrated from Germany with his parents at the age of seven), and the work of the first great American classic, Winsor McCay (for example, *Little Nemo in Slumberland*) also show the influence of European (proto-)comics. Later Disney comics and superhero comics played a huge role in the formation of the Francophone bande dessinée (for example, *Tintin*, *Spirou*, later *Asterix*, *Lucky Luke*, *Titeuf*), and the Japanese manga tradition (Osamu Tezuka's works), in a curious "anxiety of influence" nexus. Equally, Francophone, and more recently Japanese tradition also exerts an influence back on the American line. The former is most apparent in underground comics and graphic novel (Will Eisner, Art Spiegelman), whereas graphic novel is also reinforced through North-American models in Francophone territories (for example in Marjane Satrapi's and Riad Sattouf's comics). Benjamin Reiss's 2009 *TokyoLand* (and its new version, *SupertokyoLand* from 2015) is a French autobiographical graphic novel published in France, which also became an award-winning manga at the

could also be conceived of as a "reterritorialization", a spatial kind of reorganisation). The translocal communities organised predominantly via the internet contributed to the popularisation of certain genres (e.g., the Japanese yaoi) and cultural variants (e.g., the Francophone African comics), while the different phases of production are also taking place in various locations. As a consequence, Hungarian authors could also enter the mainstream of world comics production: Attila Futaki, working for *New York Times*, Roland Pilcz, doing colouring work for an American enterprise from Szeged, or Judit Tondora, who works for American and Australian publishers, to name but a few.

There are arguments for the discussion of media cultures and markets, as well as the centres of comics world production according to nation states. Some of these arguments are the unity of media regulation, the way the media market adapts to this, the use of one or more official languages, and the homogenising effect of an educational system organised on the level of the nation state. On the other hand, the production of media, and, more specifically, comics, as well as its impact frequently transgresses national borders. This applies to Hungary, particularly with respect to manga and comics, while the term *bande dessinée* establishes two nation states already with its name. Belgium is a unique case for several reasons. Probably this is where - outside Japan - the institutionalisation of comics culture was the most diverse, but the process shows significant differences within the French and the Flemish linguistic communities, precisely in international and intercultural matters. During the revival of comics after World War II., Flemish comics was primarily intended for the audience in Flanders, and preserved its local cultural references even when the Francophone Belgian *bande dessinée*, in a bid to open up to a larger, mostly French market was trying to avoid them. The respective comics cultures of the two linguistic communities are marked by different mediums, subjects, characters, genres and mediatic arrangements, the Flemish being more of a journalistic genre often promoting female protagonists, while the French school prefers the hardcover book format, and has for a long time been rather male-centred. As far as the French *bande dessinée* is concerned, part of a region which was from a (media) geopolitical perspective semi-peripheral (Brussels and Wallonia) became a centre with

Japanese comics contest organised by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, the blending of the three major geographical-cultural variations and comics traditions can be observed in significantly earlier examples. In the early twentieth century, during the rise of American comics, Verbeek (Gustave Verbeek), who was of Belgian origins, grew up in Nagasaki, studied in Paris, and later emigrated to the United States of America, published his work using upside down technique (the narration demands the rotation of the paper during reading) in the supplements of *New York Herald* between 1903 and 1905, and his works reflect oriental and European influences within a North-American mediated context (Molteni, 2005:102-111).

While thinking in terms of three centres and three major geographical-cultural variations is quite characteristic in comics studies, one should not forget about comics cultures and markets outside of the French-Belgian, US, and Japanese group (among others, the Italian, Korean, Spanish, German, Scandinavian and South Slavic traditions are also significant). Some of these can clearly be regarded as the result of an internationalisation (for example, in the case of Malawi, former Belgian Congo, and Kenya - Cassiau-Haurie, 2010) or hybridisation (there are a number of south-east Asian examples, like comics in Hong Kong and Vietnam, whereas German manga is a European example of the same) evolving from a colonial background, but there are exceptions, too. For example, the Hungarian adaptation-based comics culture and market of the Kádár era is clearly something unique. Besides, the three major versions are not individually homogenous, and they show huge differences in terms of genres, mediums and media-economical models (Guilbert, 2012).

The transcultural trends of globalisation effected a change in the typical genres and mediums in certain traditional cultures and markets: since the beginning of the new millennium, France has grown into the second largest market of manga (after Japan), and the reinvention of Hungarian comics also seems to be fuelled by the oriental type of comics (this will be discussed in more details later, in connection with soft power). The spatial organisation of comics production and consumption also found new ways which could be described, with some inaccuracy, as a process of "detrterritorialization" (but then it

The exhibition is also important because it provides an account of artists who live outside of the world's major comics-publishing centres like Japan, North-America, Belgium, France, not even in Italy, the probably nearest centre of the "comics industry", which is also closely connected to the Francophone market, and their work can be regarded as "independent" (or at least "semi-independent") from the shifts of the media market. Building a spatial network is clearly one of the intentions of this project. And this is no coincidence, as the most exciting innovations often take place in the alternative cultural networks which the exhibition tries to put into spotlight, with the aim of connecting them as well. It seems that the organisers of *comixconnection* saw an opportunity in the different comics-based mediums, as they provide various examples from the comics museum of Bucharest to the street comics of Ljubljana.

During the tour, the organisers tried to draw the attention of the artists, critics and audience coming from different traditions of comics and from different media cultures to each others' work and cultural achievements, even if they are already open towards the Western European, North American and more recently Far Eastern regions. Members of the audience could even contribute to the exhibition in different cities, forming a "dialogue" through their own drawings.

The *comixconnection* exhibition featuring contemporary work might also help us in our reassessment of the individual countries' comics history from the perspective of the mutual present generated within this network. It seems that despite many differences - like the longer North-American influence and the more diversified reception of Western European influences in the Balkan region, or the unique situation of historical and sci-fi genres in Romanian comics history, the domination of adaptation for more than three decades within Hungarian comics culture, or the importance of manga in contemporary Hungarian popular media culture - there are striking similarities as well. Proto-comics in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century, North American influence, captioned narratives in the interwar period (with the text often in verse in both Hungarian and Romanian), prohibition and strict control in the end of the forties, beginning of the fifties, the influence of *bande dessinée* in all the regions, and the emergence of the cultural stratification of contemporary comics, and the novel

publishing houses founded around major press enterprises, and journals connected to them, canonical genres and styles. In the 1950s, 1960s, thus, Belgium became a comics "Eldorado", reflected by the high number of foreign artists: among others, the Swiss Derib (Claude de Ribapierre), the Italian Dino Attanasio, the French Tibet (Gilbert Gascard) and Jean Graton could be mentioned (Lefèvre, 2000).

A reevaluation of centre-periphery relations is encouraged by the travelling exhibition *comixconnection* - *strip*, *bandă desenată*, *strip*, *képregény*, *стрип*, organised and fine-tuned by a member of the Museum of European Cultures in Berlin, Beate Wild, and the participation at this event itself shaped these relations. As the full title of the exhibition suggests, this was an exhibition with multilingual material. More than fifty artists were on display here between June 2013 and October 2015, in a region spanning from Sarajevo in the south to Budapest in the north, and from Bucharest in the east to Pula in the west. The exhibition was re-adjusted for each exhibition space, with changing emphases and different support programmes. In Hungary, besides the capital, the exhibition was also on display in Pécs in the spring of 2014, coming from Cluj-Napoca. On the map on the *comixconnection* website, there are no national borders, and only the cities are marked within an unnamed region that could be regarded as south-eastern European (but one must be careful with the wording, as it is a question of perspective).

The multilingual nature of the exhibition and the support material is remarkable,² revealing how the organisers try preserve the linguistic and cultural differences which are characteristic of the individual comics traditions of these countries and linguistic communities. Whether we approach it from the perspective of "countries as nation state" or that of "linguistic-cultural communities as nations", *comixconnection* is a transcultural and translational project crossing borders. The project itself represents dynamism, formation, process, change, interaction, and only offers a temporal stability of positions, therefore, the "trans-" prefix seems to be more justified than the "inter-" (Jablonczay, 2015).

² The website, for example, is available in eight languages: comixconnection.eu.

According to the broader sense of the term, media cities are administrative areas functioning as cities or metropolises even if their population does not warrant the status of a genuine metropolis. On one hand, they show a concentration in terms of production: just like media cities in the narrower sense, they often host media, IT and marketing companies, but they are also intellectual and cultural centres. Sites of development and experimentation are also connected to their status as preferred destinations of migration, and their media economics and media culture exploit the migration processes of globalisation, the concentration of highly qualified professionals. This is further supported by the presence of universities and training facilities of the highest standards. Such institutions are not only important for the training of experts but the informal networks developing among them are also significant. The culturally diverse environment and the transcultural experience which can be acquired here is inspiring for content creators and audiences, media users as well. In his works concerning global media cities, Andreas Hepp sticks to this broader sense of the term "media city" (Hepp, 2006:165-177). His book suggests that the majority of the global media cities of the new millennium are almost exclusively European or North-American, with a few notable exceptions like Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Melbourne, Sidney, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, and Mexico City. Remarkably, in a study relying on ten years older data, Philippe Boulanger (2014) suggested that media cities are more characteristic outside the North-Atlantic world.

Without exaggeration some of the global media cities are also comics cities. Partly because they feature an advanced level of institutionalisation and spatial concentration of the comics form, partly because they illustrate the diversity of local comics culture, and the power of the medium to shape collective identity. Thinking of *bande dessinée*, Paris no doubt belongs to this category, but some of the traits of global media cities can be observed in Brussels and Geneva as well. An encyclopaedia of comics from 2005 contained contact information for one hundred and thirty-six important Francophone publishing houses (Moliteri et al., 2004:1761-1768). Forty-seven of these are based in Paris (and a few others in the vicinity of Paris), fourteen in Brussels, and only four in Geneva. Paris and Brussels are not only centres of comics publishing, but with the

impact of the transcultural trends of globalisation (Cf. Kertész, 2007; Moliteri, Mellot, Turpin, Denni & Michel-Szelechowska, 2004:243-246; pp. 364-369; pp. 375-383; Nița & Ciubotariu, 2010). Composing a history of the differing media systems of the region, and a historical and transcultural comparison of comics publication would be profitable for Hungarian media history because it could clear the path for the history (histories) of not only comics in Hungary but comics in the Hungarian language as well.

Media cities - comics cities?

As far as media is concerned, the "cross-borderness," the translocal organisation, the "deterritorialization", the networked nature, and the transcultural trends and processes of cultural hybridisation do not exclude spatial concentrations reflecting certain preferences in terms of power, economics and culture. Research related to the transcultural trends of globalisation and the geopolitical approach to media both address this phenomena, which they refer to as media cities. The term "media city" is conventionally used in two different but interrelated senses.

The narrower sense is used to describe administrative areas or parts of such areas which are specialised in media production and activities related to media economics (Boulanger, 2014: 70-74). In the western world, such places traditionally emerged within the film industry, while in the twenty-first century, a process of clustering resulted in an economical and spatial concentration that gave rise to media cities. The appearance of such new areas was particularly characteristic in Asia, where such places saw a simultaneous concentration of media, IT, and telecommunication companies. One such geopolitically significant media city was created in the United Arab Emirates under the label Dubai Media City. More than 1300 companies involved in conventional or new media operate here in the same place. Dubai Media City tries to fill the role of a centre for media economics in the Gulf Area, similar to the role Hongkong plays in South-East Asia and the Chinese world (Boulanger, 2014:70-71).

Kinshasa, and Yaoundé), as a comics dictionary published more recently shows (Cassiau-Haurie, 2013).

It seems that a geopolitical approach to media is beneficial in connection with the comics medium as well. Even if certain previous generalisations regarding media geopolitics can only be partially applied to the comics medium – like the shift of media historical emphases.

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numerous specialised bookshops, they are also centres of distribution. Besides publishing houses and shops, Brussels is also eligible for the label "comics cities" due to its comics museum and archive (Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée, for more details see: Dierick, 2000), its comics murals, the unique graphical style of the Brussels School, and the concentration of comics experts (Maksa, 2010:66-87). Geneva can be regarded as another comics city because of its public collections, the comics culture intertwining the daily life of its citizens (the tradition of the comics poster usually traced back to Geneva, comics-based communication campaigns), and again, the intense presence of comics experts (Maksa, 2010:90-110).

Some smaller towns would also be marked on an imaginary map of Francophone comics, even though they are far from becoming global media cities, and their identity as "comics city" is closer to the narrower meaning of media city. A small town in the West of France, Angoulême hosts the prominent Francophone comics festival, and as part of the Cité internationale de la bande dessinée et de l'image, the town also houses a major collection of the French comics museum. The city of Grenoble (population 160,000) is the seat of the pioneer and prominent player of French manga publication, the Glénat publishing house, which is also the owner of the most popular contemporary series, the *Titeuf*, which sometimes reaches print runs of one and a half million copies. The headquarters of the Belgian Dupuis publishing house resides in a suburb of Charleroi, Marcinelle. Dupuis, Charleroi, and Marcinelle are associated with popular series printed in hundreds of thousands of copies, the oldest serial comics weekly, the *Spirou* magazine, and a popular comics drawing style. Another small town in Wallonia, Louvain-la-Neuve also shows some signs of comics cities. As a university city, not only is it one of the centres of comics research, but it also hosts different events, and the Musée Hergé devoted to the creator of *Tintin* and other series also make it an important site of European comics. The comics encyclopaedia from 2005 mentioned above feature only three African Francophone festivals and one major publishing house (Moliterni et al., 2004; the only publishing place on the authors' imaginary map is Abidjan), the institutionalisation of comics in recent years directs attention to other African cities as well (like

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