THE NEGLECTED SIDE OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE: THE ROLE OF LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS IN MAKING IT HAPPEN (SUMMARY)

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SUMMARY

THE NEGLECTED SIDE OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE: THE ROLE OF LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS IN MAKING IT HAPPEN

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Principal Topic

In recent years there has been a growing awareness that industries such as music, film, media and design are important economic contributors to OECD economies. With this there has being increasing interests amongst both academics and policy makers in the cultural industries. Creative industries have been at the centre of the so called convergence. Effect of convergence have been the blurring of boundaries between different media sectors and the emergence of new sectors. Convergence implies the emergence of common interests among different players along the value chain: media content providers, content aggregators, technology providers, distributors. Among practioners, academics and general public, convergence evokes a global game played by multinational companies: the common association is with the growth of conglomerates. Research on media convergence has neglected a fundamental link, the local actors. The local roots of network industries are critical in the emergence and exploration of common interests: local embeddedness (Taylor, 2005; Storper, 1997; Maskell et al., 1998; Amin and Thrift, 1997) is the background where convergence can be explored. The purpose of this paper is to point out the relevance of localization advantages in the emergence of new sectors, in particular in media industries, and to explore the process of network development in the raise of new sectors’ firms, that change the value chain configuration.

Method

An empirical study on media industries in Italy has been conducted. Media industries are analyzed because of their very dynamic recent evolution, due mainly to technological reasons. Italy is chosen as geographical area because of our close access to local entrepreneurs. A descriptive analysis of quantitative data is conducted to map the geography of media industries in Italy. Different territorial configurations emerge. In particular Milan emerges as an area of agglomeration of all the media sectors considered and therefore worth it to study with respect to the development of convergence and new industries. A qualitative study is conducted in order to understand local dynamics of start up and growth of new media industries’ companies. Interviews are conducted to different actors along the value chain: content providers, content aggregators, intermediate and final distributors.

Results and Implications

This is an exploratory study to identify some of the key factors in the emergence of new industries, in particular in the evolution of the relationships between old and new actors and in the geographic distribution of operators. Further research is suggested on the role of local entrepreneurship in the emergence of new industries. Implications for companies and policy makers are presented suggesting to take in serious consideration the geography of an industry development.

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