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Playing Spotify's game: artists' approaches to playlisting in Latin America

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines recent transformations in music industries associated with platformization by privileging the perspectives, experiences, and voices of artists. We draw on in-depth interviews with 41 musicians based in two Latin American countries: Costa Rica and Mexico. We analyze how artists perceive the "power" and limitations of playlists, how they think playlists are transforming music industries, and how they associate various forms of pressure with this process. We then show that artists' perceptions about these issues are not uniform but rather variable by discussing three logics that shape the meaning they attribute to Spotify and playlists: dominant, oppositional, and negotiated. Finally, the paper explains the factors that account for why musicians in these countries espouse these logics in different ways. The conclusion argues for considering platformization as more than a purely technological process that needs to be situated within the wider national histories and cultural configurations of the music industries.

After a steep decline in the first fifteen years of the twenty-first century, the music industry revenues grew more than 40% in the second half of the 2010s decade (Hesmondhalgh 2020). This growth resulted in large part from the popularization of music streaming services in various parts of the world. Over the past decade, Spotify has come to dominate the global streaming music subscription market. By 2021, Spotify had a market share of 31% [twice as much as its nearest competitor, Apple Music (Silberling 2022)], and more than 406 million monthly active users around the world (Spotify, 2022).

In this paper, we analyze how musicians have experienced recent transformations in music industries associated with streaming platforms. Studies on the perspectives of musicians about these platforms have been relatively rare and, for the most part, have been conducted in the Global North (Mühlbach and Arora 2020; Prey 2020a). We supplement this body of work by analyzing how 41 musicians based in two Latin American countries account for the rise of Spotify and the centrality of playlists. This region represents approximately 22% of Spotify's total number of active users (Spotify 2022). Spotify has built a reputation in consumer engagement management by employing strategies such as personalizing a "Wrapped List" of users' annual music consumption trends. As part of these strategies, the company has consistently conveyed the notion that special attention is given to consumer behavior in Latin America and that any initiative launched in the region often "[surpasses] all expectations" (Spotify 2021a). These engagement strategies typically

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essentialize Latin American Spotify users as "diverse and music-savvy" individuals who are intrinsically predisposed to use platforms (Spotify 2021a).

Costa Rica and Mexico constitute fruitful research cases for making sense of these issues in the region. Spotify launched in these two countries in 2014 and 2013, respectively, and has grown exponentially since. Within two years of its launch, Mexico was already among Spotify's three biggest country markets (Pineda and Morales 2015). Given the number of both users and artists in the city, Spotify representatives often refer to Mexico City as the "streaming capital of the world" (Nicolau 2019). They also consistently showcase Mexico as the success model they would like to reproduce in the rest of the world. Moreover, because of the centrality of music in national history and identity, as well as its diversity of styles and genres, Mexican artists have had relatively large audiences both inside and outside the country (Sturman 2015).

Whereas Mexico provides a privileged entry point into major reconfigurations in a key hub of the music industry in Latin America, Costa Rica offers an opportunity to consider the experiences of musicians from smaller but more typical markets in the region. Given the size of its population and music market, there are few opportunities for Costa Rican artists to make a living based on their music production. Over the past decades, many Costa Rican artists have tried to establish themselves in Mexico to launch their careers. This scenario creates fertile grounds for the adoption of technologies such as music streaming platforms, often advertised as an ideal instrument of "the democratization of music" (Spotify 2021b). Moreover, Costa Ricans tend to listen to relatively fewer local than foreign artists, which complicates expectations from uploading music to platforms such as Spotify (Spotify 2021c). By comparing a key regional hub and a smaller market, we hope that the insights generated from this study can help understand cases in other parts of the world.

We begin by examining artists' perceptions of the "power" and limitations of playlists. We discuss how musicians think playlists are transforming music industries but also how they associate various forms of pressure with this process. We then show that artists' perceptions about these issues are not uniform but rather variable. We analyze three logics that shape the meaning that musicians in these countries attribute to Spotify and the significance of playlisting. Drawing on Hall (1980), we refer to these logics as dominant, oppositional, and negotiated. Finally, we explain three factors that account for why musicians in Costa Rica and Mexico espouse these logics in certain ways: professional aspirations, knowledge of the platform, and network of ties. The conclusion argues for considering platformization(s) as more than a purely technological process that needs to be situated within wider music industries at the national level.

Theoretical considerations

Power, platforms, and playlists

Scholars have interpreted recent transformations in music industries as an instance of "platformization". This concept points to institutional changes associated with the centrality of platforms in multiple domains of activity. Nieborg and Poell (2018) define platformization as "the penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web and app ecosystems, fundamentally affecting the operations of the cultural industries" (4276). To make sense of this process, authors have analyzed the technological "logics" of platforms and the strategies through which companies come to "govern" and "exercise control" over cultural production, distribution, and monetization (Nieborg and Poell 2018, 4281). Rather than an "all-encompassing logic", scholars have argued that platformization varies across both industry segments and geographic regions (Poell, Nieborg, and Duffy 2022, 13).

According to these authors, establishing platforms as intermediaries in cultural production and consumption has been a key in creating multi-sided markets (Langley and Leyshon 2017). For Prey (2020b), Spotify has achieved this through "curatorial power", that is, "the capacity to advance [its] interests, and affect the interests of others, through the organizing and programming of content"

(3). Bonini and Gandini ([2019](#)) speak of an "algotorial logic" or the intertwinement of platform affordances, algorithms, and human agency in the curation of music that operates as an agenda-setting power in public opinion. Spotify's most pressing challenge is to maintain this intermediary role by keeping listeners, musicians, record labels, advertisers, investors, and brands enrolled and aligned with its plans and initiatives (Langley and Leyshon [2017](#); Prey [2020b](#)). Spotify has to accomplish this goal amid growing controversies about its system of reward for musicians (based on "per-stream" rates) and the dominance of major record companies in the platform's number of streams. As Hesmondhalgh ([2020](#)) notes, while the current system has meant that more artists can earn money from music than in the past, important inequalities and precarious working conditions persist in the industry.

Spotify's "curatorial" or "algotorial" power is perhaps nowhere clearer than in the rise of playlists as a privileged format to consume music. Spotify has been heavily promoting its algorithmic and editorial playlists since the beginning of the 2010s decade. In addition to their importance in attracting users, playlists help Spotify obtain important advertising revenues (Eriksson [2020](#)). Spotify's playlists are typically characterized by their attempt to establish a utilitarian relationship with music; the promotion of moods and emotions as the main way to experience music; the eradication of negative feelings; the reliance on stereotypical gender relations (that posit men as music producers and women as consumers); and the enactment of a "hipster" or "millennial" sensibility targeted at middle classes (Siles et al. [2019](#); Eriksson et al. [2019](#)). Platform-curated playlists are also malleable and modular in the sense that they can be remade constantly to fit specific contexts or user profiles.

Artists and the logics of cultural "decoding"

To supplement institutional analyses of industry transformations, researchers have also focused on the practices and experiences of cultural producers. These studies show that platformization dynamics are not unilateral but are the object of constant tensions. Authors have theorized these tensions as a process of cultural "optimization", that is, how cultural producers engage in "strategic preparation and readying of cultural goods to orient them toward […] circulation, discovery, and use on particular platforms" (Morris [2020](#), 4). In the case of music, Morris and colleagues (2021, [2021](#)) argue that optimization involves tactics to both alter the features of music and adjust the settings of platforms to make songs more discoverable and visible.

Despite their centrality for the music streaming industry, how artists perceive and understand issues such as "curatorial power" and playlisting remains largely understudied. There have been only a few empirical studies of how musicians experience the rise of music streaming services. Some have focused on the labor demands created by platformization. Mühlbach and Arora ([2020](#)) examined how musicians in Germany felt a pressure to devote more time and energy to non-creative tasks (including handling social media) than to artistic endeavors. A growing body of work has also focused on the significance of metrics in the practices and self-worth of musicians (Prey [2020a](#)). These authors have shown how music workers strategically deal with the ambiguity of platform metrics to make decisions about resource allocation, strategic planning, and persuasion of others about investments (Baym [2013](#); Baym et al. [2021](#)).

To further understand musicians' perspectives on playlists, we argue for situating platformization within wider industries at the national level. This is consistent with Hesmondhalgh's ([2020](#)) recent call for a systemic approach that envisions music streaming services "as embedded in a wider system of cultural production and consumption […] and cultural labour" (10), rather than a purely technological issue (as the term "platformization" might suggest). As with other institutional fields, music industries are encoded in logics or underlying orders of meaning that structure a set of ideas into coherent thought forms. Logics thus express the values, individual and collective identities, and assumptions of actors in a given field.

We draw on work on cultural practices of "decoding" to argue that musicians can espouse different logics to make sense of playlisting in each country. Hall's ([1980](#)) encoding/decoding approach is a fruitful framework for our analytical purposes because of the flexibility it affords to understand

"how [people] in different societies and of different cultures [make] sense of imported texts crafted in a different cultural environment" and how issues of cultural production can "be addressed not only to the institutional dimensions of the process, but also to different national […] decodings" (Gurevitch and Scannell 2003, 245).

According to Hall, a *dominant* logic accepts the premises of a discourse and the frame of reference in which it has been produced. Alternatively, an *oppositional* logic "detotalizes [a] message in the preferred code in order to retotalize [it] within some alternative framework of reference" (Hall 1980, 138). Finally, a *negotiated* logic accepts the premises of the discourse but makes some exceptions to it and adapts it to make it fit in certain "local conditions" (Hall 1980, 137).

Research design

Between 2020 and 2021, we interviewed 41 musicians for the purpose of this study (21 in Costa Rica and 20 in Mexico; see Table 1 for more details on the participants). We interviewed primarily singer-songwriters with different trajectories, music genres, presence on Spotify, and resources. The final sample included some artists with hundreds or thousands of monthly streams and others with several millions. (We turned this metric and others into a topic of conversation rather than a natural way to assess their careers.) While most artists interviewed were independent, they received varying levels of support: some worked with labels, digital distribution companies, and managers to promote their music on the platform, while others did it entirely by themselves.

Interviewees were also diverse in the kinds of music they created. Their music included genres that could be labeled as pop and rock, but also included *bolero*, punk, *ranchera*, and others. Most belonged to what we might call an alternative Latin scene, one that struggles to retain visibility in a Latin American market heavily concentrated on *urbano* music (e.g. reggaeton, Latin trap, etc.). Although some interviewees were newcomers, others have already reached important milestones, such as Grammy nominations and international awards. Similarly, whereas some made a living entirely based on their music (e.g. performing and streaming revenue), others had jobs that were closely or loosely related to their musical careers (e.g. as music engineers or producers, teaching music, advertising, etc.), and which were their primary sources of income.

To contact artists, we turned to "trusted brokers" (Bonini and Gandini 2020, 5), personal acquaintances with multiple connections who agreed to ask musicians in both countries to participate in our research. Interviews centered on three main issues: personal and professional trajectories; experiences with and approaches to dealing with various music streaming platforms; and main practices with social media platforms. Interviews lasted for an average of 66 min. We conducted two in-person interviews before March 2020 but turned to Zoom once social distancing measures were implemented in both countries because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recorded conversations upon approval and transcribed them in their entirety. We respected interviewees' preferences regarding quote attribution: we withhold the identity of interviewees who preferred not to reveal their names or have their names associated with specific quotes and cite real names for those who opted to waive anonymity. (All interviews were conducted in Spanish. Translations are our own.)

We combined rounds of individual and collective coding of the interviews to foster investigator triangulation. In the first coding stage, we focused on identifying the myriad ways in which musicians understood transformations in their practices and industries that were tied to streaming platforms and playlists. This round was conducted individually by members of the research team. During a second round of coding, we collectively worked to build larger categories based on patterns of similarity and difference in the responses given by interviewees. We also began establishing relations between these categories and extant research on platformization. Finally, during the third round of coding we employed Hall's decoding framework to organize the categories and patterns in the data. We also accounted for why musicians in both countries adopted these logics in different ways.

Table 1. Description of musicians interviewed.

Interviewee	Country	Artist name	Band or soloist	Music genre	Label status	Year of first release on Spotify
Javier Arce	Costa Rica	Cocofunka	Band	Fusion of rock, reggae, funk, and Latin rhythms	Unsigned	2010
Diego Cordero	Costa Rica	Dylan Thomas	Band	Indie rock	Unsigned	2017
Álvaro Díaz	Costa Rica	Rombos	Band	Alternative Dance	Unsigned	2018
Charly Fariseo	Costa Rica	Rombos	Band	Alternative Dance	Unsigned	2018
Diego Frutos	Costa Rica	Siluetas Amarte	Band	Rock	Unsigned	2019
Eva González	Costa Rica	Canina	Soloist	Latin pop	Unsigned	2020
Luigi Jiménez	Costa Rica	Patterns	Band	Tropical disco	Unsigned	2013
Fede Miranda	Costa Rica	Gandhi	Band	Rock	Unsigned (signed in the past)	1997
Debi Nova	Costa Rica	Debi Nova	Soloist	Singer-songwriter, Latin, Pop	Signed (major label)	2010
Esteban Ocampo	Costa Rica	Sofá Kids	Band	Alternative pop	Unsigned	2019
Daniel Ortuño	Costa Rica	Los Waldners	Band	Guitar pop	Unsigned	2014
Arturo Pardo	Costa Rica	Arturo Pardo	Band	Singer-songwriter	Unsigned	2012
Esteban Rodríguez	Costa Rica	Seka	Band	Punk	Unsigned	2000
Sebastián Suñol	Costa Rica	Magpie Jay	Band	Rock	Unsigned	2015
Leonardo Valverde	Costa Rica	424	Band	Rock	Unsigned	2010
Ricardo Vargas	Costa Rica	Felino Taurino	Band	Synth-pop with Latin and urban rhythms	Unsigned	2018
Fabrizio Walker	Costa Rica	Fabrizio Walker	Soloist	Singer-song writer	Unsigned	2011
David Aguilar	Mexico	El David Aguilar	Soloist	Singer-songwriter	Signed (major label)	2011
Memo Andrés	Mexico	Espumas y Terciopelo	Band	Pop folk	Unsigned	2014
Camía	Mexico	Carmen María	Soloist	Bohemian pop	Unsigned	2016
Sofía Campos	Mexico	Sofía Campos	Soloist	Singer-songwriter	Unsigned	2018
María Centeno	Mexico	La Isla Centeno	Band	Latin pop-folk	Unsigned	2018
Tatiana Ditilenko	Mexico	Ditilenko	Soloist	Pop	Unsigned	2016
Lito de la Isla	Mexico	Los Rumberos	Band	Rumba, pop, Latin rhythms	Unsigned	2015
Iván de la Rioja	Mexico	Daniel, Me Estás Matando	Band	Boleroglam	Unsigned	2018
Maricha Elizundia	Mexico	Espumas y Terciopelo	Band	Pop folk	Unsigned	2014
Karina Galicia	Mexico	Karina Galicia	Soloist	Singer-songwriter, Soul, Jazz	Unsigned	2018
Nora González	Mexico	Nora González	Soloist	Ranchera	Signed, indie label	2017
Gü	Mexico	Abraham GÜ	Soloist	Pop	Unsigned	2018
Jósean Log	Mexico	Jósean Log	Soloist	*Guapachoso* (cheerful) pop	Unsigned	2016
Paulina Parga	Mexico	Paulina Parga	Soloist	Singer-songwriter	Unsigned	2018
Pepe Portilla	Mexico	Pyo Portilla	Soloist	Mexican pop	Unsigned	2019
Gianna Sotera	Mexico	Gianna Sotera	Soloist	Indie pop rock	Unsigned	2019
Arturo Urbiola	Mexico	Urbiola	Soloist	Indie pop folk	Unsigned	2016
Daniel Zepeda	Mexico	Daniel, Me Estás Matando	Band	Boleroglam	Unsigned	2018

Note. This table excludes the information of five interviewees (two from Costa Rica and three from Mexico) who requested for their participation to be anonymous. The country refers to where artists were primarily promoting their music at the time of the interview (some in Mexico had relocated there from other Latin American countries). Some interviewees discussed their involvement in relation to more than one musical project, such as side bands or solo endeavors. Here we only provide information for the main project that was focused on during the interview. For the music genre, we offer terms that the artists themselves have used to describe their music either during the interview or in public-facing profiles (e.g. social media, Spotify profile, etc.). Note that some of the unsigned artists do in fact receive label services from their digital distribution company. As might be evident, the year of the oldest release does not necessarily correspond to the year when said release was actually made available on the platform; some releases precede the birth of Spotify and were included later on but nonetheless are archived based on the year of their official release.

Making sense of playlists

The "power" of playlists

Musicians in Costa Rica and Mexico emphasized the importance of Spotify more than any other platform in transforming music industries. It was common for interviewees to define Spotify as the "radio" of this era, by which they meant that it was the main way to reach audiences nowadays. One artist who lives in Mexico City and combines pop and electronic music summarized this view with precision: "[Spotify] has the power. It chooses who is going to be known and who is not". These words express a generalized conviction about the primacy of Spotify in allowing people to listen to music and convey a belief in a form of divine power capable of securing a career to whoever is "chosen" by the platform.

There was also general agreement among interviewees about the centrality of playlists in allowing Spotify to exercise its "power". Most musicians saw in playlists an opportunity to increase their revenues, gain exposure, receive invitations to events such as festivals, and further consolidate their careers. In both countries, interviewees turned to previous experiences to explain why they thought playlists were so "powerful". Esteban Ocampo, the vocalist of Costa Rican indie pop band *Sofá Kids*, explained: "Playlists have worked very well for us. What made us grow the most as a band was when we were featured in this *Novedades Indie* (New Indie Songs) playlist". Many interviewees quantified the growth in their number of streams as a direct result of inclusion in playlists. For Abraham GÜ, Mexican pop artist: "The truth is that algorithmic [playlists] have been good for me. *Release Radar* and *Discover Weekly* have helped my songs be heard five times more from one day to the next". This type of experience solidified the notion that audiences consumed music primarily through playlists and that the number of streams was a valid indicator to measure listening preferences.

Musicians typically differentiated between various kinds of playlists and assigned different degrees of importance to them. Most interviewees said they valued editorial playlists the most, that is, those curated and released by the platform (Bonini and Gandini 2019). Daniel Ortuño, who is a mechanical engineer and the guitarist of Costa Rican pop-rock band *Los Waldners*, explained: "The [key] term is 'gatekeepers' who have a certain position [in the industry]. If they put [songs] in their display window, it guarantees you more exposure". In this view, editorial playlists worked well because they connected key curators in the industry and listeners who trusted their selections.

But artists who were on editorial playlists at the time of interviews also underscored some of the inherent risks of becoming overly reliant on them. They noted that, although playlists could be helpful for boosting streams (and revenue) temporarily, they were not necessarily ideal for generating sustainable growth (i.e. new fans), since people can easily listen to playlists without knowing who they are listening to. In this view, having music that is overly dependent on Spotify's editorial playlists becomes susceptible to the whims of the editors, and is thus less self-reliant. Recalling a very successful song that his band had recently launched and had entered a very large pop playlist, Lito de la Isla, a musician, producer and member of Mexican duo *Los Rumberos*, expressed concern around the fact that "90% of the streams come from Spotify playlists. It's cool that the song has that many plays, but it's not cool that such a small percentage is coming from the artist's own catalog or from listeners' own playlists". He added that "the problem with this is that when the editor decides to pull your song from that playlist, your streams and your monthly listeners are going to plummet". Thus, an ideal for many interviewees was to strike a balance between Spotify's recommendations and organic growth in which people actively seek out their music.

Some artists (particularly those with a larger following on Spotify) preferred algorithmic over editorial playlists for making their music "go viral", as Daniel Zepeda, singer, drummer, and songwriter of Mexican duo *Daniel, Me Estás Matando*, put it. Zepeda perceived these playlists as more "organic" and "real", given his understanding that "the algorithm is based on what people are listening to"; that is, driven by the public rather than Spotify's gatekeepers. However, most

interviewees assigned significantly less importance to algorithmic selection than to human curation. This could be explained by the importance of musicians' own experience in grounding their assessments of which playlists worked better. Since editorial playlists appeared to be more accessible or easier to decipher than algorithmic playlists, many interviewees centered their efforts on the former. Moreover, as Bonini and Gandini (2019) show, the distinction between editorial and algorithmic playlists is somewhat artificial in that some decisions regarding songs in editorial playlists are supported by and automated through software. Spotify has also introduced a "hybrid" model that algorithmically personalizes some editorial playlists for users.

Interviewees also distinguished another kind of playlist, namely those created by either people or organizations. They associated these "personal" playlists with strategic advantages, such as linking their songs to certain causes, activities, moods, and music styles, in addition to favoring them algorithmically. Interviewees thus noted that they could benefit from the symbolic links created by sharing space within playlists with other specific artists.

The pressures of being playlisted

For interviewees, the "power" of playlists also implied a pressure towards optimization: they felt they needed to adopt certain practices to make their songs more apt for eligibility and discovery on platforms. Many artists noted that Spotify's focus on playlists had diminished the importance of albums and foregrounded singles. For Javier Arce, singer of Costa Rican band *Cocofunka*, after Spotify's arrival, the focus of songwriting shifted from album development to the creation of independent musical units targeted at playlist inclusion. Many artists also explained the great care with which they crafted their pitches to Spotify before each release, in an effort to make their songs more appealing for playlisting. Carmen María, a Mexican pop artist, elaborated on this phenomenon by providing an example: "There are people who have started releasing a song each week to land on a playlist. I have a friend who did this in 2018. It worked for him and now he's doing very well". In this perspective, releasing songs independently from each other multiplies the opportunities for playlist inclusion. Interviewees also felt the lifespan of singles had significantly shortened as a result of this dynamic. Some speculated that Spotify not only demanded them to constantly release new songs but also punished those who failed to meet this expectation, for instance, by excluding them from playlists in the future.

In a related manner, interviewees argued that playlists had changed issues of temporality in music creation and distribution. Artists in both countries mentioned two examples of these transformations. First are changes in dates when new music is released. Some interviewees said they had reorganized production schedules to favor playlist inclusion. Second, some musicians indicated they also had playlists in mind when writing songs. Artists in both Costa Rica and Mexico narrated instances when they decided to shorten songs mostly because they thought it would improve their chances of making it into a playlist. Recalling one such case, one interviewee in Mexico lamented that shortening a song also implied removing parts he thought were of quality but consoled himself with the idea that concerts would still offer him an opportunity to play the version he really wanted to record.

Interviewees also associated playlists with an emphasis on moods as the main form to experience music (Siles et al. 2019; Eriksson et al. 2019). While most interviewees denied writing music for specific playlists themselves, many believed the practice was common among their colleagues, consistent with a third-person effect. These interviewees alluded to the pressures of fitting music into pre-established categories created by Spotify to market playlists, which in large part revolve around moods. Making music amenable to playlists thus involves using Spotify's terms to frame songs. One way to achieve this is to write lyrics and melodies that seem appropriate for the moods and genres evoked by certain playlists. As one interviewee admitted, "Songwriting sessions are held to get a place on ¡*Viva Latino!*, the most important playlist on Spotify for Latin music". Other approaches involve creating names and pitches for songs that could be easily noticed by Spotify curators and

assigned to the platform's pre-established categories. As an interviewee in Mexico described it, this practice thus requires learning "to speak in [Spotify's] keywords". She provided an example when pitching a song for playlist consideration: "It's not about saying, 'I took inspiration because José Pérez broke up with me,' but rather 'This song is about love and punk'".

Another form of pressure came from a perceived obligation to work with–and often pay–intermediaries that could help get their songs included in playlists. There was a generalized belief among interviewees that having music selected for playlists required more than just supplying the information requested by the platform. Many artists argued it was almost indispensable to have "special contacts" in the industry who could influence Spotify curators. Interviewees referred to the role of digital distribution companies in this sense, some of which have expanded to include certain label services, such as taking responsibility for pitching songs, lobbying for their artists, and supporting the promotion of new releases. This perception is consistent with previous scholarship noting the rising importance of digital distributors in the music business, for instance, pre-selecting from thousands of weekly releases a handful of tracks to recommend for playlisting in representatives of streaming platforms (Sun 2019). Furthermore, certain distribution companies have their own technological infrastructures with more sophisticated tools (e.g. mechanisms to enable pre-saves) and their own playlists, some of which have a considerable following, offering an additional avenue for promoting their artists' work. One artist in Costa Rica explained the allure of choosing one such distributor:

> I [signed a contract with one] because someone explained to me [...] that if an aggregator [i.e. distributor] earns a percentage, it will be more motivated to promote your songs so that they are played on Spotify. The [distributor's] promise was to work more closely with editors at Apple, Spotify, and the like.

This musician also maintained that his distributor had failed to promote him when representatives found out he had uploaded music to Bandcamp. For a handful of artists–namely those with the highest number of streams on Spotify–working with these distributors proved beneficial, as they reaped the benefits of these services. However, most interviewees were quick to note that the promises made to them often failed to materialize. Many indicated they were disappointed in the lack of interest from intermediaries or explained that obtaining results took significant work to build a closer relationship with them. Furthermore, some complained about favoritism within their distribution company. For example, one artist in Mexico explained:

> In terms of pitching my music, which was one of the things they had committed to doing for us, eventually the guy [at the distributor] admitted: "If we want Spotify to pay attention to our important artists, we can't distract them with our small artists. If I have a meeting [with Spotify], am I going to talk to them about 30 artists? No! I'm going to talk about five and it isn't in our best interest to talk about you".

Finally, as noted in previous studies, access to statistics and data related to listeners' practices on Spotify creates another source of pressure. Many interviewees admitted to regularly checking metrics on their "Spotify for Artists" profiles (where they have access to data provided by the platform about the practices of listeners). A musician in Mexico noted:

> When [my song] was on the *Novedades Viernes* [playlist], it was great because I could see how many people were listening to me [and] how many playlists were including me. But when [the number of streams] starts to decrease, you feel you are losing listeners.

Metrics were at the core of interviewees' sense of artistic validation, and sometimes took an emotional toll (Prey 2020a). Interviewees explained that there was a pressure to increase the number of monthly listeners because metrics are key for receiving invitations to play in certain events and for guiding strategic decisions. Finding out where Spotify listeners were located helped interviewees decide where to play next and guide marketing and communications efforts.

Metrics also came to shape how artists conceptualized their audiences. When asking them about who listens to their music, many artists offered Spotify's demographic segments as descriptors. Debi Nova, a Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter based in Costa Rica and Los Angeles, said her music

was listened to by "mostly women between 18 and 35 years old". For some, this information was a source of concern, as in the case of Esteban Rodríguez, vocalist of Costa Rican punk-rock band *Seka*, who noted his audience was aging: "I'm worried because 44% [of listeners] are between 28 and 35". Thus, artists imagined their listeners largely in terms of the stats and market categories provided by Spotify.

Logics of playlisting

Artists' acknowledgement of the "power" of playlists does not mean they unproblematically or universally accepted it. Furthermore, not all musicians responded in the same manner to platformization issues. We identified three main logics that structured their ideas about playlists in both Costa Rica and Mexico: dominant, oppositional, and negotiated.

Dominant logic

One particular logic tends to relatively accept Spotify's promises surrounding the "democratization" of music. This acceptance stems more from a sense that platformization is inevitable or potentially beneficial for artists rather than belief in its legitimacy. For many interviewees, a dominant logic expressed a sense of resignation. These musicians assumed platformization as a given and focused on further understanding and exploiting Spotify's singularities to their advantage. The premise is that, either by playing Spotify's game or by gaming the system instead, artists can obtain important benefits they could not reach otherwise.

This logic has gained strength through the role of "institutional entrepreneurs", that is, actors with particular interests who leverage resources to transform certain industries (Garud, Hardy, and Maguire 2007). In the case of music markets, entrepreneurs often promote the virtues of Spotify and offer advice (and services) on how to improve artists' metrics and relationship with the platform.

Landing on Spotify's editorial playlists is one of the main goals of this logic. According to one interviewee in Costa Rica who has enjoyed relative success on the platform:

> The platform we're married to is Spotify. That's where our music "moves". This gets us lots of money, which allows us to keep our project going. We haven't been on any important Latin American playlist. That's what we're trying to do right now.

These words convey the sense of commitment some artists have to Spotify to develop their careers. They also demonstrate the belief that inclusion in Spotify's editorial playlists symbolizes artistic consolidation.

This logic promotes one kind of relationship with Spotify, that can be described as "cultivated closeness". María Centeno, who performs as a solo artist and as the main vocalist of Mexican alternative duo *La Isla Centeno*, explained: "What we have done the most is to *cultivate a good relationship* with digital platforms, especially with Spotify, because what helps us the most when we release a song is for the song to enter playlists" (emphasis added). Managing this kind of relationship with Spotify was also a factor in musicians' selection of labels and intermediaries. In the words of the Costa Rican musician who said his band was "married" to the platform: "Spotify is something like a label for us!" He explained that, despite having received some offers from labels, he would only consider signing a contract should they guarantee building a "good relationship" with Spotify.

How exactly Spotify operates is an enigma to practically every artist we interviewed. But the different logics handle this uncertainty in a distinct way. For a dominant logic, it is artists' obligation to learn as much as they can about Spotify. In other words, "cultivated closeness" with Spotify goes way beyond mere "presence" on the platform: artists need to learn how it works to succeed in a universe that gravitates around Spotify. Musicians engage in deliberate efforts to acquire the

knowledge that will help them develop a "good relationship" with the platform. This includes issues of communications, marketing, artistic management, and technology.

Obtaining this knowledge leads to a certain sense of empowerment. Artists not only learn the rules of the Spotify game through cultivating closeness but can also exploit them to their advantage. One musician we interviewed offered a telling illustration of how he developed one strategy to "game Spotify's algorithms", as he put it. This artist had created a song he was convinced would not be selected for playlists on Spotify because of its pessimistic tone. His strategy to circumvent this issue was to create his own personal playlist to feature this song, link it to other artists and sounds with whom he wanted to be associated, and use a popular meme at the time as the cover of the playlist. He described the results of this experiment thusly:

> To this day, it is my most listened to song, and I attribute it to this playlist that I made. My music became associated with more popular artists, which was more useful to me. It worked out very well and with a low budget [$70 invested in promoting it.]

Although this could be considered a tactic of cultural optimization, this artist considered it a "gaming" practice in that it sought to use the platform's algorithms to his advantage.

For many interviewees, adopting a dominant logic does not mean yielding power to Spotify. Instead, it was experienced as "liberating", offering them more control over their music and careers than they believed would have been possible in the past. Jósean Log, a singer-songwriter from Mexico who currently lives in Spain, noted: "I've had this project for 5 or 6 years, and I continue to work without a record label, without management. I have remained independent, insistently, on my own initiative". Jósean acknowledged his trajectory was "atypical" in many respects. Many others also expressed a sense of pride in how they had been able to manage their music projects without depending on labels or managers (which many associated with corrupt industry practices and exploitation), while still aspiring to–and in cases like Jósean's, actually achieving–commercial success. To the degree that playlists supported independent artists in their endeavors to grow their audiences on their own terms, they were thus considered "liberating" from the rules for success established by other industry actors.

Oppositional logic

In contrast to the dominant perspective, an oppositional logic is skeptical of platformization and its promises for musicians. The words of one interviewee in Costa Rica captured this sentiment with precision: "Platforms might be where the future is, but you don't always want to be a part of *that* future" (emphasis added). This opposition results in a disinterest in Spotify' playlists, rules, and workings. Rather than cultivating a close relationship with the platform, this logic is best characterized by the sense that artists need not do anything other than have their music available on Spotify. Although a minority, some artists even flirted with the idea of abandoning Spotify and uploading music to alternative platforms instead, such as Bandcamp, as a more favorable option, although this approach was also understood as very risky.

Several reasons underlie the logic of opposition. Interviewees in both countries offered artistic factors to explain their skepticism towards Spotify. In short, for some musicians, Spotify is a threat to the creative process. One interviewee in Mexico explained:

> Someone sent me a link the other day to a platform where you can invest some dollars and increase the possibilities that your song is selected for playlists and generates more numbers [streams]. But there's something artistic in me that says: "No! Stop! I want my art to be truly valued, to let things grow by themselves, to mature".

In this view, Spotify's focus on data and metrics is fundamentally at odds with the artistic project by privileging quantity over quality. The assumption is that the value of music should be a product of genuine interest rather than sponsored campaigns. In this logic, platformization externalizes artists' relationship with listeners and takes "away" from artists a fundamental part of their creations.

Some interviewees also asserted that Spotify's playlist promotion efforts purposefully hid a much more complicated scenario. Some argued that Spotify's promises about success through playlists were practically impossible to achieve. An interviewee in Costa Rica captured this idea when he noted: "Spotify's logic is that of slavery: you give something in exchange for nothing". For this person, playing the playlist game was an endless cycle designed mostly to preserve Spotify's "curatorial power" but not in the interest of artists.

More broadly, an oppositional logic emphasizes the ideological nature of platformization. Some interviewees stressed the importance of making this issue visible given that technology companies work hard to downplay it in public discourse. This idea was perhaps nowhere clearer than in the words of a Costa Rican hip hop artist:

> Do you really want to listen to music without interruptions? [Imitates Spotify's ads]. Then DOWNLOAD IT! Old school! These companies, which have a huge marketing capacity, have been able to put the idea into the minds of people that that's the best way to listen to music. That's false. We keep supporting elites that are stifling music around the world. (Emphasis added)

According to this interviewee, there was nothing "natural" about the rules and formats imposed by Spotify to listen to music (including playlists). Instead, revealing the ideological nature of the company would lead to a clearer understanding of how Spotify worked to preserve its economic capital rather than favor artists or music itself. During the interview, this artist also claimed that Spotify's intermediary role was unnecessary and suggested that, rather than paying a monthly fee, people should buy and download music directly from artists.

Another telling example offered by musicians of how playlists hide larger power relations was the importance given by Spotify to large labels. In short, there was a belief among interviewees that "Spotify's arms [were] easily twisted by big labels", as one musician described it. One interviewee in Mexico noted that a closer look at Spotify's editorial playlists would reveal a fundamental bias in their operation: all included artists had contracts with major labels. This artist thus compared playlists to payolas (that is, receiving money to play a song without disclosing it). In her words: "Labels are taking control. They're *payoleando* the playlists!"

Whereas a dominant logic envisions the uncertainty of Spotify's technological operation as a challenge that needs to be solved through personal entrepreneurship, an oppositional logic views it as an instrument of control. Musicians who espoused this logic challenged the view of algorithms as an ally that could help artists "game the system" to their benefit. Instead, they considered algorithms as biased entities whose real operation criteria were impossible to decipher. An artist in Mexico with several hundred thousands of monthly listeners on Spotify noted: "We [musicians] don't know how [algorithms] work. But what is a fact is that it is not a clean [operation]. [Spotify] is affected and manipulated and touched by an algorithm". Accordingly, some argued, musicians should advocate for clearer explanations of platforms' algorithmic operations rather than try to "game" them to their advantage.

Negotiated logic

A negotiated logic gives credentials to Spotify's "curatorial power" through playlists but resignifies it in important ways. Whereas a dominant logic emphasizes the centrality of Spotify in musicians' careers (and centers on strategies that gravitate around the platform), a negotiated logic opts for relativizing Spotify's centrality (without questioning its relevance altogether). In this view, musicians should neither obey nor abandon Spotify but rather constantly assess its place as part of a broader project where artists can enact their agency. Playlist inclusion is neither a given nor the goal but rather a possibility that needs to be assessed based on artistic considerations and the possibilities that platforms offer to achieve them.

Musicians who espoused this view emphasized the need to clarify first what the purpose of playlisting would accomplish in their larger artistic project. *Cocofunka*'s Javier Arce articulated this logic in a clear manner:

> I've noticed that Spotify changes [every 6–7 months]. But it changes in ways I can't control. Costa Rican artists [should] understand that being on a playlist is not a victory at all, because you depend on whether the people who discovered you on the playlist like you and would want to listen to you again tomorrow. That's where you have power as an artist.

A tension between structural transformations brought about by platformization and the agency of musicians underlies Arce's account of the music industries in Latin America. He argued neither for accepting at face value the inevitability of platformization nor for denying it altogether, but rather for focusing on those aspects where musicians can still "have the power", which don't necessarily center on streaming platforms. Spotify is a part of the puzzle that artists are trying to solve, but not necessarily the most important piece.

Unlike a dominant logic, which fosters an understanding of platforms, a negotiated logic downplays the uncertainty that characterizes their operation and envisions it as a deferrable issue, given that it is something beyond musicians' control. Interviewees who espoused this logic argued for focusing on two issues that were priorities to enact their artistic agency: identity and communications. By identity, they typically referred to the relative singularity of the music they produced. Identity means creating music that does not sound like anything else in a given context or that cannot be easily classified within established genres (including Spotify's marketing vocabulary).

Whereas the oppositional logic criticizes marketing as an ideological instrument of corporate elites, a negotiated logic envisions it as an instrument for gaining artistic control and for turning Spotify itself into a tool. Most artists we interviewed employed social media to promote their music and establish a relationship with audiences. "Social media are everything! Everything!", said one musician in Costa Rica. For this person, playlists help artists to be discovered by listeners but don't offer opportunities to connect with them. In a negotiated logic, communication with audiences requires as much attention (or more) than resolving issues of discovery and exposure. Thus, one artist in Mexico noted: "I'm trying to build a stronger fanbase and improve engagement without relying on the big numbers of playlists". Musicians who espoused this logic focused on finding the right approach to social media to perform a specific artistic identity rather than devoting all their energy to pleasing Spotify. Many interviewees said Instagram was their preferred platform to foster "engagement" with listeners. However, they also expressed frustration with the amount of time and effort involved in creating content and otherwise maintaining their social media platforms.

Understanding logics in national context

Logics were not universally or equally distributed. While some musicians were strict defenders of one perspective, many oscillated between them, combined them, or had evolved in their way of thinking about them over time. This flexible adoption of logics is a product of musicians' own position in music industries characterized by distinct cultural values and market configurations. In other words, musicians in Costa Rica and Mexico adopted and combined these logics based on how they fit (or not) with broader notions that define the experience of being a musician in each country. Logics are sets of ideas that seem natural to actors in specific places. Thus, although enacted by individuals, these logics also express values that distinguish broader national contexts.

Three interlocking issues shaped how interviewees in both countries espoused these logics in Costa Rica and Mexico: how consistent logics were with what musicians considered to be legitimate professional aspirations in each country; how likely it was for musicians to acquire first-hand knowledge about the inner workings of platforms; and how possible it was for artists to build networks of ties that could provide them with various forms of capital. In what follows, we discuss these three factors in more detail and then illustrate their significance by describing the trajectory of one artist in each country as ideal-type cases.

Perhaps the most obvious factor shaping artists' adoption of institutional logics was their own professional aspirations. Those with greater commercial ambitions or most invested in reaching or maintaining a certain level of commercial success with their original music, were typically

more prone to adopting dominant or at least negotiated logics. Spotify was understood as a means to that end, offering a potential of generating income through streams and perhaps more significantly, of growing fan bases that would pay tickets for live concerts. Meanwhile, artists for whom the commercial aspects of music were less central, while still interested in the same goals, were less often focused on participating on Spotify's terms. This latter group often included those for whom original music was more of a side-project than a full-time job or those involved in genres with a more limited commercial reach. When artists in Costa Rica assumed that it was nearly impossible for someone in this country to live off of original music alone they leaned towards oppositional or negotiated logics. A structural condition of the music industry in the country thus led to naturalizing certain ways of understanding and relating to streaming platforms.

A second factor shaping artists' adoption or combination of different logics was their levels of knowledge about how Spotify works. Spotify's dominant discourse was most impactful (both constraining and empowering) among those with a deeper understanding of it. Some interviewees had much more intricate and nuanced understandings (mental models or "folk theories") about how to approach and use the platforms effectively for their own purposes (cf. Siles et al. 2020). Meanwhile, artists with lesser knowledge about the platform, while potentially less successful on it, were also less constrained by a dominant logic, and more inclined to express oppositional views. Because of the geographic distance from Spotify's regional offices, understanding how the platform really worked was often deemed more difficult for artists living in Costa Rica than in Mexico. In those cases, artists tended to espouse negotiated or oppositional logics.

Finally, a third related factor shaping artists' approaches to platformization issues was their capacity to establish networks of professional associations that could offer them various forms of capital. One prominent benefit of such networks consisted of the possibility to establish close contacts with intermediaries. This was in large part shaped by where they were geographically located. Because the most relevant and powerful intermediaries, especially certain digital distributors and record labels–not to mention Spotify's own offices–are located in the hubs of the music industry, musicians who were living in Mexico rather than Costa Rica had a better chance of building and nurturing personal relationships with them. These relationships resulted not only in better outcomes but also in more "insider knowledge" about the platform itself and the human relations mediating editorial decisions.

"Whatever is going to happen, happens"

To illustrate how these interlocking factors work in practice in each country, we first examine the case of a Costa Rican artist who embodies a logic that is closer to the oppositional side of the continuum. Although not all musicians in Costa Rica relate to playlists in this way, his approach is representative of those who think that it is almost impossible to live off of their own music, know how the platform really works, and build a network of ties that could help them play Spotify's game in this country.

This musician resides in Costa Rica, where he simultaneously participates in a solo project and a music collective involving a fusion of Afro, indigenous, and *mestizo* sounds and rhythms. He makes a living by teaching music and playing live music with his guitar, mostly in Costa Rican venues, which are relatively small. Compared to many artists we interviewed, he was more bohemian in his approach to music, as evident in his lack of emphasis on pursuing new platforms ("it's not that I'm a hermit or a Shaolin monk, but beyond my cell phone, I'm not really into technology") and his broader concern with social protest and political issues, relating to both the substance of his music and who he wanted to reach with it.

His professional aspirations informed his ambivalence toward Spotify. On the one hand, he explained that he was "trying to change and invest a bit more energy [in Spotify] because it is *apparently* important or has become important to people whether [one's music] has a lot of streams on Spotify" (emphasis added). On the other hand, since he viewed Spotify as exploitative, he felt like

"giving Spotify so much importance is contributing to their pillaging of musicians". Instead, he preferred focusing time and energy taking his music to underserved populations, such as those in local rural areas instead of "being important on Spotify". While he recognized that it would be "nice to have songs with two million plays", he also said that "from the bottom of my heart, it doesn't mean much". In other words, while he understood that Spotify's rationale was important and meaningful to audiences, he also experienced a strong opposition toward embracing it, instead foregrounding objectives in line with other kinds of ideals.

This ambivalence came in hand with a limited understanding of Spotify, although he was sometimes critical of himself for this. While many of his peers discussed cross-platforms strategies and careful pitches when launching a new song, when asked about how to get a song playlisted, he explained that although he wanted to learn more about how to pitch his upcoming music, "Honestly, it really isn't clear to me […] I've never pitched anything, I just upload the album like an idiot". He also described his music launches as a "communications disaster" because he failed to invest time and money in the promotion of posts on social media: "They walk whatever they are going to walk on their own". Similarly, while he was aware that singles were apparently beneficial for musicians on Spotify, he also explained that "at the end of the day, I imagine an album, so I do an album, and whatever is going to happen, happens". While he was critical of his own limited knowledge about the platform, and somewhat interested in doing better, he was also indisposed to buying into Spotify's imperatives.

Lastly, this artist's experience reflected a limited access to gatekeepers and intermediaries who could provide him with insider knowledge about how the platform works or advocate for him. As he explained, the only person that supports his project has nothing to do with the music industry: "I can't go and say to [this person], 'Hey, what should we do about Spotify?' because she is going to tell me that she doesn't know what to do about Spotify. So I don't know if I'm totally lost, but I just don't spend a lot of energy on this, although maybe I should". This quote exemplifies how limited knowledge is often a byproduct of limited access to external resources and key players within the music industry, which is especially pronounced among those who occupy spaces that are physically and symbolically distant from the epicenters of musical production.

"Not another one in the bunch"

In contrast, we examine the case of a Mexican artist and music producer residing in Mexico City, who skewed toward a more dominant approach. This interviewee is involved in two different projects, both with relative success on Spotify, and both of which receive ongoing support from a digital distribution company with label services. While he accepted that filling football stadiums was perhaps an unrealistic aspiration for his bands, he also believed a degree of commercial success was feasible in Mexico and expressed a desire to both reach a growing number of audiences internationally and make a living by making music he genuinely enjoyed: "[We would like to] reach more people, more countries in Latin America, Europe, and the United States too, but always remaining faithful to our music, our genre, and not going after fads". These aspirations thus interacted with his own artistic values and the desire to focus on music that he was personally interested in.

Unlike the Costa Rican musician described above, this artist was much more invested in understanding Spotify and trying to capitalize on it. Being immersed in the music scene as an artist and producer, the Mexican musician had a more elaborate understanding of the platform and how to successfully launch new music. He was also regularly included in editorial playlists with both of his bands, which he believed was crucial to their success. Rather than launching music and letting "whatever is going to happen, happen", he worked intensely alongside his bandmates, manager, and digital distribution company to develop careful strategies for every release, including music videos, ongoing social media content, and paid advertising on these platforms to broaden their reach. One optimization strategy was persuading followers to "pre-save" the song on their Spotify prior to the launch: "It's always helpful to offer people something in exchange for their pre-save", he explained.

This greater knowledge about how to coordinate a successful release on Spotify came in hand with access to greater resources, including a network of personal ties he had carefully cultivated to this end, particularly with people at his digital distribution company. He explained: "We became really, really good friends. We go out, we hang out […] We have a WhatsApp group and they are always there for us". These relationships, in his view, were crucial, given that these individuals were acquainted with people at Spotify and thus had the power to advocate for inclusion in playlists: "There has to be a lot of trust, friendship, everything; otherwise, you are just another one in the bunch". This interviewee also had the rare opportunity to visit Spotify's offices and introduce himself in person, in addition to having an early song included on a playlist when a friend of his worked there. Ultimately, these experiences not only underscore the increasingly salient role played by intermediaries like distribution companies as crucial gatekeepers between artists and Spotify, they also show how important social ties and social capital in this scene are for acquiring more knowledge about an otherwise obscure platform, and for gaining preferential access to Spotify's playlists. Being physically close to this center was instrumental to the cultivation of these relationships. Adopting a dominant logic thus seemed more "natural" in Mexico, where pursuing a commercially successful music career, learning about the platform, and building a professional network was relatively more feasible.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, we have analyzed artists' approaches to the centrality of playlists. We have argued that platformization is not a linear process but instead is variously interpreted, experienced, and enacted by actors situated in wider national fields. For this reason, we suggest it makes more sense to speak of different forms of platformization (or platformizations in the plural) than of a single, uniform process.

Interviewees largely recognized the significance of playlists in music industries. Most admitted that having their music selected for playlist inclusion was beneficial to their careers and was even desirable. However, this did not mean that artists unproblematically played Spotify's game. Their assessment of playlists involved a careful and complicated discussion of the merits, benefits, limitations, pressures, and possibilities of finding a balance between Spotify's conditions and advancing their careers on their own terms.

Artists' perspectives on playlists were also shaped in large part by their understanding of algorithms. Interviewees dealt with the uncertainty that characterizes the opaqueness of algorithmic procedures in various ways (Siles, forthcoming). Whereas research has tended to emphasize the importance of technological logics to make sense of platformization dynamics, many musicians we interviewed went in the opposite direction. Given that algorithms operate in an almost impenetrable secrecy, they preferred to devote their efforts to optimization tactics such as strategizing playlist inclusion or planning a pitch for a song. In addition, while few had had successful concrete experiences with algorithmic playlists, many reported personal anecdotes that proved to them the value of editorial playlists.

In their study of musicians in Germany, Mühlbach and Arora (2020) concluded that "artists find themselves in a constant discord between enjoyment and pressure, self-actualization, and self-exploitation, freedom, and insecurity". We found a similar tension in the Latin American musicians we interviewed. Moreover, we argued that these common forms of oscillation are institutionalized in wider logics that provide musicians with symbolic resources to make sense of current transformations in their particular contexts. We discussed three logics in the cases of Costa Rica and Mexico: one that seeks to play (along) with Spotify's dominant discourse, another one that opposes it, and one that relativizes and negotiates it. In practice, the existence of these logics means that the effects of platformization in music industries are not identical for everybody and that actors such as musicians can have different and even contradictory views of the same phenomenon. For example, and perhaps counterintuitively, not all musicians we interviewed actually opposed Spotify's "curatorial

power". Many interviewees did not seek to challenge the larger technological and economic system promoted by Spotify. We also thank our "trusted brokers" for helping us contact interviewees, as well as the reviewers and editors of this journal for their most helpful feedback.

Finally, our approach invited a thorough consideration of the factors that shape how musicians deal with the "power" of platforms and playlists. Key in accounting for variance in artists' perspectives were differences in Costa Rica's and Mexico's music industries, where certain ideas and logics made more sense to musicians than others. Our comparative approach helped us identify issues that shaped the adoption or combination of logics, such as professional aspirations, knowledge about the operation of platforms, and the capacity to build networks of ties, especially with key intermediaries beyond platforms involved in the process, who often serve fundamental gatekeeping roles. Assuming regional uniformity to discuss platformization could run the risk of missing the importance of these national differences (Poell, Nieborg, and Duffy 2022). Thus, we sought to emphasize the need to account for the cultural configuration of music industries in more systematic ways than what has been the case to date in scholarly analyses of platformization dynamics. More comparative research could help understand additional factors that explain the experiences, opinions, and logics of musicians in other contexts.

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