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Knowledge and Communication in the Arts: The Cases of European Cultural Capitals

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Methods for Capturing Creative Knowledge in Dance and the Arts (Cases of London, Barcelona and San Diego)

Visual analysis in sociology is not a new phenomenon, but it remains controversial, especially in the sociology of the arts. Choosing the right method should go along with a reflexive construction of the object. I propose a comparative analysis of visual ethnographies on film, dance and synchronized swimming, in Barcelona, San Diego and London, which began in 2008 and are still ongoing. I suggest moving part of this instrumental debate from the methodological level to that of research design. As recent developments from cognitive science and embodied cognition put forward, the production of knowledge extends beyond the individual agent and is embedded in functional, technical and communicative patterns of interaction. I present here an integrated model to capture knowledge in its natural settings, namely, in the set, the studio and the swimming pool. By using the tools offered by new technology such as ELAN software on linguistic analysis, I show that qualitative sociological observation of the arts can include analog as well as audiovisual methods. Moreover, I make explicit the architectural principles that define the functions and application of these tools in order to select the best coding strategy. Finally, I pinpoint the particular

advantages of this integrated model for looking at compared artistic settings, which are messy, complex and uncertain environments for work.

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Knowledge-Generation Strategies in the City Space: Comparing Artistic Communities of St. Petersburg, Berlin and Barcelona

Today city space is at the center of communicative interaction between various actors and their groupings. As such, it has become the locus of intensive knowledge creation, and clashes and intersections of different knowledge fields. Probably, one of the major knowledge-generating powers in the city space are the artists. Their works appear to be knowledge objects that represent significant conceptual relations between meanings and – when introduced in the urban space – they influence knowledge generation processes. Knowledge evolution is stimulated by artists through the continuous use of art works for communication with publics in common urban spaces of experience. Communities of artists appear to be particularly powerful communicators, joining their efforts in a common narrative, style or artistic methodology; and performing various activities in the urban space. These activities can involve broad audiences in the development, reproduction and promotion of certain conceptual combinations. We study how such artistic collectives communicate and generate knowledge in the urban space.

Using data collected in three European cities, we describe and compare knowledge-generating communication of three urban artistic communities that work in the field of visual arts: *Parazit* (St. Petersburg), *La Escocesa* (Barcelona) and *KUNSTrePUBLIK* (Berlin). Basing on a set of qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observation and analysis of texts an attempt is made to grasp specific communicative strategies that the artistic communities use to engage other participants of urban art worlds and broader publics into the reconceptualization of different places of the city spaces, reframing of everyday life practices, reinterpretation of political events and of art itself. *Parazit* pursues the strategy of creating an alternative urban reality. To do this, the community challenges conventional usage of spaces, ‘artistifies’ and fictionalises routinized functional spaces, and intimises the city space. *La Escocesa* has a complex strategy of tacking between cohabitation and commercialization, which operates through symbolic communalization of local spaces, construction of homelike identity of the space and the simultaneous usage of both closed gallery exhibition

spaces and open public spaces. *KUNSTrePUBLIK* engages in (re-)appropriation of the urban social space by re-interpreting empty space as a space filled with content. It seeks to trigger creative attitudes towards space, constructs unique identity of space, and expands the circle of symbolic claimers of space.

We analyze how the artistic communities strategically choose city spaces to exhibit their art objects, reveal which way the artists consider the historical and sociocultural background of the places they work with, trace how the communities choose activities for the particular urban contexts where their works are located, and assess whether the artists engage local urban communities in the process of artistic co-creation and why. The paper shows how the choice of knowledge-transforming communicative strategies is related to the economic, political and cultural particularities of the urban contexts, in which the artistic communities are embedded.