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# **Analysing social borders of artistic innovation: a transversal perspective.**

Dr Elena Raevskikh

## **Abstract**

Today, artistic innovation goes beyond the cultural sphere, and integrates areas of social activity that were not traditionally associated with art. Artistic innovation enhances social and economic impact of urban policies, cultural offers and industrial productions. It is also increasingly used as a political and social counterbalance to reactionary moods in Europe, as well as in countries such as the United Arab Emirates or Singapore. However, despite the increasing importance of artistic innovation for states, territorial powers and industrial systems, its social, economic and cultural impacts remain ‘hidden’ from traditional measures of innovation. Based on existing literature and empirical observations, this paper identifies social processes that accompany (1) production, (2) social assimilation and (3) territorial anchors of artistic innovation, as well as research questions that these social processes raise in contemporary societies. We suggest that a systemic perspective that adopts a bottom-up and empirical sociological approach can reveal the social indicators of artistic innovation that are still unexplored or underestimated. Our reflection complements the current conceptualisations of artistic innovation offered by other analyses and disciplines, and may be of use to researchers working in the related fields.

## **Keywords**

Innovation Metrics; Artistic Innovation; Public Policies; Art; Design; Social Policies;

## **Introduction**

Innovation in arts and culture makes part of innovation activities promoted by states, territorial powers and industrial systems. The economically and socially important changes of an aesthetic nature (“soft innovation” (Stoneman 2009)) become prevalent in contemporary political thought, promoting the impact of creative industries on national, regional and municipal development. The *New Political Culture* (Clark, Hoffmann-Martinet 1998) is primarily based on the creative potential to generate new cultural scenes fostering more “participative” and “multicultural” experiences for citizens. The cultural consumption that a place makes possible, as well as social connections based on aesthetic sensibility, become key factors in defining what makes a city an attractive place to live or to visit. The cases of empowerment of cities like Bilbao or Dubai illustrate the potent social impact of artistic innovations. The new identity of these cities associated with art, culture and leisure amenities has been achieved through several emblematic urban projects that are not exclusively innovative. However, the groundbreaking aesthetic design of Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum or Burj Khalifa tower designed by Adrian Smith made of these buildings the most powerful symbols that embody the cities’ attractiveness.

The increasing importance of values, the rise of social issues, the decline and transformation of traditional political parties and unions define changes in the social role of arts and culture. Artistic innovations that respond to social needs and that are not motivated by profit contribute in cultural diplomacy and struggle against the threat of illiberal or reactionary tendencies. For instance, 3D Replica of Palmyra Arch, which was destroyed in Syria in 2015, has been created in Oxford and transported in several big cities around the world before being

unveiled in Palmyra. This project combined artistic, scientific and technological breakthroughs, and intended to promote the values of tolerance and multiculturalism throughout the world.

Despite the increasing importance of artistic innovation in contemporary societies, the OECD Oslo Manual, which is the main guide for the design of the European Community Innovation Survey (CSI) questionnaire, is still based on standard economic model. This model promotes innovation of functional, scientific or technological nature reflected in indicators such as investment or patents awarded. This document contains clear definitions of scientific and technological innovation, and enables its measurement and evaluation. Even though the latest edition of the OECD Oslo Manual (2018) extend the measurements of innovation from businesses to other organizations or businesses that address challenges of a social nature, it still does not include the concept of artistic innovation in its viewfinder. In consequence, innovation activity related to culture and arts is “hidden” from traditional measures of innovation. Art patrons, industries and public authorities encourage artists to be “innovative” without describing of what artistic innovation is. The social, economic and cultural impacts of artistic innovations remain unexplored as well.

Several publications has recently addressed this gap by analyzing the innovative behaviours in the creative industries (Handke, 2008, Miles, Green 2008, Potts et al. 2008), innovation types and processes related to publicly supported arts and cultural institutions (Bakhshi, Thorsby 2009), innovations which respond to social needs by third sector organisations and public sector bodies that are not motivated by profit (Mulgan et al. 2007).

However, the conceptual and empirical framework that allows a systemic approach to artistic innovation still does not exist. The existing conceptualisations range from “soft innovation” (Stoneman 2009) to “hidden innovation” (Miles, Green 2008) and “artistic innovation” (Castaner, Campos 2002). While each of these definitions highlights a different dimension of the concept, we choose to use in this paper the preliminary term of “artistic innovation”. This term is chosen in accordance with the starting point of our analysis, focused on the role of art in the processes of innovation. The aim of this paper is to suggest social indicators that seize heterogeneous dimensions of artistic innovation and evaluate its diverse impacts on contemporary societies.

## **Empirical background**

The research program that we have conducted over the several last years in Europe and extra-European countries (United Arab Emirates, Singapore) was focused on renewal and reorganization of the cultural offers and on the impacts of arts and culture on immigration and cultural identity concerns. This research allowed us to understand the growing significance of artistic innovation for contemporary public policies, industries and competitive territories in European and extra-European contexts. We have identified several social indicators useful for measuring and further conceptualization of artistic innovation. We have also elaborated the methodological guidelines that make such an analysis feasible.

## **Literature review**

Among existing works, macro approaches address artistic innovation through exogenous variables such as cultural policy and economic conditions of the territory (Heilbrun, 1998). Some meso-sociological studies examine artistic innovation through the complex relation

between the environment and the organization, exploring in particular the role of external sponsors (Martorella, 1977). Micro-analyzes focuses on the impact of organizational variables of artistic innovation, such as size (Heilbrun, 1998) or internal structure (DiMaggio, 1985).

The recent essay by Luc Boltanski and Arnaud Esquerre, *Enrichment* (2017) addresses issues related to artistic innovation from the point of view of the “economics of enrichment”. The “economics of enrichment” does not produce wealth, but generates it from things that already exist. The value of today’s most innovative objects would consist of groundbreaking ideas, technologies and know-how, "enriched" by pre-existing local traditions, craftsmanship, materials, etc. For example, production of electric wires from marine algae, or toys from agricultural waste could be innovative, but not valuable *per se*. However, the combination of groundbreaking ideas, innovative technologies and the “cultural” components, especially rooted in locality and in history (wires made from algae of the Rhône river in France, where the oldest bust of Julius Caesar has been found, Kabuki dolls-inspired toys made from agricultural waste from Kyoto rice fields, etc.) makes the innovation particularly valuable and desirable.

The topic of artistic innovation is essential not only for the industries that seek to create new sources of value, but also for the public cultural institutions (operas, museums, theaters, etc.) that are expected to renew their perimeter and to redefine the relationship they have with their audiences. The research project led by Nesta (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts), an international innovation foundation based in the UK, identified four categories of innovation common to cultural institutions. These are innovations in: audience reach, art form development, value creation, and business management and governance. Furthermore, digital technologies allow arts and cultural organizations to exploit their cultural assets and to create more social and economic value. Museums and galleries are already starting to take advantage of opportunities offered by the Internet and digital technology (Bakhshi, Throsby 2009), theatrical companies use cinematographic tools for interactive and immersive representations, etc..

Artistic innovation has been also analyzed in relation to territorial competitiveness. Vetzl (1996) developed the concept of “archipelago economy” based on very strong regional poles, involved in international exchanges with each other. In the current context of growing urbanization, territorial competitiveness is increasingly based on collective capacities to repeatedly innovate sources of value (products, patents, concepts, economic models, environmental and social values, etc.) and new skills (knowledge, know-how, processes, trades, etc.) (Le Masson, 2006). For instance, several programs of the Dubai Future Foundation (United Arab Emirates) seek to contribute to the economic influence of the city of Dubai through the attraction of international engineers, designers and inventors who will locally create the new sources of value. The "Knowledge Capital" platform based in Osaka aimed at promoting authentic and innovative artistic products in Japan. The Luma Foundation based in Arles (France) supports the innovative eco-responsible products and aesthetic objects, etc. These hubs create and support horizontal, frequently transnational networks of innovation that increasingly outmatch traditional vertical relations with the city’s hinterland.

### **A bottom-up approach to artistic innovation**

Today, artistic innovation goes beyond the cultural sphere, and integrates the areas of social activity that were not traditionally associated with art. The objects of everyday life, the products, the experiences and the practices are becoming increasingly connected to aesthetics

and creation. Equivalently, innovation activities in aesthetic, artistic and cultural fields increasingly integrate the components derived from technological and scientific progress.

To grasp this transformation and the broadening role of artistic innovation for both “purely” cultural activities - and the other sectors with a growing artistic component, as well as the amalgam between artistic innovation and technological progress, we suggest the differentialist approach, derived from the comprehensive sociology developed by Max Weber (Pedler 2014). The analysis adopts as a point of reference definitions and perimeters familiar to the observer, and describes by difference structures, organizations, territories and actors that adopt heteronomous logics. The starting point of the analysis is intentionally large and focused on endogenous interpretations of “what is” and “how to measure” artistic innovation from the viewpoint of a myriad of concerned actors, networks and organizations.

As Antal, Hutter and Stark argued (2015), in modern society the scope of innovation widens to all processes that introduce something new. A very broad definition is needed to capture all the cases that introduce artistic innovation. Based on literature review and our empirical observations, we can describe artistic innovation as (1) a mode of production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of products, processes, marketing strategies and organizations with (2) an artistic component that is innovative (has a social or economic value-added novelty) *per se*, or (3) an artistic component innovative by its way of integrating the socio-technical processes of production and social reception.

We would like to highlight that this departing definition of artistic innovation is preliminary, and is used mainly to configure the empirical framework of analysis. The bottom-up and comprehensive approach will reshape this departing definition and fulfill it with the characteristics of artistic innovation expressed by endogenous actors, networks, structures and organizations. The diversity of meanings, processes and values of artistic innovation opens new debates on transforming role of art and culture in contemporary societies.

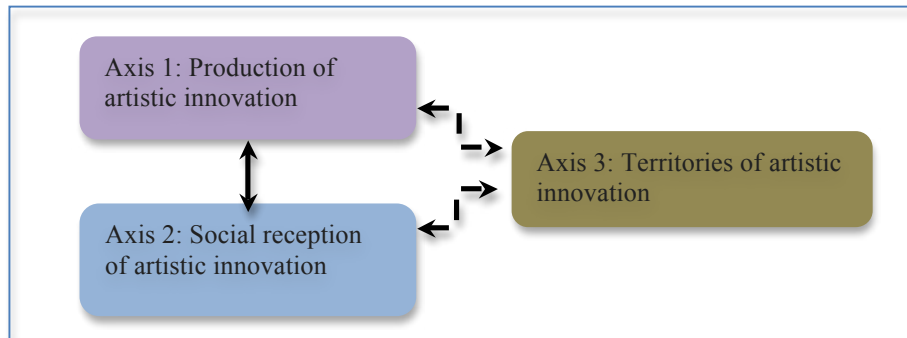
## **Research questions**

This section synthesizes research questions connecting artistic innovation with its social, cultural and territorial contexts.

- How do the actors, networks and organisations that integrate industrial, institutional and artistic fields define artistic innovation? What are the current debates on this subject?
- What are the interactional processes and the mechanisms of artistic innovation? What are the main issues in the field?
- What is the relation among artistic innovation, technological progress and industries? How this relation can be explored and analyzed?
- What are the impacts of artistic innovation on regional clusters and cities engaged in territorial competitiveness?
- How do artistic innovations circulate locally, nationally and internationally?
- What are the factors that promote (or create barriers) to social reception and assimilation of artistic innovations?
- What are the factors (historical, economic, socio-cultural, etc.) that add value to artistic innovation in different cultural, social and economic contexts?

These research questions could be structured around three interrelated axes: Production, Reception and Territories of artistic innovations. Figure 1 below illustrates the articulation

among these three axes. The processes of production of artistic innovations, as well as their social implementations, are anchored in territories, and differ according to various socio-cultural, political and economic contexts. Accordingly, Axis 3 (Territories) is transversal to Axis 1 (Production) and Axis 2 (Reception).



**Figure 1:** The three axes of research on artistic innovation

## 1. Production of artistic innovation

### 1.1. The processual dimensions of artistic innovation

What distinguishes artistic innovation of the invention (helicopter propellers invented and drawn by Leonardo da Vinci) or the hazardous discovery that has an aesthetic impact (discovery, by Eugen Sapper, of the catalytic phthalic acid process that is used to produce numerous dyes and perfumes more simply and more economically)? In the current context of economic competition based on creativity, artistic innovation, unlike invention and discovery, integrates the market and meets an economic purpose and/or a social need. The process of artistic innovation may start with invention or discovery, but it should inevitably end with a deliverable and valuable result.

To realize an idea means to succeed in expressing and materializing it. Shaping of an artistic idea is a lasting and non-linear process, which includes a division of labour among the actors, and which alternates the phases of “opening” (inspiration, research of the collaborators) and “framing” (rationalization of the deadlines, intermediate validations, etc.) (Grossetti 2015). From this perspective, it is particularly important to understand the interrelationships between (1) networks of artistic, industrial and institutional interdependence that include heterogeneous actors and transcend organizational boundaries and (2) collectives (organizations, firms, institutions, etc.) with a collective identity, common rules, administrative boundaries, etc.

In consequence, an empirical survey on artistic innovations should focus on processes that are both contradictory and complementary, such as (1) “empowerment” of a collective identity in relation to the network that gave rise to it, and (2) “embedding” (Grossetti, 2015, White, 1981) interpersonal relations on relations between organizations. Based on the concrete case studies, the survey need to analyze "from below", using ethnographic, micro-historical methods and first-hand statistics, the interactional processes that allow admission and realization of new ideas, products, services and processes that integrate an innovative artistic component.

## 1.2. Organizations, practices and technologies of artistic innovation

Artistic innovation is sought in the case of products, processes, marketing and organizations related to cultural spheres, and with a strong aesthetic component (live performance, books, music, etc.) In these contexts, innovation concerns the new cultural products, but also the methods and techniques of their elaboration and presentation to targeted audiences. Artistic innovation is also pursued in the industries whose production is functional, and not aesthetic as such (new models of transports, furniture, buildings, windsurfers, etc.). In this case, the artistic component of functional objects (but also of their marketing, related services, etc.) plays an important role in their social reception and market competitiveness.

Much of the work of the creators (designers, artists, musicians, sculptors, etc.) that are implicated in the innovation processes can be described as an attempt to stabilize, through technological and organizational choices, the course of interactions between the final products (objects, experiences, services, etc.) and their users in the broadest sense, between the products and their environment, but also among organizations, practices and technologies that co-produce innovation.

Exploration of this double work of creation of innovative objects, experiences, services, etc., and the relations which they allow - and which allow them to exist - contributes to the comprehension of endogenous definitions of artistic innovations in each particular case. Understanding the link between artistic innovation and organizational, technological and scientific structures requires identifying of economic, industrial and technical constraints that stimulate, limits, shapes or misadjusts the artistic activity as a part of rationalized production process. In this context, it is also important to analyze "innovation practices", i.e. new combinations of pre-existing technologies and processes that result in a social or economic value-added novelty without a major scientific, technological or aesthetic basis (as, for example, innovation in organizational forms of artistic production).

## 1.3. The creators of artistic innovation

If we suppose that artistic innovation is based mainly on organizations and processes, what is the role of individual contribution in relation to collective and organizational dimensions of innovation activity? Both an extremely collective dimension and a primacy of the creator mark artistic innovation. The creator is the guarantor of coherence of a project, but also the leader who takes risks in the activity of innovation. Also, the creator has an intimate form of expertise that cannot be formalized, and thus cannot be reproduced.

The careers of creators and the footprints that their activities leave on collectives and organizations could be analyzed afresh with the epistemological tools offered by the sociology of charisma. The authority of the charisma, as it is presented in *Economy and Society* of Max Weber, is something extraordinary, which can burst into everyday life and break its regularity (Weber, 1995). In *Sociology of Religions*, Max Weber speaks of a "charisma of function", which takes hold when the religious cult is institutionalized and managed by a body of religious priests whose status is regulated by salaries, career goals and professional duties. In these circumstances, priestly "activity" becomes rationally organized and manages the goods of divine salvation as an institution (Weber, 1996).

The creator, like Max Weber's religious priest, is both the bearer of the weakly formalizable (and thus "mystical", extraordinary) artistic capacities, and the manager who seeks the

balance between the “mystical” and “rational” component, the artistic uniqueness and the economic profit. How do the loss of the major originator (p.ex. Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel) impact the company or the public institution that seeks to innovate? Can we talk about the specific charisma of the creator that enhances economic or symbolic value of the innovation? Or, on the contrary, the contemporary industrial worlds tend to "erase" the personal charisma, and anonymize innovation processes?

## **2. Assimilation and social reception of artistic innovation**

### **2.1. Articulations between production and reception of artistic innovations**

Today, cultural institutions and companies are called upon to constantly renew their organizational perimeters, as well as to preserve and multiply the relationships with their audiences or customers. However, interplays between (1) the definitions of artistic innovation expressed by the people and the organizations that produce it, and (2) the appreciations of regular or irregular audiences, art professionals, collectors, newcomers or regular customers are rarely explored. How the "life cycles" of different types of artistic innovation could be analyzed? Why, and according to which contextual variables, some artistic innovations gain in social and/or economic value over time, while others are devalued and leave the market?

Using research methods and techniques such as statistical, cartographic, ethnographic and micro-historical explorations, it is possible to articulate definitions, social criticisms and receptions of artistic innovations developed at various scales (creators, consumers, collectors, etc.). It is also possible to address the existing gap in understanding of the impacts of artistic innovations (cultural offerings, products, processes, marketing strategies, etc.) on the functioning of pre-existing cultural institutions (operas, theaters, museums, etc.), placed in a competitive context with new forms of culture - and thus conditioned to renew their institutional perimeter and their offers.

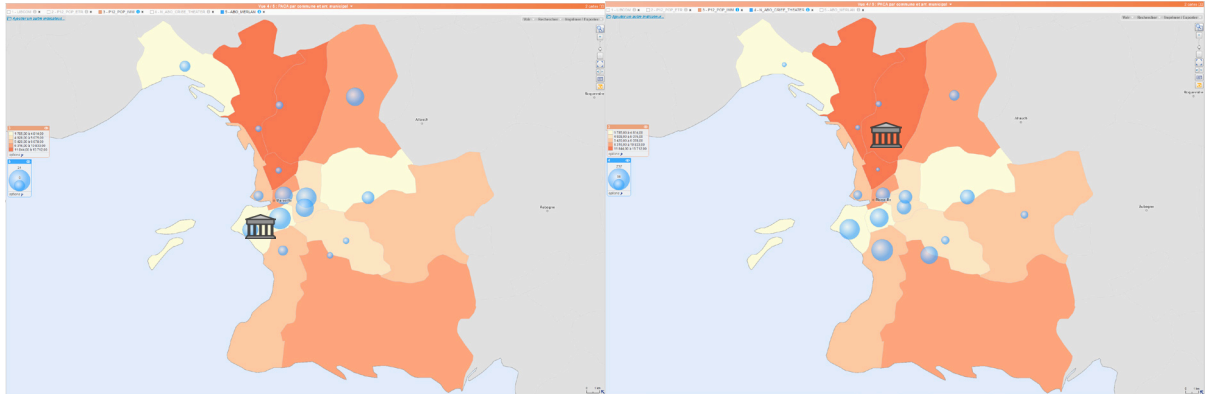
### **2.2. Artistic innovations and metropolitan scenes**

Several existing surveys associate “placemaking strategies” with social, economic and cultural transformation of urban landscapes (Silver, Clark 2016, Martin-Brelot 2012, Vicario, Monje 2002, etc.). These analyses show that on the bottom-up level, the urban landscape is structured by different social and professional categories. People of comparable professions, incomes, and educational levels tend to live and to work in similar urban areas. They also tend to have comparable commuting, cultural and housing choices. Thus, different people could characterize each neighborhood and living practices. Meanwhile, these various urban scenes (Silver, Clark 2016) are rather dynamic and are able to reconfigure themselves under the influence of aesthetic, cultural and lifestyle factors.

However, there is still a gap in understanding of how urban spaces react to artistic innovations, and how various groups of people build, "from below"- from their mobility, everyday choices and consumption - the cultural palette of a city. We were already able to create a description of urban spaces built from the cultural practices of individuals (p.ex. attendance of theaters in Marseille (France) during the year of Marseille -“European Capital of Culture” program that brought a strong renewal in programs, governance and public image of the local cultural institutions). The cartographic approach was combined with quantitative and qualitative methods of survey, in order to cross and visualize (1) geographical indicators from our ethnographic surveys concerning the places of residence of the public of two



theaters (the Théâtre de la Criée, and the Théâtre du Merlan), with (2) social indicators from the INSEE (the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies) census. For example, the map below shows the geographical distribution of the audience of the Théâtre de la Criée and the Théâtre du Merlan (blue bubbles) crossed to the proportion of immigrant populations (intensity of colors) by district in Marseille (see Map 1 below).



Map 1: Distribution of La Criée Theater's audiences (on the left) and the Théâtre du Merlan's audiences (on the right) (blue bubbles) vs. Immigrant population by zip code (intensity of colours).

After testing these different variables and comparing maps, we found evidence that neither of the two theaters' audiences is related to the immigrant population, despite the innovative artform development focused on more inclusive programming, audience reach and governance (Bakhshi, Throsby 2009). Furthermore, we found that whatever the location of the theater or cultural institutions (whether they were central or peripheral), there was no significant impact or influence of these institutions on the immigrant population. We found, for instance, no significant impact when the cultural institution was located in a central location of the city such the Theater of La Criée. The immigrant population remains poorly integrated into local cultural life and does not travel downtown to engage in cultural practices. On the left part of the Map 1, we can observe that most audiences of the Theater of La Criée come from central, southern and eastern neighbourhoods of the city. However, very few are from the north side of the city, where we find the highest proportion of immigrants.

This analysis, being of an explorative nature, raises more questions than answers. We consider that a comparative approach used to examine the cases of artistic innovations anchored in the urban space could be fruitful for understanding how different types of populations (populations living in the city center and peripheral districts, immigrant populations, elderly and younger people, etc.) perceive, evaluate and use artistic innovations. Such an approach can also help to understand how artistic innovations are positioned in the urban space, and how they structure the city.

### 2.3. Artistic innovations and urban identities

Some innovative architectural works (Louvre Abu Dhabi designed by Jean Nouvel (UAE), the Luma Foundation designed by Frank O. Gehry (France), etc.) are commonly considered as the new porters of urban identities. As cities and regions are becoming more and more engaged in global and "horizontal" relations of territorial competition that outstrip the national boundaries, the public authorities use various landmark artistic innovations (buildings, sculptures, works of art, etc.) as an instrument of creation of a new urban identity, or a tool of transformation of the old one.

As stated by conventional wisdom, the urban policies that favor artistic innovations attract “most talented and educated” people, and generate economic changes. However that it may just be a proposal of a new innovation policy or investment on its own that generates these changes. The innovative city aesthetics creates new perspectives and challenges for local inhabitants, public decision makers and private actors. These perspectives and challenges are becoming increasingly topical even when a landmark building’s forthcoming cultural and aesthetic impacts are still anticipated, and not yet fully experienced by the city (Raevskikh 2018).

This observation ties with a larger reflection about the role of speculation in place-making, as well as postmodern perspectives that highlight the importance of symbols detached from concrete reality. In this perspective, artistic innovation can be analyzed as a source of new symbols that shape economic and political reality of the future. In the current context of growing threats of illiberal movements and policies, artistic innovation participates in cultural diplomacy and works as a political statement. The international competition for artistic innovation is also the competition for stronger symbols that incarnate political and social values.

### **3. Territories of artistic innovation: political issues and regional logics**

#### **3.1. Territorial competitiveness and artistic innovation**

The notion of cluster describes the geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular sector (Porter, 1998). According to the cluster paradigm, the geographical rapprochement of economic actors would favor innovation, creative activities and transfer of “tacit” knowledge linked to specific non-formalized know-how (Polanyi 1962, Nonaka and al., 1995). Many clusters of artistic innovation has been already described and surveyed: music in Liverpool (Power, 2008), advertising and publishing in New York (Porter, 1998), fashion in Milan (Wenting, 2008), etc.

The policymakers often approach the clusters as a factor of competitiveness in the knowledge economy. For instance, in France, the reform of the regions questions the administrative and political organization of the territory and imposes multipolarity of cities networks on the metropolitan territories. The capitals of 13 French regions are expected to exploit their growth potential, and at the same time to identify the “themes” on which all territories (metropolises, medium-sized and small towns) can collaborate. Innovation and the circulation of talent are perceived as important “themes” that allow the connectivity and singularity of the territories and facilitate mutual knowledge between the French regions and comparable territorial communities in other European countries (Landry, 2000).

At the same time, the “top-down” policies that stimulate geographic concentration of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular sector are not able to guarantee the economic efficacy and the territorial attractiveness of the clusters. Moreover, geographic concentration of artistic activities can depend on the other factors than the public policy *per se*. For example, the Montmartre of the 1900s, the SoHo of the 1970s, the Rive Gauche of the 1960s, or Akihabara, the video game district in Tokyo, have consolidated in a spontaneous manner, without any specific intervention of the public authorities.

The conjunction of these two ideas (“clusters like the competitiveness factor” on the one hand and “spontaneous tendencies for territorial grouping of certain activities” on the other hand) suggests a certain number of questions. Does the reinforced political support to metropolisation and clusters favor artistic innovation? Are the pre-existing sociotechnical networks of artistic innovation mainly concentrated in metropolises? Or, on the contrary, do they function independently of the political logics of territorial attractiveness? To what extent concentration in the creative industries can be a factor of territorial competitiveness? And to what extent can governments influence the competitiveness that this concentration can result from?

### 3.2. Creative cities: diverse realities

The notion of the “creative metropolis” refers to very different mechanisms depending on various economic, cultural, political and socio-geographical configurations. A detailed study of heterogeneous European contexts (southern vs. northern countries, centralized vs. decentralized countries, etc.), which we were able to carry out within the framework of our survey on the renewal of the European cultural offers, captures very strong differences that contextualize the potential for innovation. The other surveys also approve that innovation activities are not homogeneous and cluster spatially in regions that provide concentrations of the knowledge needed for the commercialization process (Feldman 2010). However, the causal links between the variables related to the socio-economic, historical or political profile of a territory and the local potential for artistic innovation remain weakly explored.

A comparative study of contexts that facilitate, or on the contrary, create obstacles to the production and successful implementation of artistic innovations could be useful for understanding of stakes and drivers of these processes. Development of the common indicators (qualitative, but also quantitative) can allow an international comparison that reveal a complex reality without postulating, *a priori*, the existence of a “creative” territory, or declaring a territory “creative” *a posteriori*. The findings resulted from this approach will have important policy implications for both private firms and state governments.

### 3.3. The effects of spatial proximity on artistic innovation

Contemporary changes in artistic work (such as, for example, new methods of production, new tools and strategies for public presentation, globalized markets, etc.) are transforming networks involved in artistic innovation. Territorial concentrations of companies, research organizations, art schools, artists, associations, etc. emerge, and pool technical, scientific, aesthetic and economic knowledge. For instance, in the United Arab Emirates, the activities such as design, art, technological development, healthcare, etc. are gathered in the newly developed neighborhoods of the cities like Dubai or Abu Dhabi. In consequence, the UAE cities become increasingly composed of the neighborhoods that are recognized nationally and internationally by a particular function that includes directly or implicitly artistic innovation (Motor City, Design District, Art District, etc.).

In these close exchange networks, the activity related to artistic innovation can be multiple, fragmentary or intermediate. The processes, methods and knowledge that contribute in a particular innovative deliverable can also become autonomous sources of innovation. Moreover, their development can lead to the other productions than the results that were initially intended. This is the case, for example, of the Japanese manga cartoons, which enter

the museum expositions, but also inspire video games, optical technologies and computer interfaces (Ito, 2009).

Explanations of the effects of spatial proximity tend most often to be locked in the economic or technological dimension: the need for face-to-face exchanges, the construction by interaction of common tacit knowledge, etc. (Grossetti 2015). However, from a sociological perspective, the analysis of production and assimilation of artistic innovations that takes as a starting point the observable dynamics of territorial collaboration could reveal the new variables related to the spatial organization of innovation activities. An inductive and qualitative approach that compares several case studies is able to apprise of how the territory and the proximity can play a role in artistic innovation and capture the logics that produce or disapprove the exchanges among the neighboring organizations.

What is the role of the territory in bringing together organizations that collaborate around artistic innovation? Are the territorial dynamics of artistic innovation associated with international exchanges between major cities? Do they transcend national borders in favor of specialized global networks (Wagner 2008)? Or, on the contrary, are these relational dynamics anchored on the smaller-scale sites, and contextualized by more local or interregional exchanges? An analysis of collaborations among the actors based in different cities, regions and countries, and measuring the intensity of their exchanges in relation to a variety of macro- and meso- sociological variables, would make it possible to capture and map "from below" the dynamics of circulation of artistic innovations at the local, national and international levels.

## **Conclusion**

The main aim of this exploratory paper was to address the lack of systemic reflection on social indicators of artistic innovation, and to highlight the importance of its further exploration and conceptualization.

We suggested several directions of exploration that seize the heterogeneous dimensions of artistic innovation and evaluate its diverse impacts on contemporary societies. We have also identified social processes that accompany production, reception and territorial anchors of artistic innovation, as well as research questions that these social processes raise. According to conventional wisdom, research problems related to artistic innovation should be resolved by the same disciplinary approaches than for the other types of innovation. However our paper suggests that a transversal sociological perspective that adopts a bottom-up and empirical approach can reveal the dimensions of artistic innovation that are still unexplored or underestimated. These dimensions can fruitfully complement the current conceptualisations of artistic innovation offered by other analyses and disciplines.

Accordingly, the first major contribution of the present paper is that it provides a transversal sociological framework for defining, measuring and evaluation of artistic innovation "from below". This framework complements the traditional evaluations that are already deployed for the other types of innovation, and seeks to seize, understand and compare social appreciations, ideas and debates on "what is" artistic innovation in contemporary societies.

A second important implication of our approach derives from our empirical observations of European and extra-European contexts. We insist on the multi-processual character of artistic innovation that exceeds artistic and cultural field, and increasingly integrates the products,

processes, marketing strategies and organizations related to a variety of domains (technical, political, organisational, urban, scientific etc.). In consequence, we consider that the analysis of artistic innovation should incorporate the survey of artistic components that are innovative not necessarily by their own, but also by their way of integrating the socio-technical processes of production and social reception.

Finally, we suspect that territorial competition for artistic innovation that integrates the everyday lifestyle of citizens becomes an anticipated tool of cultural diplomacy. The tendency to use artistic innovations as a political and social counterbalance to reactionary moods is observable in the case of the European political programs, as well as in the countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Singapore. Our paper has described sociological and cartographical approaches that could be useful for analysing the impacts of artistic innovations on territorial attractiveness, social inclusion and multiculturalism.

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