Visibility as a Stake for Cities

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1 ABSTRACT

Visibility has been recently discovered by sociologists. It is different from fame. Fame is the mere consequence of meritocracy: some talent is recognized, a name is well known. Visibility involves the use of Medias, and the popularity (of the star) concerns not only his (her) talent but also his (her) person (face, style …). In the first part of the paper, this difference is described. In the second part, the analogy between visible persons and visible cities is explored in these fields: (1) the appearance of a new spatial division of labor (metropolises, which are visible / mid-sized cities) (2) adverse selection (the stake of choosing the specialty of a city) (3) different mindsets (in visible cities and mid-sized cities) (4) security in large cities (the symbols targeted by terrorists are there) (5) the interaction between visible persons and visible cities.

2 INTRODUCTION

The American novelist Upton Sinclair wrote a book "Mammonart" on the links between famous artists of the past and the economy. We quote him: "Mr. Ogi must have an audience" (Mr. Ogi is the name of any artist). Of course, audience (and therefore money) matter in an artist's life. But one has recently discovered that there are two kinds of audience. Some artists are famous: their talent is recognized, their name is well known. It is meritocracy. And other artists, the "stars" are in a different situation: their popularity involves the Medias (Internet) and not only their talent is popular, but their person (face, style …) is worshiped. They are "visible".

To the difference fame / visibility corresponds the difference amateur / fan, when audience is concerned. We find pertinent theory on fame and amateurs in the book of the American sociologist HS Becker "Worlds of art", and on visibility in the book of the French sociologist Nathalie Heinich "De la visibilité" ("On visibility").

In the first part of the paper we shall present what is visibility and what is the difference between fame and visibility. In the second part we explore the analogy between visible persons and visible cities in several fields: spatial division of labor, adverse selection, mindsets, security and interaction visible persons / visible cities.

3 AMATEURS AND FANS

There is a continuum going from "grace" to "trance". Amateurs are mostly on the side of "grace" and fans, on the side of "trance".[1]

To understand "grace" we can refer to the philosopher Kierkegaard, quoted by the German sociologist Siegfried Kracauer in his book "The detective novel". The community of believers is communing (during the mass) when everyone resents that his neighbor is a fellow man, since Man is always between God and Immanence. Things are as the words say that they are. Concerning amateurs: they commune when their pleasure is such that they resent that they are between Art (embodied in the Artist himself) and Immanence (the uncultured brute).

"Trance" is described by the French novelist Louis Hémon in "Battling Malone, pugilist". Describing the audience at a boxing match he writes: "The crowd, suddenly infuriated… became a living clamor, an horrendous unleashed wrath. Men got up out of their chairs, apoplectic, the veins of their forehead as prominent as cables, shouted insults and blasphemies, shaking fists and ready to rush forward etc."[2]

According to HS Becker a world of art is characterized by conventions. They are known by amateurs and mastered by the artists. Therefore the pleasure of an audience of amateurs is also a "judgment of taste" (to use the words of Bourdieu): the spectacle was adequate to the chosen conventions. At the opposite, the fans

[1] But amateurs can be very vulgar, and fans can remain still. Amateurs are vulgar when there is a scandal. For instance, when the piece "Déserts" ("Deserts") from the French composer Varese was premiered in Paris, in 1954, there was a scandal. It was recorded, and the record is available on YouTube.

[2] The translation from French is by the author of the paper.

ISBN 978-3-9504173-0-2 (CD), 978-3-9504173-1-9 (print)
Editors: Manfred SCHRENK, Vasily V. POPOVICH, Peter ZEILE, Pietro ELISEI, Clemens BEYER

cherish and worship the personal features of their idol: face, style, clothes and even anything familiar to the idol (his home, for instance) or concerning him (her) like tastes, moods … Their behavior is passionate and tribal.

We can sum up the difference between amateurs and fans in this table:

	Amateur	Fan
Interest	Heritage, Style, History…	Personality of the Star, rumors and information on it, objects linked to it …
Motivation	Taste, Culture	Entertainment, Identification to the personality of the Star (imitation, worship …)
Criteria	Judgment of taste	Spontaneous pleasure
Behavior	Discretion	Enthusiasm
Places	Museums, Concert halls, Festivals …	Shows with the worshiped Star
Examples of places	Paris, London, Venice …	Graceland3, Hollywood, Halls of fame …

4 THE HEINICH'S THEORY ON VISIBILITY

At the start there is the appearance of cheap technology allowing the reproduction of artworks, highlighted by Walter Benjamin (Heinich, 2012). More, there is a dissymmetry: the Star is alone, and the fans are many (Heinich, 2012). Indeed the Star is helped by many professionals able to promote the sales. They combine in the best way physical presence and virtual presence of the Star. It results in a worship of the person of the Star. Success explains success: the self-realizing predictions (when the fans prepare themselves to marvelous time) matter. But they are not enough. Talent and … chance matter also (this is a point highlighted by Nassim Taleb in his book "Antifragile: the things which gain from disorder"). An audience of fans is wise when it is enthusiastic about the successful spectacle: it is the outcome of an accord of talent and chance. Paradoxically, a star knows his or her fans less than famous artists know the amateurs supporting them. Painters meet the amateurs buying their paintings, know their tastes and can adapt their style to these tastes (Becker, 2010). The Star does not know his fans (since they are so many) but is able to develop empathy with them. The success of the famous artist relies less on chance. But when the success of the Star exists, it is bigger.

The Heinrich's theory brings more. She is a follower of the French sociologist Bourdieu. She adds a "capital" to the capitals defined by Bourdieu to explain the search for distinction: cultural capital (innate ease with culture is concerned), educational capital (knowledge acquired in schools), economic capital (money) and social capital (social connections). It is the visibility capital, the main features of which are:

- It is measurable. The size of the audience can be measured.
- It is accumulable. The success of a Star allows more success. One can define the production function of a star: $G = f(Cv(ev), P(ep)) - DU(ev, ep)$, where: Cv is the visibility capital, P is the output (the number of professional performances), ev is the effort to acquire visibility, ep is the effort to produce performance, DU is the disutility of the efforts. G is the net gain, f is the gross gain. Suppose: $\partial G / \partial ev > \partial G / \partial ep > 0$. The star is a wise entrepreneur if he (she) develops the visibility capital, not working but attending galas, TV shows, or being busy with humanitarian activities, for instance. In other words, one unity of effort devoted to visibility triggers more gain than one unity devoted to production. Another consequence of the visibility capital is the Lyndi effect. It has been discovered by an American sociologist, Albert Goldman, who studied music and musicians. It has been commented by mathematicians like Mandelbrot and Taleb. Concerning human beings it states: the longer has been the career of some star, the higher is his expectancy to remain in the course of career.[4]
- It is transferable. The heirs of a star are visible persons, who can become celebrated more easily since their personality attracts attention.
- It is worth money. The stars get gifts, make appearance in advertisings, obtain sponsorship etc.
- It is convertible. A star can convert from an activity to another one (an actor becomes a singer etc.).

[3] It is the home of Elvis Priestley in Memphis (USA). It is the most visited home in the USA, after the White House.
[4] However this « law » is not so pertinent when human beings are concerned. First, life expectancy is bounded. Second, it often occurs that a star does not keep its ability to create empathy with his audience.

The consequence of the existence of visibility capital is an upheaval of social hierarchy. Nathalie Heinich distinguishes "added value" and "endogenous value": "added value" concerns talented artists who become visible persons such as cinema actors, singers … or sportsmen or sportswomen etc. and "endogenous value" concerns the raw phenomenon of visibility, which is explained by the curiosity of people, not by the talent of the visible persons. So the monarchic families, the persons appearing in telereality programs, the journalists interviewing and meeting celebrities and even … weathermen and weatherwomen are visible persons.

5 THE ANALOGY BETWEEN THE VISIBLE CITIES AND THE VISIBLE PERSONS

This analogy exists in several fields.

5.1 A new spatial division of labor

The large metropolises are visible, while the mid-sized cities imitate them and are not so much visible. Indeed, in some large cities (London, Paris …) the needs are fashioned, and the Stars live there. Only there, they can work. They need professionals of many kinds: consultants, impresarios, journalists, script writers, sound engineers etc. (Los Angeles, with Hollywood, is an example). The needed atmosphere is there. The large metropolises are in competition to attract this professional milieu. The visibility capital of a large city is useful. The décor of the city is nice, and always reshaped. Here one can observe this top of the artificiality of the city: artification. According to the French philosopher Lipovetsky, artification is when all in the everyday life has to be beautiful. Possibly subsidies incite to shoot movies in these cities. To support nice museums, Opera houses, theaters etc. is costly, but the inhabitants of the large cities are rich, and these cities have big budgets.

More, the historical center in large metropolises is the place for entertainment, leisure, culture … at the disposal of the inhabitants of the whole metropolis. Here are the nice places, the museums, the concert halls, the nightclubs, and the restaurants … The experts in transport have recently discovered that the flows of transport inside the metropolises are not as they have believed before: just from the periphery to the centre to the workplace, and return from the centre to the periphery, to the home. There are flows from a borough to another to work, to shop, to buy services etc. And there are flows from periphery to the centre to have entertainment there.[5] Here are the popular places, the nice décor, which are shown on the TV screen, in movies etc.

The synergies in visible cities are a consequence of the visibility capital. For instance, if one attends a congress in Paris, one can meet famous persons during the congress, then visit the city, go to the show and eat in celebrated restaurants etc.

Of course there are many places in these cities formatted to welcome visitors, trigger their whims and incite them to spend money during their stay. But this does not mean that the quality of life is very good for the inhabitants. Indeed, it is at a standard level. There are many reasons: (1) As all the places in the visible cities have to be nice (the city is artified) there are always building sites anywhere (2) Noise is a problem in all the attractive places (where are the bars, the nightclubs, the cinemas …). One can give the example of the famous passageways of Paris which inspired Walter Benjamin when he wrote his book "Paris, capital city of the 19 th century". They are closed Saturday and Sunday as it is asked by the inhabitants (who know the code to enter the passageway). Some protest that these places could be open to visitors, formatted to welcome them etc. which would trigger proceeds, and jobs. There is a conflict: if the quality of life is preserved, economic opportunities are lost. (3) In some quarters of visible cities many movies are shot. It raises problems. Among the tens of professional specialties in cinema, there is one which consists in preparing the ground for the shooting outdoors. An authorization of the police station is needed. The shooting is announced on panels. Parked cars are removed. It is called in French "ventousage" ("suckering") meaning to put suckers on the ground to prevent drivers from parking their cars. During several days, three, four or five big trucks full of electronic equimpent will be parked in the street. Circulation of cars and pedestrians can become impossible (for instance when special effects, like "effect of snow", are produced). The filmmakers are fond of shooting in these places because it is nice décor. It is also fashionable, authentic and popular. (4) In Europe, the standard of life is raising continuously. As the inhabitants of large cities are

[5] After a presentation by the Russian geographer Olga Verdina, at the International Geographic Union congress, in 2015, in Moscow.

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richer, they are frequently out of their home to shop, to go to the show, to eat in restaurants, to visit exhibitions etc. The networks are saturated. Car attrition allows an improvement. But often streets and plazas are replete with people. (5) Also there is the stake of security that we deal with in a particular paragraph.

At the opposite life in some mid-sized cities is more pleasant. These cities are silent, sure, walkable, the networks are not saturated and the pace of life is not frantic.

5. 2 Differences in mindsets.

The inhabitants of the large cities are used to observe and understand visibility. The inhabitants of the mid-sized cities are familiar with fame, the consequence of talent and competency. The two are very different. It is shown by the Heinrich's notion of "endogenous value" In this case celebrity does not correspond to a particular talent but is the consequence of curiosity of people and exposure to the Medias. Visibility involves empathy with the audience, use of Medias and links with "entrepreneurs of visibility" (journalists …). Fame is when somebody is recognized as talented. The words are celebrity (visibility), or fame, or reputation, or renown. A coarse scheme explains the difference: in the large metropolises, the needs are fashioned, while in the mid-sized cities, one produces the products which allow the satisfaction of the consumers.

5.2 Adverse selection

The cities have to choose specialties and to build their own image. The large metropolises can attract all sorts of cultural activities, all kinds of shows etc. They are not "specialized cities". At the opposite mid-sized cities are (possibly) renowned in a single field (festivals, fairs…). They cannot blur their reputation by mingling different kinds of events. Take the example of cities which are well known in the field of classical music: Bayreuth (Germany), Salzburg (Austria) and Prades (France)… These cities cannot organize festivals of jazz, or world music. It is not a problem for large cities.

It is a sensitive issue. The size of the city matters very much. It seems that the threshold for an Opera House is 300000-500000 inhabitants. For a concert hall and an orchestra, it is perhaps 200000 inhabitants (sometimes two cities have an orchestra in common, or an orchestra performs music intermittently).For a simple auditorium, the threshold is less (perhaps 100000 inhabitants).

In Paris, Bercy Arena allows sports competitions and concerts. There are more than 20000 seats. It can be used for all kinds of shows. There is no problem because of a particular vocation. From an economic point of view, it is profitable since it can be used very often.

5.3 The stake of security in visible cities

The main symbols are in visible cities. Are concerned some quarters, plazas, monuments etc. They are targeted by terrorists. Also the means of transportation are targeted. They are used by many people at certain times. There are also attacks against political or religious symbols. When an attack (in a large city) occurs, the videos on it show a décor which is familiar because it is often visible on TV screens, in movies etc. Therefore it triggers a stronger emotion. Of course, the inhabitants of the large cities are worried of the possibility of attacks in their cities. But the inhabitants of the mid-sized cities are also afraid. In general, there is no symbol in mid-sized cities that terrorists could choose to hit. The mid-sized cities are more secure.

5.4 The interaction between visible persons and visible cities

The visible persons and the visible cities are in mutual dependency. Each benefits from the other. When they live in large metropolises, the Stars find the professionals they need, and the industry of events and the "entrepreneurs of visibility" (journalists) are there and of course the "atmosphere" (fashion, new "trends" …) is there. The studios (films, TV, radio) are there.

Not only the visible cities are benefitting from the purchase power of the Stars living there, but the décor is made more prestigious by the presence of the Stars. Thanks to sponsoring and events, they are shown in the prestigious places of the cities, in TV programs, videos …There are particular tour operators which offer trips allowing seeing Stars in the quarters where they live (when they move in the streets, when they shop…). Internet sites warn that some Star is presently in a shop or a restaurant etc.

6 CONCLUSION

If visibility has been discovered by sociologists recently, the topic was dealt with decades ago. For instance, famous books were written on the scandals and even crimes having occurred in Hollywood. The topic has been dealt with by journalists and novelists. We shall describe the ideas on visibility between the two World Wars (crust, anomy, Nemesis …) to highlight the opposition between these ideas and the current theory. We conclude by summing up the consequences of visibility for cities.

6.1 The ideas on visibility between the two World Wars.

We shall quote a half-forgotten French novelist, Edouard Estaunié, who wrote "La vie secrete" ("The secret life"). According to him we do not know one another. Of course, we meet and are in touch, but without understanding the main features of our personality. It is called the "crust". Only when the breaking of the crust occurs, we have the opportunity to know who the other persons are really. This occurs when there is a drama. That is why the novels fascinate the readers: the narrator takes the reader in a drama, which is the opportunity to display the deep personality of the characters. The "secret life" is shown. Today it is the role of movies. According to Lipovetsky the success of cinema is explained: "it fulfills and old dream of humanity, living vicariously".

Another theme of this time was anomy. As early as the 18 th century, the French philosopher Diderot in his book "Le paradoxe du comédien" ("The paradox of acting") described the actors: " in society I find them polished, caustic and cold; proud, light of behavior, spendthrifts, self-interested; struck rather by our absurdities than touched by our misfortunes; masters of themselves at the spectacle of an untoward incident or a recital of a pathetic story; isolated, vagabonds, at the command of the great; little conduct, no friends, scarce any of those holy and tender ties which associate us in the pains and pleasures of another, who in turn shares our own". The actor is not like other people, since he simulates passion perfectly, without resenting it. Later the word "anomy" has been used to describe the particular life of Stars: solitude, hidden passions, precarious equilibrium of the personality etc. A theme linked to anomy was Nemesis. Celebrity implies curiosity and often when some weakness of a star is known, it triggers disastrous consequences. Finally, the star could be destroyed (Nemesis).

Today visibility of the stars is explained in another way: consumers' society, capital of visibility (Heinich), artist capitalism (Lipovetsky) and social imaginary. The idea that the stars are anomic is somewhat blurred. Of course, some stars have behaviors they prefer to hide (and fear the curiosity of Internet users). But many stars are wise entrepreneurs and rich people. They seem to manage their image. And Nemesis should not be exaggerated: in many jobs chance matters and a star can be victim of bad luck, becoming unable to use the means warranting success.

6.2 The consequences of visibility for cities.

Since the phenomenon of visibility changes the society, it changes the hierarchy of cities. Today, there are visible cities (the large metropolises like New York, London, and Paris …) and mid-sized cities which are less visible. But these mid-sized cities are not only cities imitating the visible cities. They are the places of competency and fame (which are very much different from visibility).[6] Fame is the consequence of performance, while visibility concerns personal features and is generated by Medias. The stars are of different kinds: worshiped stars in the visible cities, and renowned persons in the mid-sized cities.

The visibility in large cities has consequences on quality of life. There it is not at its top. In the mid-sized cities, possibly quality of life is better.

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[6] A typical example in one of these cities is the owner of an enterprise, who succeeded. He becomes popular in this city.

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