

MEDIACITY 5
Reflecting on
Social Smart Cities
International Conference,
Workshops, Urban Interventions
1st - 3rd May 2015
Plymouth, UK

SOCIAL SMART CITIES WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY
ARCHITECTURE DESIGN & ENVIRONMENT WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY
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The formats of struggle for the city in new media (cases of the “Local blogs” project and the mobile application “Ingress the Game”)

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The development of local media products gives citizens a chance to struggle for the city. In some cases, it means literally to appropriate urban space and to maintain control over it within the game (“Ingress the Game”). In other cases, it refers to attempts to produce a legitimate language of urban descriptions within the district blog (“Local blogs”). We distinguish different media formats containing the specific organization of citizens’ participation in urban life and analyze their initial goals and failures. Reflecting upon some of the ways how everyday life practices, an imaginary dimension of the city and technical issues of communication are linked together, we conclude that new media are as a simulator of more complex social interactions. The “Local blogs” project provides the communication platform that lacks the mechanism of self-presentation and has too many alternatives in field of social networks. Meantime the foolproof gameplay of Ingress integrated with other services and networks tends to overcome the simplified idea of competition and appropriation for constructing more advanced urban descriptions of a consolidated game community..

New media as a simulator of social interactions

If the idea of struggle for the city exists nowadays and could be imagined as potentially concerning everyone, it is usually considered in a very material way – as a war, as meetings against demolition jobs, as Pride parades, as municipal elections, etc. In addition, it takes too many efforts to transform contemporary normative city in a symbolical level – to re-name a street or to set a memorial place. These functions usually belong to very concrete agents – local authorities, business corporations. How could ordinary people participate in creation the image of the city? How could we imagine the struggle for the contemporary city as a single whole? Could we examine this idea as a still actual one? In our paper we turn to new media¹², which save

¹² We understand new media as media which main function is to support user’s content creation.

the traces of citizens' participation in city life and, what is more important, create new legitimate forms of city appropriation.

Some researchers believe that individual imaginary reconstruction of the city in inevitable in contemporary megalopolises where notional landscapes overlap each other and create an effect of total heterotopia and oversaturation of cultural codes and meanings (Vakhshayn, 2014). The growth of local media products illustrates both the demand for integral image of the city and the citizens' willingness to become a part of it. But how these media represent the city? How they influence on people' action and perception of environment? We would like to analyze the relationship between messages about the city, practices of city "appropriation" and formats of new media. We use the term "format" to delineate mechanisms and circumstances in which urban descriptions function. The formats present different elements of the city as meaningful and connected to each other; and provide different roles for citizens in the description of the city.

Thus, the idea of struggle for the city could be re-actualized in different formats. We will work with two cases. The first case is Moscow "Local blogs" project, which attempted to overcome previous forms of city descriptions – the soviet (scanty and conservative) and consumptive one (city as a place for leisure). In that way, this case illustrates a struggle between different languages of city description¹³. Each of them represents through the city image an ideology of some citizens' strata. For example, "Big city" magazine organized "Local blogs" project and had most detailed coverage of the Moscow protest demonstrations in 2011. The second case, mobile application "Ingress the game"¹⁴ exploits the archetype of struggle stimulating the gaming practices of city appropriation. On the one hand, this format through representing city as a non-neutral space managed to rebirth ideas of the "right to the city" and community in some way. On the other, the consequences for everyone's participation are non-narrative understanding of the city and very reduced and performative character of competition (city as a place for simple actions).

As W. Benjamin and Russian avant-garde directors interpret cinema in the beginning of XX century as a training simulator of modern city experience, we suppose that in the epoch of urban society (Lefebvre, 2003) new media become a training stimulator for very wide spectrum of social interactions. But

¹³ We understand a language as a discourse about the city with its own axiomatic, metaphors and optics on the city life.

¹⁴ Mobile application "Ingress the Game" is a multi-player online game based on principles of geo-localization and augmented reality (2 million of players, designed by Niantic Labs (Google)). It represents the city as a non-neutral space – a city map, consisting of game portals that match tourist attractions and unique objects. Users should walk through the city to make game actions and change the part of a map on the screen. All portals can be captured by one of two teams ("fractions"). User collides with short fraction's mythology description after the first launching of application. After capturing two portals, a player ("an agent") could link them together. Linked three portals form a control field. One of the likely targets of Ingress is to cover all Earth surface by a one fraction's field – blue or green according to the fraction membership.

if one hundred years ago media appeal only to citizen's ability to perceive, nowadays they imply citizen's participation, erasing the border between real and virtual. In the case of "Ingress the game", we investigate how the idea of struggle for the city becomes a ground for very sophisticated communication organization in game community.

In terms of Johan Huizinga we could define some stages of "Ingress" development as "puerilistic". It means that game interactions more and more reproduce common relations and mechanisms of urban appropriation while maintaining an illusion of game form (for instance, total appropriation of areas). In the case of "Local blogs" we analyze the fail of experiment for creating the format of city problems' discussion. It turns out that nowadays the representation of city type "polis" (Hannah Arendt) does not work without elements of gamification and self-presentation. That is why the language of "new citizens", a translator of which was the "Big city" magazine, transferred to the parallel network structures, such as self-organizing groups in "Facebook".

In view of the aforesaid, we could make several pre-conclusions. In classical urban anthropology the idea of community is connected with a concrete territory, a special system of symbols (which could include the language) and its own demands in politics. Nowadays we could see: (1) the urban community constructed on practices of collective mobility and without special language of city description ("Ingress") and (2) the language of city description translated through media without a concrete community-carrier, but with plenty of performative and liquid communities in social networks ("new citizens"). However, we will demonstrate that even in the format which does not imply the means for political messages, some users find a method to do it (field art in "Ingress"). Previous conclusion problematize the idea of new media as a special structure ("why if new media does not work as new media?") and the idea of urban community ("what we could relate to it?") as well.

Methodology

The empirical section of our research is divided into two parts. The first one is dedicated to the "Local blogs" project of "Big city" magazine. To realize it we used means of participant observation and discourse-analysis. For a one year of local journalist-blogger's job (2012-2013) we collected materials (news, posts, photos) containing urban descriptions of citizens and had opportunity to witness stages of project's development. The second part regards the mobile application "Ingress the Game". We conducted 8 interviews with players of each fraction in the period of autumn 2014. Then we launch the Internet questionnaire (March 2015) and collected 709 responds. After clearing the dataset we get 497 responds, 231 from which are from Moscow. Considering the total amount of active players held at the official community (general

population in Russia equals about 7915 people, in Moscow – 1771 people) we could estimate that statistically the confidence interval is no more than 3.3% and 6% respectively.

We believe that selected methods capture the specific aspects of investigating phenomena. A direct measurement of citizen's descriptions is difficult because of their unconscious character. The investigation of language and its format needs more participant methods. The observation let us look for a process of communication in more natural conditions. Meantime Ingress uses very standardized channels of game performing and communication, although players may exploit these channels in their own way. The certain practices of game and communication depend on a set of variables (fraction membership, living district, time of Ingress usage) that requires operations of generalization.

The “Local blogs” project of the “Big city” magazine

“Local blogs” was one of the most large-scale project in Moscow aimed at to push out citizens on the streets. To show the context and purposes of its organization we will conceptualize the development of Moscow representation in post-soviet media, describe a new optics of city perception and its connectedness with social movements, and then conclude with reasoning about urban discussions in new media.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union urban media faced with the necessity to create an image of a new way of urban life. We outline several problems of Moscow as a former USSR capital: the lack of local memory due to forced mass resettlement of citizens and demolition jobs in the beginning of XX century; the necessity to re-define public spaces as non-soviet and to form some citizens' leisure and consumptive strategies in capitalistic environment of the city; the lack of comfortable infrastructure.

The first popular magazines about Moscow aimed at solving the problem of leisure strategies – the new way of urban life was presented as consumption of “right” cultural products and visiting “right” places. Their target auditory was people with finances and stability, who wanted to make a choice between different proposals of the city. These magazine contained reviews, interview with celebrities, announces about events, some news.

The “Big city” magazine, which project “Local blog” we analyzed, was found in 2002. Its main function was not a propaganda of some way of life, but a description of different citizens' “habitués”. There were interviews with outstanding, but not famous people, reports from unknown places, big thematic materials (for instance, one number was dedicated to the description of things which deputies in Moscow use, wear and present each other). “Big city” magazine also tried to cover the lack of local memory problem, realizing numbers with old people life stories and materials about city history. In opposition to modest stylistic of soviet magazines and to limited circle of themes of “glamour” city magazines, “Big city” transmitted citizens' speech

syntactically close to natural and represented the city as a place keeping the capacity to surprise (through description of new places and new persons). On the one hand, this approach to city image could be interpreted as a strategy of magazine with limited budget (for instance, liberation from necessity to pay for photos of celebrities). On the other, this optics on city life can be a symptom of new social structure.

In the end of 2000s the “Big city” magazine started to raise a popularity rapidly, and in 2011 became the main translator of protest movement ideas. Urbanist K. Lynch in his book “Image of the city” tells that city image (always partly individual, partly - collective) becomes as legible and complicated, as a homogenous group is in characteristics of age, cultural capital, etc (Lynch, 1960). Therefore, we could suppose, that in Moscow by the end of 2000s formed a strata of people, whose image of the city coincided with image, constructed by the “Big city”. Moreover, they have not already been satisfied with culture consumption, but tried to promote their political interests.

What was first – the class of citizens, who introduced the new language of city description, or the language, that formed the city image and group, accepted the language as its own? The most popular sociological approach presumes that there is a new class of people at the first place, who then elaborate their own language, expressing their needs. But some sociologists consider that new language appears firstly, then it struggles for power (including the field of mass media), and later people, who can speak on it, appear. New language created new optics of city perception. “Richard Florida didn’t discover the “creative class” just as Pasteur didn’t discover the existence of microbes – they created an optics in which these objects became legible, describable and, in the end, real” (Vakhshtayn, 2014, p. 16).

This idea coincides with retrospective view of several most popular editors and journalists on their work in 2000-s as a modeling ideal city: “we wrote about the city as if it is interesting to live there” (Jury Saprykin, the editor of a popular magazine “Afisha” (*translated as “poster”, “billboard”*) and “Big city”). Thus, there was an element of utopian imaginary in the work of Moscow magazines in early 2000s. Thus, there is an instance, media that create a new language of the city description, and there is a group of people, which, absorbing the language, creates output in the form of demand for the magazine and promotion through it their political interests. The project “Local blogs” of “Big city” magazine we consider as the continuation and consequence of this utopian language of city description.

The “Local blogs” project was a special part of the “Big city” magazine website, launched in the end of 2012 (Figure 1). All posts were attached to city map; users could monitor news on it or chose the news line of one particular district blog. Bloggers (district resident or young journalist, one or two in blog, they had a little wage) published new posts with local news, interviews and historical information several times a day, using ordinary lexicon and “youth” stylistic in their notes. In the beginning, there were ten

blogs, dedicated mostly to center area, but in a year, there were about fifty. Every person could offer his own post, which had to be approved by blogger in several hours; also, everyone could automatically post a photo from Instagram with special blog tag. Posts were divided into six categories: history, news, previews, places, people, and photography. Organizers presented this project as a platform for local community to discuss their problems. Bloggers encouraged and even provoked people to share their questions and advices.

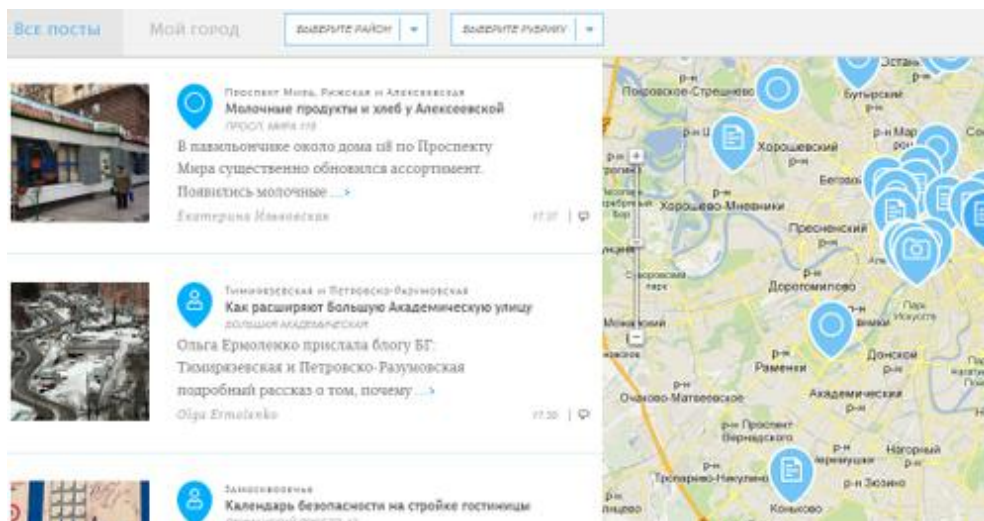


Figure 1. The website of the “Local blogs” project

After the start of project work, it arouses an intensive reaction in the journalistic field and conversations about “new era of journalism”. It also received a Facebook Russia award as the best media undertaking. In a year, each post had about 1000 views. Nevertheless it turned out that not so much people were willing to create their own posts, they rather prefer to comment or read them. In the end of 2014 year bloggers had to stop their work because of financial problems, city community did not support project functioning.

The main purpose of “Local blogs” project corresponded to previous magazine ideology – to show that every place in the city, including periphery districts, could be interesting. On the one hand, K. Lynch regards the opportunity to change the image of the city as an indicator of “healthiness” of city environment. Therefore, the project aimed at involving people in discussions about the city and positively “picked out” city objects could be estimated as a step towards Moscow image recovery and legibility. On the other hand, we keep from considering the failure of “Local blogs” as the symptom of weakness of city community and environment. The blogs’ format (very modest user’s profile, no friends list (unpredictable auditorium of publication), no encouragement for posts) was unsuitable for accumulation of social, economic and symbolic capital. This case problematizes the media-optimists confidence in accessibility of net as a sufficient ground for expression. There were many alternative media platforms (social networks,

personal blogs) for demonstration of non-routine optics, attentive to diverse situations and details of city life, or of interest of other citizen advices, which were demanded for post-making in “Local blogs”.

Thus, the growing popularity of the "Big city" magazine expressed the need for creating a new language of city description, which let new strata of Moscow citizens symbolically “appropriate” city space, to perceive it as familiar and open. However, the element of utopian imaginary, inherent in this language, was projected beyond the borders of editorial staff and created overstated expectations from media platform (free discussion as a sufficient ground for community organization) and from Moscow citizens as well (they had a clear interest to participate in discussions about the city). In that way, the new language was not actualized in the framework of the blogging in magazine’s website, but in the parallel structures of social networks (photos in Instagram as a display of non-routine optics on city environment, Facebook self-organizing groups for local problems discussion).

Mobile application “Ingress the Game”

Game elements of urban space and mobile technologies

“Ingress the game” is a game of new generation without definite time and space borders (Figure 2). It is available every moment and everywhere. That differs “Ingress” from classical understanding of a game. In work of Johan Huizinga “Homo Ludens” the Game is opposed to everyday practices. One of specific characteristic of the Game is its certain time-space borders that construct a frontier between common and sacred. At the same time, the Game is not detached from culture and reality, so culture is acting out in game forms. On the one hand, “Ingress” supplements common citizens’ practices (walking, going to job and school) and strengthen them with new meanings. On another hand, the format of the game does not have the end in scenario, situation changes every moment due to other player’s actions. This forces some participants to apply more and more energy to prolong the course of the game. Gamer’s motivation has a performative character: “*To show that we can do it*” (from the interview with the player). For instance, after the symbolical appropriation of North Pole by one fraction, another fraction decided to make a field above it too. We called this stage of game “potlatch”. Growing difficulty of game tasks requires the more complicated community organization (the organizers of North Pole takeover mission coordinated 46 player from 7 counties). A solidary community is a result of game needs. Moreover, in our analysis we found out that more than a half of application users collided with some forms of violence during the game. Violence often caused by too personal attention to some city places (portals defending), signals about underside of game format of struggle and new forms of attachment to the city. In terms of Huizinga, we called this convergence of game and everyday logics “puerilism”. In this section we will review ideas of

social theorists about game intervention in urban space, whose projects also tending to wash out the borders between city life and game. Afterwards we compare these ideas with local-based mobile game case, and then describe different displays of struggle for the city game format (privatization of portals, players' distrust, and characterization the city in terms of war).

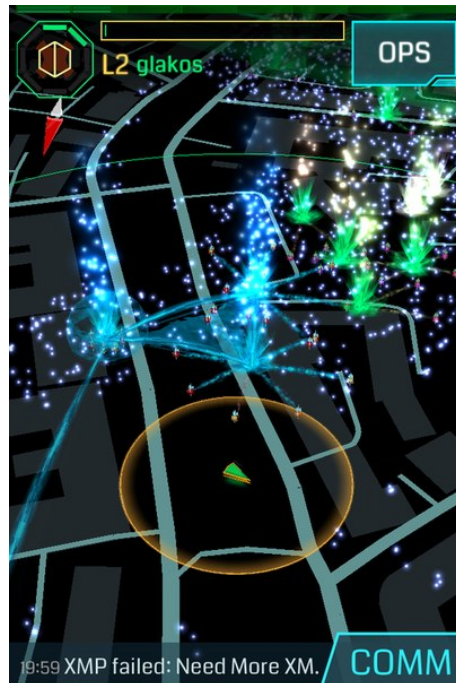


Figure 2. The gameplay of “Ingress the Game”

In the middle of XX century social theorists and architects regarded projects of game interventions in the urban space as dismissive and democratic. Conditionally we could divide their projects into two approaches: psychogeographic and architectural. The first one – psychogeography – scrutinizes the game ability of urban perception. Guy Debord and his followers paid their attention to problems of game re-definition of urban space during “drifting around urban environments” (Debord). The second approach is related with several architectural schools and avant-garde conceptions: New Babylon of Constant (1960) and Archigram of David Green (Crompton 1998), – that receive from Scott McQuire the general name – “liquid cities” (McQuire, 2014, p. 137-174). Proponents of this approach prefer to discuss structural ability of urban space to be recompiled by means of “dynamic network individual wills” (Ibid., 153).

Regarding these two approaches we doubt to accurately attribute mobile games to one of them. On the one hand, mobile games pretend to change previous forms of urban perception and to provide formats of gaming community organizing. On the other hand, mobile games enchain players to screen and virtual representation of city that is far from real formats of space usage and appropriation.

Mobile games as a format of new media give a precedent to overestimate the significance and facilities of new technological channels of communication. What are the perspectives of mobile games? Does this form of game deliberate or reproduce existing social relations? What qualities and mechanisms of everyday life are *acting out* within this format?

Although game elements are evident in mobile games, there are foundations to suspect level of their clarity. J. Huizinga told that contemporary forms of interactions and everyday life “consciously used game forms for concealing social and political intentions” (Huizinga, 2011, p. 283). As a result forms of interactions (including mobile games) recall to game forms staying at the same time just “feigned game”. This characteristic of modern culture Huizinga called “puerilism” (infantile behavior). Puerilism is opposite to the Game. The apparent semblance to the Game is supplemented with “a necessity of banal entertainment, a thirst of rough sensations, all kinds of unions, signs of differences, scarcity of sense of humor, fiery reactions and going far suspiciousness and intolerance” (Ibid.). Opposition “Game – Puerilism” provides a quite general context for discussion of interaction formats within mobile games.

In case of Ingress we can follow how the idea of struggle for the city reveals in different forms during the development of game community. The primordial concept of Ingress stays at the necessity of ongoing capturing and transferring from hand to hand portals. This stage of Ingress’s development we could describe in terms of *potlatch*. Potlatch is characterized by mutual efforts of the parties to demonstrate the higher level of charity and wealth that can be sacrificed without any harm to its owner. The key point of potlatch is revanche. The opponent must overcome the previous offering (Huizinga, 2011, p. 97).

Ingress players show similar patterns of competition. For instance, we ask players what game mood they prefer: move more or play more. We receive the following distribution of responses: 59% of players prefer move more and play more, 29% - move less and play more, 9% - move more and play less, 3% - move less and play less. These data show that for about 68% of players moving is a preferable category. At the same time the significant number of players (29%) pretends to reach game goals with the least effort. The fact of effort minimization suggests that players tend to possess portals and not to give them away.

It is equally important how players decide to join one of the teams. Most popular variants are: 53%¹⁵ of players choose a fraction because of its description, 31% - like the color. These variants don’t distort the equal proportion between two fractions due to random selection. For us is more interesting than players want to support the inferior team. So, 18% of players decide to join local weaker force, 6% - to join global weaker force. These

¹⁵ The multiple choice question. The sum of percent exceeds 100%.

variants of recruitment maintain (at least not disturb) the balance of power that is disordered by a will to join the fraction of gaming friends (32%). We consider that given distribution of responses witnesses the initial intention to sustain an ongoing exchange by attacks and defenses between two fractions.

Practices of city appropriation and sleeping urban forces

The contrary logic to potlatch is the puerilistic logic of total control over game portals and private possession. For instance, that is widespread among players to have so called “home” portals – portals that are reachable for game manipulation from home, a place of working or studying without living a building. In this case the place that is already emotionally and practically attached to a person matches a game portal. Coincidence of urban elements of everyday life with game elements can be regarded as a potential threat to destroy the format of the game. Among the respondents, 70% say that they have a “home” portal. The most common form of interaction with the “home” portal are: “mining gaming artifacts” (46%¹⁶), “other agents know that this is my portal” (39%), “I am constantly distracted by the portal” (35%). These forms are typically competitive advantage that players get from a convenient location of portal. At the same time, the category “others know that this is my portal” let us see the coupling between the identity of a player and a particular place. This is a way how a player potentially appropriates the part of urban space. Next most popular categories: “this is the usual portal” (18%) and “I meet with the visitors of the portal” (18%) - reveal more consolidating potential of such king identity. In this case a “home” portal becomes another reason to communicate with strangers, to perform an imaginary linkage between the certain place and the player.

Meantime superposition of everyday life and game logics entails situations leaving the borders of game performance and harmless transferring controlled portals from one another. About 13% of players force other players from the same fraction to install artefacts and mods on their “home” portals for maintaining control over them. 10% of players don't let players from another fraction perform game manipulations with their “home” portals. This case of breaking game format is supported with facts that 36% of respondents experience situations of non-game pressure, particularly 8% of players face with threats of physical violence.

The described abode displays of private possession and control over portals supplemented with breaking game rules just illustrate other form of acting out the game format. Ingress can not last long autonomously and closed on game rules. The mobile game that has urban space as a game board sooner or later reveals sustainable mechanisms of everyday life interaction. Furthermore integrated with other services (social networks, messengers, maps) the

¹⁶ The multiple choice question. The sum of percent exceeds 100%.

mobile game is capable to arouse and to actualize sleeping urban forces. For instance, in spite of global character Ingress launches local district communication in Telegram and Google+. Among the respondents, 87% are members of local district chats (or communities) in Telegram (Google+). The membership in such chats (communities) is not occasional and requires real efforts of players. So, 52% of players become a member of chat (community) due to playing around the district area and meeting other players there. 41% of agents get an affirmation after playing together with other local players, and 24% create these chats (communities) with their own hand.

The situation of occasional encounter is no less important. The occasional encounter is a basic condition of presence and communication in the modern city (R. Sennet, J. Habermas). In case of encounter with a player from the same fraction: 21% ignore alien presence and 74% start communication; in case of encounter with a player from another fraction: 42% ignore, 52% start to communicate. The difference appears because 20% of agents that write a message in common fraction chat (internal chat of Ingress) in case of encounter with a player from another fraction prefer to visit the certain portal but not to show their own presence. Nevertheless we tend to estimate a high potential of game encounters to engender new social ties and connections.

Distrust and atmosphere of suspiciousness vs Cooperation and joint projects

The confronting argument for amplification social ties between players is an overall atmosphere of suspiciousness in Ingress. Starting to call players as “agents” Niantic Lab (Google) provokes the significant level of distrust. So, the average level (median) of trust to agents from another fraction is equal to “-1” (“Rather not trust”) on the scale from “-3” (“Absolutely not trust”) to “+3” (“Absolutely trust”). Within own fraction agents tend to trust more to players from the headquarters and players seen before (median is equal to 2 “Trust”). Meantime players concern that such level of trust is partly justified. The majority of respondents finds difficult to assess it positively or negatively (median and mean equals “0”), but the lower quartile is equal to “0” too and the upper quartile is equal to “1” (Rather justified then not”).

Associations and imaginary borders

The idea of struggle is also supplemented by imaginary borders that divide a city into parts of fractions’ possession. For instance, we ask players (231 responds) what districts of Moscow are associated with one of two fractions. 62% of agents have such kind of associations. Particularly we find out that imaginary Moscow represents puzzles of fractions’ possession practically not overlapped (Figure 3). The only one exception is the central district № 29. This fact should be considered in light of weak associations in peripheral districts. Widely recognized districts such as Strogino of Resistance (№ 17)

and Izmaylovo of Enlightened (№ 31) don't get a support from all two fractions. Except for districts № 51 and № 61 (Biryulevo) others have a low level of association or a stereotypical presence when a district belongs to one fraction according to another but is not so recognized by the former. In contrast to a periphery the center is a main ground of clashes between fractions. During the period of investigation (since September 2014) the fraction "Enlightened" was the dominant force in Moscow. This explains why the center stays the most controversial and desired area in Moscow. If one fraction takes control over this part of the city, it means a temporary dominance that sooner or later will be replayed. Peripheral districts allow fractions not to constantly collide but to fix under control areas.

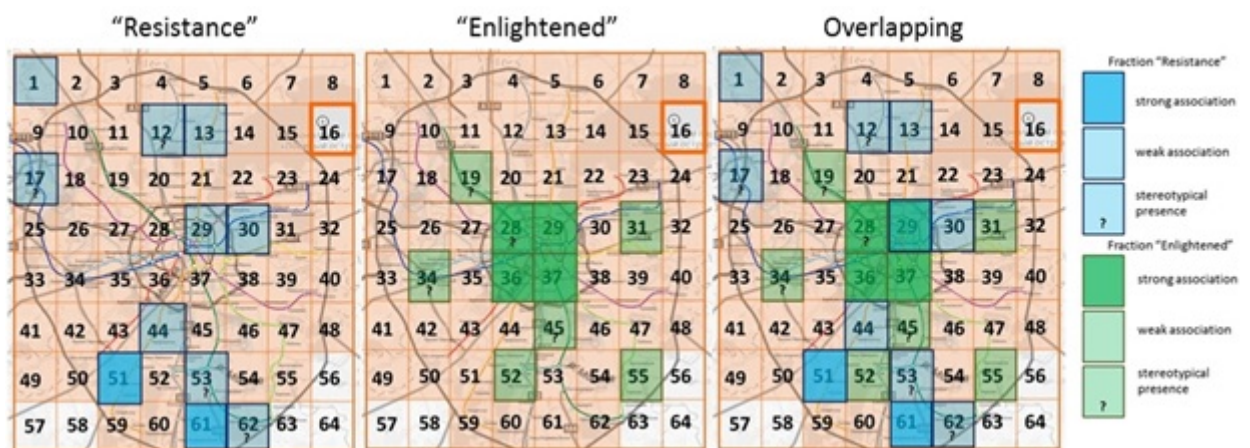


Figure 3. Districts of Moscow associated with the fraction ...

Potlatch vs Puerilism. The other scenario of game format

Ingress as a mobile game acts out different logics of struggling for the city. From the one hand, the mobile application allows players to exchange with attacks and operations. The meaning of Ingress is to maintain an ongoing practical participation of players. From the other hand, the significant part of players aims to total control over the certain area whether it is: a "home" portal or a living district.

The other scenario of game format is a stage of collaboration between players of different fractions. The performative logic to overcome previous achievements forces players to initiate joint projects. The brightest result of such projects is so called field art (Figure 4). Field art is a picture (a tracery) constructed from control fields of different colors. Deprived of sophisticated means of statement players have to use elements given by the mobile application – control fields. Field art is not only a case of collaboration, but also is an instrument of coverage important events leaving the game borders.

The development of collaboration stage is based on erasing differences between opposing fractions. The majority of players (60%) do not see any distinctions in personal qualities and organization types. This fact opens new perspectives for cooperation into a single game community and production more advanced urban statements and descriptions.

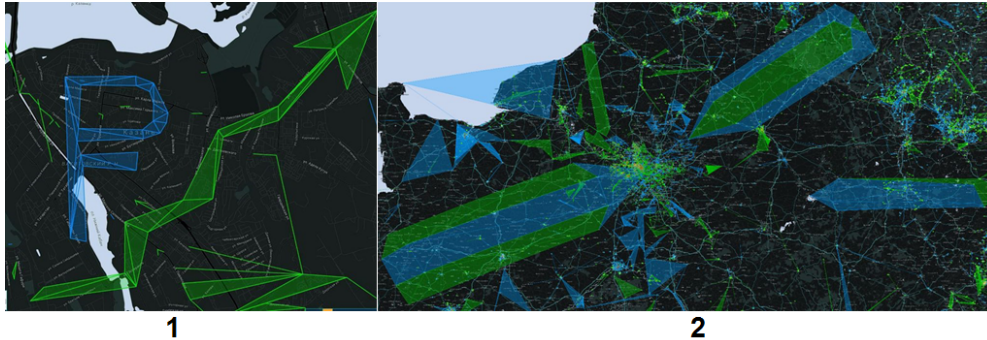


Figure 4. Field art. Representation of actual events: operations “Ruble, grow up!” (Russia, December 2014) and “Je suis Charlie” (France, January 2015).

Formats of new media: working or not?

The idea of format allows not only to argue about mechanisms providing communication in new media between citizen and the city, citizen and other citizens, but also to estimate a gap between initial conception of media product and forms of its usage (“tactics” in terms of M. de Certeau). According to the plan, Ingress should provoke users to change the routine routes and redirect their attention to details of material urban environment. This idea was realized by a half; players walk a lot in the city, but do not detect it. *“Ingress gives a reason to get around such interesting yards that you would not visit on your own. There are plenty of different miracles. And Ingress indicates places and graffiti that you would not notice. Of course, there is a problem that you much focus [on the screen] and not pay much attention to the place where you are. Yes, it is a disadvantage. But here we must learn to distribute our attention [between the environment and the screen]”* (from the interview with the player). This format provokes very material perception of the city as a distance walked by foot. On the contrary, “Local blogs” project created a format encouraging the attention to saturated with details urban environment in its forms as historical heritage and space for comfort social relations as well. However, this attention implies rather contemplation and information consumption, then discussion activity, and the plan of blogs organizers about local communities activation failed.

Surprisingly the foolproof gameplay of “Ingress” turned out as a sufficient base for elemental statements, which could be constructed in ones that are more complicated (field art). The initial idea of struggle and mechanism of city

redefinition in the game have very reduced and performative character (capturing and "repainting" portals by two teams) in comparison with ideological change of languages of city description in magazines. Nevertheless, game format managed to re-actualize some archetypical connections between citizen and the city and catalyze existing social relations (users have opportunity to realize their "network capital" – J. Urry). At the same time, convergence of game and everyday life could have dangerous consequences. Thus, the distinction between different formats and their connectedness with material life becomes the important citizen's mission and responsibility in the epoch of new media.

All previously said let us to conclude that new media products are rather a simulators of urban reality than simulators of it. The utopian constituent of new media (everybody could participate) has a possibility to change urban environment (new language of description could inspire on different activities as festivals, markets and charity events as last years in Moscow show). However, sometimes this utopian charge can provoke overstated expectations; solely media products have not enough mechanisms to create a community. New media as a place of social experiment not only create, but also represent the already existing structures of meaning and social relation, which makes them an important object for research.

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