Evolution of the territorial field of art in a post-socialist city. Distribution patterns of private contemporary art galleries in Krakow, Poland, between 1989 and 2019

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1. Introduction

Spatial patterns of art production and consumption are increasingly focused on by urban scholars (Redaelli & Stevenson, 2021). Locations of prestigious public and private cultural institutions reflect urban centralities and their shifts through the centuries (Boichot, 2011; Paül i Agustí et al., 2017; Phillips, 2014; Wedd et al., 2001). At the same time, clusters of independent, alternative venues are considered as initiators or at least signs of ongoing transformations of degraded, marginal, peri-central districts (Dzialek, 2021; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Phillips, 2014; Pixová, 2013; Rius-Uldemolins, 2012; Schuetz, 2013; Vivant & Charmes, 2008). Hierarchies and oppositions within art worlds are often reflected in their distinct locations within the urban space (Lizé, 2010; Mangset, 1998; Picaud, 2017), often in a form of clusters that group representatives either of mainstream and institutionalized or off and transgressive art currents (Boichot, 2011, 2013; Debroux, 2017; Kim, 2007; Molho, 2014; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Phillips, 2014; Rius-Uldemolins, 2012, 2016). Art clusters emerge, evolve, and gain increasing visibility and recognition to the point of potentially replacing the existing epicentres of artistic life; often, however, they fizzle-out without coming close to threatening the position of the established artistic cores (Dzialek & Murzyn-Kupisz, 2014; Halle & Tiso, 2009; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Rius-Uldemolins, 2016; Taylor, 2016; Zuzek & Braslow, 2011).

Most of the available research on the city-wide distribution of art spaces (going beyond case studies of the most prominent artistic...
quarters) is limited to either a single point in time (e.g. Ithurbide, 2014; Molho, 2014; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017; Phillips, 2014; Picaud, 2017; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012), or to a limited number of such moments (e.g. Kim, 2007; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Schuetz & Green, 2014). In this way, they may offer highly interesting and informative snapshots of the distribution of art places and how it changes, but without the more in-depth understanding of how their clusters have evolved and without the tracing of the spatial choices made by individual entities involved. These studies do not combine the spatial with the temporal dimension, in terms of when and where the activities of art places started or ended, or whether they relocated in the meantime (see Moulin, 2009). Digital databases of historical and contemporary venues and events (de Maupou & Saint-Raymond, 2012; Fletcher & Helmeich, 2012; Saint-Raymond et al., 2016; Taylor, 2016) offer new perspectives in this respect. However, they have not been matched yet with in-depth studies of qualitative material that would provide more explanation of the forces behind change in the urban art landscapes. Individual and collective spatial strategies of artistic venues and their owners have been identified in qualitative studies as their response to opportunities and constraints they face in urban space, e.g. commercial forces on the real estate market, public policies such as zoning or culture-led urban regeneration (Halle & Tiso, 2009; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Moulin, 2009; Pixoná, 2013; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012, 2016; Wojnar, 2017). However, so far they have not been quantified to give a better understanding of their role in the emergence and disappearance of art clusters.

At the same time, as posited by Markesen (2014; see Redaelli & Stevenson, 2021) studies of urban creativity need new conceptual approaches. In this case, there is a need for theories that would combine the spatial and the temporal dimensions of the artistic dynamics in the urban space in general and in particular the successive emergence and disappearance of art clusters of different types. Theories that would integrate both the symbolic and economic features of artistic undertakings to explain their spatial choices and that would link changes in the spatial distribution of different art venue types with both the evolution of the art worlds and the transformations of urban space (see Moulin, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016), the change in its use and the meanings associated with its different parts. Empirical approaches should offer a possibility to track locations of individual entities, their fixed or fluid presence within the city (see Adamek-Schemya, 2006; Tironi, 2012), and to link them with the observed changes in their spatial structures. At the same time, they should explore motivations of artistic initiatives, relate their spatial strategies with their distinct artistic character, and uncover mechanisms leading to the transformations of centres of the artistic life.

In this paper I offer a contribution intended to fill these research gaps by proposing a notion of a ‘territorial field of art’. The territorial field of art picks up on the idea of the field of art, proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (2016), and reflects how the interrelations, the oppositions and the hierarchies within that field manifest themselves in the form of the central, marginal or peripheral locations within the urban space. This approach is based on previous interpretations of the work of the French sociologist in urban studies (Hanquinnet et al., 2012; Lizé, 2010; Mangset, 1998; Picaud, 2015, 2017; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016; Wacquant, 2018). It was used specifically to study processes driving the transformation of the spatial structure of private art galleries showing post-war and contemporary art, and in particular the emergence, the development and the decline of their clusters in different part of the inner city of Krakow, Poland, between 1989 and 2019. The processes were linked with the city’s broader social and economic changes that corresponded to similar processes observed in other large post-socialist cities (Malý et al., 2020; Romaníczyk, 2018).

Private art galleries were chosen, because due to the technical and financial requirements posing a relatively lower barrier of entry in comparison to that faced by theatre and music venues, they tend to be relatively less stable, have a low survival rate and short existence (Benhamou et al., 2002; Debroux, 2017; Halle & Tiso, 2009; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Moulin, 2009; Schuetz & Green, 2014). Unlike with publicly-owned art galleries and museums, which achieve a greater stability in time and space by leveraging public funding, private art gallery owners must constantly assess opportunities and constraints to their business in different parts of the city and try to react accordingly. Their relocations could be regarded as a part of their risk management strategies in the uncertain art world. They attempt to incorporate the image of established or emerging artistic districts that they delve into as an element of their artistic identity. Their appearance or disappearance can thus be considered a litmus test of urban transformations (Debroux, 2017; Halle & Tiso, 2009; Jansson, 2014; Kim, 2007; Molho, 2014; Moulin, 2009; Phillips, 2014; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012, 2016; Schuetz, 2013; Schuetz & Green, 2014).

Additionally, the art galleries included in this study differ from the galleries or auction houses that offer antique, 19th century or modern art on the secondary art market (Jansson, 2014), as they are on a constant lookout for young generations of artists who compete for the attention of the viewing audiences and critics alike, and strive to become a feature in the art world and in the urban space.

Another reason to study them is that they differ in their market focus; commercial galleries are oriented more towards art dealership and are closer to art buyers, collectors and investors, while non-profit art spaces focus on discovering new talents and promoting new artistic trends. The two types of venues may be in opposition to each other in terms of artistic values, but their locations may also differ due to the different importance of the economic and non-economic factors for their operation (see Debroux, 2017; Kim, 2007; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Moulin, 2009; Phillips, 2014; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016, 2012).

Krakow is one of the two major centres of visual arts in Poland, trailing behind the much stronger capital city of Warsaw (Bazylko & Masiewicz, 2008), and because of its traditions and heritage is considered the cultural capital of the country (Murzyn-Kupisz & Hoj, 2020; Romaníczyk, 2018; Wallis, 1994). However, considering the global art system, the Polish art market represents its semi-territories (Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017; see; Redaelli & Stevenson, 2021). Nonetheless, the case of Krakow (a fine example of a post-socialist historic city) offers an excellent opportunity to study the development of an art gallery landscape as it burst free after the strict state control of art market and art circulation was lifted in the landmark year of 1989, the fall of the communist regime.

A database of private art galleries was created and it shows that only a small number of commercial and non-profit establishments did operate, whether legally or illegally, during the 1980s, while more than 200 entities were identified to have operated between 1989 and 2019. Each record represented one location of a gallery or its branch with period of activity in this place. Art galleries that relocated were listed under two or more records, depending on the number of changes of locations. Openings, closings and relocations were later aggregated into six five-year periods. A qualitative content analysis of press and internet excerpts from a period starting in the 1980s and ending in 2019 was used to explain location choices of art galleries and mechanisms that were shaping the territorial subfield of art galleries as it was providing an insight into comments and opinions prevailing at the moment when these changes were occurring.

This paper is organised as follows. Firstly, the general tendency of different types of private art galleries to cluster in a specific area of large cities is discussed based on existing empirical studies. It is followed by a conceptual proposal of a ‘territorial field of art’ that combines Pierre Bourdieu’s structuralist view of the antagonistic relations between artistic generations and their location, be it central or marginal, in urban space. The research material and methods are described in the next section. This allowed the emergence and cycles of development of primary art gallery clusters between 1989 and 2019 to be identified in the inner city of Krakow, and various mechanisms standing behind their transformations to be determined. The final section provides a synthetic overview of the spatio-temporal evolution of the territorial subfield of
art galleries in Krakow.

2. Art galleries and their clusters

Private art galleries together with publicly-owned art museums and galleries, auction houses, antique shops, art biennales and fairs constitute the ecosystem of visual arts (Jansson, 2014; Jyrma, 2002; Morgner, 2014; Moulin, 2009; Moureau & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2016; Phillips, 2014; Schuetz, 2013; Schuetz & Green, 2014). They emerged in the 19th century as a key element of the modern organization of the art circulation and the art market known as the ‘dealer-critic system’. It meant a gradual transition from the model of commissioning contractual works of art by rich patrons towards new groups of art consumers and buyers and a growing appreciation of contributions that were original and breaking with tradition (de Maupoue & Saint-Raymond, 2012; Fletcher & Helmreich, 2012; Kim, 2007; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017; Moureau & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2016). Gallery owners spot new talents or work with recognized artists by managing their reputation, fanning interest in their work and boost value by organizing exhibitions and publishing catalogues, they represent the artists on the market and negotiate with buyers on their behalf. Art galleries constitute the physical space of the primary art market where art dealers link more or less autonomous art producers with art viewers and collectors, and enable them to exchange economic, symbolic, social, and cultural capital. During this process, the artistic and economic value of artworks is negotiated. As a result, in the past the most prominent galleries were often catalysts of major artistic movements (Bystryn, 1978; Jansson, 2014; Kim, 2007; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017; Moulin, 2009; Oberlin & Geryn, 2015; Phillips, 2014; Quemin, 2020a; Uboldi, 2020).

Non-profit, artist-oriented galleries focus on fostering artistic community around themselves and, to a limited extent, on selling art works. Commercial, market-oriented galleries are set up to raise the economic value of objects created by artists cooperating with them and to build relations with art collectors. The latter are usually managed by art dealers and represent a higher degree of professionalisation, while the former are usually artist-run spaces that manifest the desire of artistic communities to bypass traditional intermediaries, their opposition to the commodification of art and their will to democratize access to it. These project spaces allow them to experiment and propose new ways of doing art that break up with existing conventions. They are often short-lived, although some of them gain wider acceptance and transform into more institutionalized and market-oriented establishments. Commercial and non-profit galleries may differ in terms of their predilection for the aesthetics of their interiors: white cube prevailing among the former, while site-specific design is more common among the latter (Bystryn, 1978; Debroux, 2017; Dzialek, 2021; Molho, 2014; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Moureau & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2016; Phillips, 2014; Marguin, 2015; Poljak, 2015; Uboldi, 2020).

The existing empirical studies on the spatial distribution of art galleries show their high concentration, especially those with the strongest reputation. They form art gallery districts (Debroux, 2017; Halle & Tiso, 2009; Jansson, 2014; Jyrma, 2002; Kim, 2007; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Morgner, 2019; Moulin, 2009; Quemin, 2020a; Rius-Uldemolins, 2012, 2016; Schuetz, 2013; Schuetz & Green, 2014), often clustering in large numbers along the same streets, such as the famous rues des tableaux in Paris (de Maupoue & Saint-Raymond, 2012; Saint-Raymond et al., 2016). Their clusters combine the logic of competition and cooperation, enabling them to overcome their weaknesses related to their usually modest size (Moulin, 2009; Redaelli & Stevenson, 2021; Rius-Uldemolins, 2012c).

Two types of art gallery clusters can be identified: market-oriented and artist-oriented (Table 1), with differing positioning towards art producers and consumers and consequently using generally distinct urban settings in their organisational strategies and image branding.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of galleries and their locations</th>
<th>Market-oriented clusters</th>
<th>Artist-oriented clusters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevailing type of galleries</td>
<td>commercial, renowned</td>
<td>non-profit, emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics of galleries</td>
<td>white cube, often in historical buildings</td>
<td>site-specific, often in unusual premises and sites, e.g. post-industrial lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability of galleries</td>
<td>higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with artists</td>
<td>strong links with artists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with art consumers</td>
<td>proximity of upper class residents, wealthy art collectors and investors</td>
<td>connection with avant-garde art enthusiasts, young intellectuals marginal, peri-central location, ‘bad’ districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features of a district</td>
<td>prestigious, traditional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location factors</td>
<td>economic, ‘hard’</td>
<td>non-economic, ‘soft’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of a district</td>
<td>prestige, traditional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial experience</td>
<td>proximity, convenience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompanying services</td>
<td>luxury goods and services</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration of the author.

Market-oriented clusters group mostly commercial establishments, that value proximity or good accessibility to residential areas of urban elites and wealthy collectors. They occupy locations in prestigious, historic downtowns or in newer inner city districts, despite higher prices on the real estate market in such locations, usually in the vicinity of establishments offering luxury goods and services, taking advantage of the agglomeration economies and induced flows of potential customers. Art galleries located in these districts both create and take advantage of an image of elite consumption areas, while also often being more sensitive to the competition that may squeeze them out of such central locations (Kim, 2007; Halle & Tiso, 2009; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Moulin, 2009; Fletcher & Helmreich, 2012; Rius-Uldemolins, 2012, 2016; Schuetz, 2013; Ihurbide, 2014; Molho, 2014; Phillips, 2014; Schuetz & Green, 2014; Debroux, 2017; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017; Morgner, 2019).

The second type is less prevalent than expected (Debroux, 2017; Phillips, 2014; Schuetz, 2013; Schuetz & Green, 2014). It groups non-profit, artist-run, experimental spaces that are oriented towards the local artistic scene. They usually distance themselves spatially from established market-oriented clusters by occupying locations in degraded, peri-central or marginal districts, often stigmatised in urban discourse, and very often temporarily adapting and using affordable premises that are awaiting refurbishment (Standl & Krupickaite, 2004; Halle & Tiso, 2009; Moulin, 2009; Rius-Uldemolins, 2012, 2016; Phillips, 2014; Molho & Sagot-Duvauroux, 2017; Uboldi, 2020; Dzialek, 2021; Valli, 2021). Their founders may be attracted by the ‘look and feel’ (Heebels, van Aalst, 2010) of old buildings, that offer ‘authentic’ interiors different from the traditional white walls of commercial galleries (Debroux, 2017; Kim, 2007). To art viewers, reaching such galleries may also involve the discovery and exploration of districts in which they are located and the use of ‘bohemian amenities’ (see Woldoff et al., 2011) in their vicinity, thus constituting an added value in the art consumption experience (Moulin, 2009; Rius-Uldemolins, 2012).

Aspiring galleries may opt to settle in the existing centrally-located market-oriented clusters, even though they may have to occupy premises with a lower visibility (e.g. upper floors). Higher rents may be compensated for by using the already-established image and reputation of the district thus increasing their chance of survival (Halle & Tiso, 2009; Schuetz, 2013; Schuetz & Green, 2014). They may, however, risk adopting pioneer strategies and explore parts of the city not yet associated with the artistic life. That way they may start building their artistic and spatial identity by going against the hegemony of previous generations of art dealers (Dzialek, 2021; Rius-Uldemolins, 2012,
2016). In some cases they may act as catalysing agents of bottom-up urban regeneration, reversing the stigmatisation of a degraded quarter and co-creating its unique brand (Rius-Ulldemolins, 2014).

Managing a contemporary art gallery is fraught with risks because of stiff competition on the art market that is usually defined by oversupply of artists and their works, that await recognition, often with little or no success to their credit. As a result, their period of operation is often short. Clusters of such galleries, however, may achieve a better stability and enjoy more longevity, typically with a few best-established anchor galleries and much larger number of small and short-span undertakings (Benhamou et al., 2002; Debroux, 2017; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012; Schuetz, 2013; Schuetz & Green, 2014). Still, the costs involved in establishing a gallery are usually lower compared to other artistic venues, enabling galleries to relocate easily when needed (depending on the risk-taking or risk-averse attitude of their owners), for example in response to adverse changes in the neighbourhood or when anticipating the development of a new artistic territory. The new location of an art gallery may also be a sign of its growing prestige and professionalisation. Thus, their relative instability and ease of relocation mean that they may be treated as markers of more general transformations occurring in an urban space (Debroux, 2017; Halle & Tiso, 2009; Kim, 2007; Molho, 2014; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Moulin, 2009; Peterson, 1997; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016).

Clusters of art galleries can evolve from artist-oriented towards market-oriented. As the initially mostly independent enterprises grouped together grow in number, gain in professionalism and reputation, compete with older, established districts, they may at some point take over leadership in a local art scene. In large art cities, the art gallery point of gravity has been observed to shift from one district to another (Wedd et al., 2001; Kim, 2007; Halle & Tiso, 2009; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012, 2016; Molho, 2014; Schuetz & Green, 2014; Debroux, 2017), thus exemplifying a general migration of their artistic life epicentres (see Dziąłek & Murzyński-Kupisz, 2014; Phillips, 2014; Zukin & Braslow, 2011). However, some established art gallery clusters display relative stability over a long period of time despite the emergence of other competing centres (Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012). In this scenario new artist-oriented clusters may never reach the more mature stages, decreasing both in number of entities and their recognition, and eventually they may disappear altogether. This happens either because the art currents they were promoting failed to gain traction, or because the previously attractive conditions for their operation have considerably worsened.

3. Territorial field of art

Different types of art galleries and their clusters correspond to the two dimensions of Pierre Bourdieu’s field of art, i.e. autonomy vs heteronomy and heterodoxy vs orthodoxy (Bourdieu, 2016; see; Alexander, 2018; Buchholz, 2018; Grenfell & Hardy, 2003; Picaud, 2015, 2017; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016). The former refers to the opposition between an ‘anti-economic’ stand of the non-profit art spaces and the economic focus of art dealers. The latter describes the opposition between the experimental art of young, innovative artists on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the established older artists whose art has already gained recognition and consecration in the artistic milieu and who occupy a dominant, gatekeeping position. Art galleries and artists representing orthodoxy differ in the resources of symbolic capital, that is prestige and reputation, to those available to heterodox ones. Those with a stronger position in the field defend their artistic status quo and the existing definition of art, while those in a weaker position tend to challenge the established art world hierarchies and attempt to change the rules of the field. The structure of the field of art is however more complex and includes a continuum of art dealers and gallery owners representing rearguard tradition, consecrated avant-garde, successive generations of emerging avant-garde movements and possible forerunners of future artistic trends (Grenfell & Hardy, 2003; Moulin, 2009; Uboldi, 2020).

The hierarchy within the subfield of art galleries is reflected in their power to build artistic and economic value of the artists they represent, in the degree of their professionalisation (e.g. membership in art associations, participation in art fairs), in their reputation within the art system (e.g. art prizes), in their media visibility (e.g. reviews in art magazines), and in their internationalisation (e.g. ability to attract non-local artists and buyers, opening branches abroad), etc. (Benhamou et al., 2002; Jansson, 2014; Jyrämä, 2002; Molho, 2014; Moulin, 2009; Quemin, 2020a; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012; Uboldi, 2020).

Spatial representations of artistic hierarchies within different fields of cultural production are increasingly the topic studied by urban scholars (Hanquinet et al., 2012; Lizé, 2010; Mangset, 1998; Picaud, 2015, 2017; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012, 2016; Wacquant, 2018) as they note that different types of art and artistic relations (cooperation, domination or opposition) are indeed represented, if sometimes in a distorted manner, in the physical space in the form of specific places and of the spatial proximity or distance between them, that can be termed the territorial field of art. According to one of the Bourdieu’s collaborators ‘social and mental structures have spatial correlates ... social distance and power relations are both expressed in and reinforced by spatial distance; and that propinquity to the centre of accumulation of capital (economic, military or cultural) is a key determinant of the force and velocity of social change’ (Wacquant, 2018, p. 96). Bourdieu (1977) himself observed a homology between the spatial distribution of the theatres with different repertoires and the places of residence of writers of varying recognition and of artistic or market orientation, and the socio-spatial segregation of Paris. Other studies confirm similar spatial configurations of other territorial subfields of artistic production and consumption in the French capital, for example the distribution of writers and poets in 19th century (Charle, 1977), art spaces from the 19th century until today (Boichot, 2011, 2013; de Maupeou & Saint-Raymond, 2012; Saint-Raymond et al., 2016; Debroux, 2017), and music venues (Lizé, 2010; Picaud, 2015, 2017).

While studying a specific territorial field of art, one should not only examine its topography, i.e. the distribution of art places, but should also capture its topology, namely the artistic and spatial relations between them (Brennan-Horley, 2010; Uboldi, 2020). One may expect that art places (e.g. art galleries) representing orthodoxy and heteronomy should occupy more favourable central locations, while those representing heterodoxy and autonomy – the less favourable ones on their margins. Spatial patterns of art places may, however, be modified by the palimpsestic nature of the urban fabric and by the various underlying social, economic and political contexts and trajectories of urban development.

Artistic and spatial centrality means symbolic domination in the territorial field of art – the ability to impose a definition of art, the power to consecrate forms of artistic expression considered valuable, and to reject undesirable ones. At the same time, artistic centres exhibit the ability to intercept and reinterpret artistic innovations from the peripheries. The combination of the classic and the novel artistic values gives them vitality. On the other hand, they risk losing their position and gradually decline, when representatives of heterodoxy on the margins of the territorial field of art succeed in shifting the rules of the field and creating their own artistic centre as a new source of art currents (Cas-telnuovo & Ginzburg, 1981; Hautala & Jauhiainen, 2019; Mangset, 1998; Molotch & Treskon, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012, 2016; Uboldi, 2020; While, 2003). Transformations within the territorial field of art may also impact the logic of the classification struggle in the field, the social production and reproduction of a hierarchy of artistic values between centre and periphery (Mangset, 1998, p. 65). Artists and art intermediaries may adopt various artistic and spatial strategies corresponding to their aspirations in the field of art, as well as to the opportunities and restrictions they face in various central, marginal or peripheral parts of cities. Thus, various symbolic, social and economic aspects need to be considered when studying artistic clusters in changing urban settings. Hierarchies and oppositions within the territorial field of
art may however be blurred and subject to re-evaluation as it evolves (Mangset, 1998; Moulin, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012, 2016).

Therefore, it is interesting to reconstruct a territorial subfield of art galleries and determine whether the spatial choices of entities representing different generations of artists and market orientations are indeed different. And whether there is an observable long-term spatial evolution of art clusters and changes in their hierarchy.

4. Research design

The study focuses on private art galleries in Krakow that were exhibiting and/or selling post-war and contemporary artworks (paintings, sculptures, photography, installations, performances, etc.) over a period from 1980s to 2019. Other cultural institutions, educational or business establishments (art museums, art schools, auction houses) were taken into consideration, as many studies show that galleries tend to cluster in their vicinity (Moulin, 2009; Plaza et al., 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012, 2016; Schuetz, 2013; Molho, 2014; Saint-Raymond et al., 2016; Molho & Sagot-Duvauxoux, 2017; Morgen, 2019).

Each record in the database represents one location of an art gallery (or its branch) and the period of its activity. Art galleries changing their location were represented by two or more records, depending on the number of relocations. In order to reduce a possible impact of the survivor bias (Borowiecki & Greenwald, 2018), that is some uncertainty of information for some of the less known initiatives, data were aggregated into six five-year periods (except for the first one, which included 1989). For each of them, spatial data were compiled about the locations of the newly established galleries and their branches, of those closed down entirely, and of those that changed their location. Later on, it was determined whether the relocations took place within a cluster, between clusters, or outside of them to other non-cluster locations. This approach allowed to uncover how spatial choices of individual galleries representing artistic orthodoxy or heterodoxy and heteronomy or autonomy, viewed in the defined periods of time, translated into the emergence, development or decline of art gallery clusters (see Moulin, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016), and, as a consequence, into a transformation of the territorial subfield of art galleries in Krakow.

Qualitative text analysis of the press and internet content from between the 1980s and 2019 was performed to help understand the motivations behind spatial decisions made by galleries and the mechanisms of change in the territorial field of art. It included statements by art journalists and gallery owners referring to (re)locations of galleries in different parts of the city, their causes and consequences, in relation with the general changes observed in the urban space and in the world of visual arts. This method provided insight into the prevailing opinions about artistic and spatial relations within the territorial field of art expressed in the artistic community at the time of their occurrence, thus allowed to avoid the retrospective bias inherent in interviews conducted after a considerable lapse of time (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Its limitation is, however, that due to its nonreactive character it did not allow, as interviews would do, a deepening of the perspective of gallery owners themselves (see Moulin, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012; Uboldi, 2020).

Similarly to other studies (Debroux, 2017; Molho & Sagot-Duvauxoux, 2017; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012) various data sources were used: printed and online editions of local newspapers and weeklies, art and cultural magazines, art portals, gallery websites and social media profiles, artists’ websites, and other written materials on art galleries in Krakow and Poland. The galleries were mapped in 2016 and 2019, using Google Street View historical street views from 2009 onwards as an additional source. Personal observations were conducted during the Krakow gallery weekends (later gallery weeks) between 2015 and 2019. Hierarchies of art galleries within their subfield (see Quemin, 2020a; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012) were established for the decade of 2010–2019 based on two measures: 1) gallery participation in the municipal support program aimed for the most recognized commercial galleries, and 2) their presence at the national (Warsaw) and international (Basel) art fairs (see Jansson, 2014; Morgner, 2014). Unlike antique dealers affiliated to an association since 1997, private contemporary art gallery owners in Poland have not yet established such an organization that could serve as another indicator of their symbolic capital within this subfield of art.

5. Main findings – evolution of the territorial subfield of art galleries in Krakow between 1989 and 2019

5.1. Art gallery clusters

The database allowed to identify the changing distribution of art galleries and the development of their clusters in Krakow inner city after 1989 (Fig. 1). Earlier, under the communist regime, art consumption remained under state control through the network of official public art galleries and a state-owned art trade company (Bodłok, 1992). Foundations for the emergence of an Old Town gallery district were laid in the 1980s (Fig. 1A), when private art dealership was first allowed. Central locations were also preferred by and made available to galleries managed by artistic associations authorized to operate at that time. A few independent non-profit art spaces, of semi-legal of illegal character, were located at the edges of the city centre (Dzialek, 2021; see Marguin, 2015).

Between 1989 and 2019, four primary art gallery clusters were identified in the Krakow inner city. They consisted of a large number of art establishments with some more established anchor galleries among them. The galleries concentrated in distinct urban neighbourhoods which were often perceived as art quarters in the media discourse. Additionally, three secondary areas attracted typically smaller numbers of shorter-lived art endeavours, and even though none of them developed into a cluster, they were consistently chosen for location by gallery owners throughout the whole period. The history of the emergence and development of primary clusters represents the evolution of the territorial subfield of art galleries in Krakow with its oppositions and hierarchies.

The most prominent cluster is located within the limits of the Old Town, the medieval core of modern Krakow. Its reputation invokes the prestige of historical cultural institutions and the accumulation of cultural heritage in this central district. A second cluster, complementary to the one in the Old Town, is located to the north-west of it, in the district of Piașek, considered to be one of Krakow’s ‘good’ neighbourhood (Bouloc, 2011). This district has been urbanized between the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, and was already home to a significant community of visual artists at that time, as evidenced by the construction there of the seat of the Association of Polish Artists and Designers (Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków, ZPAP) in 1930s. The clusters formed in the Old Town and in the Piașek neighbourhood represent the market-oriented type with their art galleries falling predominantly into the orthodox and heteronomous types. Together they cover a large majority of entities participating in the municipal support program and in the Warsaw Art Fairs.

The other two primary, predominantly artist-oriented clusters, were emerging in succession one after another (see Dzialek, 2021). They were or still are connected with vibrant bohemian scenes representing heterodox and autonomous positions within the field of art. The first one emerged at the turn of 1990s and 2000s in Kazimierz, originally a separate medieval town incorporated into Krakow at the end of the 18th century and known until the second world war as the cradle of Krakow’s Jewish community. The neighbourhood is an outstanding example of a post-1989 urban transformation of a degraded area after its decline during the communist era (Murzyn, 2006; Smagacz, 2008). The second cluster began to develop at the turn of 2000s and 2010s on the other side of the Vistula river in the working class district of Old Podgorze and its post-industrial part of Zablocie. Their deterioration, in turn, had been linked to the flight of the local industrial activities away from these central and peri-central districts after the fall of the communism (Zwiech, 2018).
The secondary areas of art gallery attraction were identified to the north of the Old Town near the main building of the Academy of Fine Arts (Akademia Sztuk Pięknych, ASP, dating from the 1880s) and along the two main streets linking from Old Town to Kazimierz neighbourhood.

The multiple openings and relocations of art galleries, when seen in relation to the Old Town’s Main Market Square, the fulcrum and the most symbolic public space in Krakow, reveal their gradual dispersion during last three decades (Fig. 2). New galleries consistently opened farther and farther away from the centre, creating an artistic ‘front’ of exploration of the then inner city’s marginal sections. While at the beginning of the studied period, the median walking distance separating newly established galleries from the central point was about 350 m, it increased to 1400 m in the final half of the period. Relocations of galleries (one out of five Krakow art galleries has moved at least once) has also demonstrated a general shift away from the centre towards the inner city fringe. It was especially visible in three periods: 1995–1999, 2005–2009 and 2015–2019, when artist-oriented clusters emerged first in Kazimierz, then in the Old Podgórze and in the Zabłocie neighbourhoods. The only exception was observed in the first half of 2010s, when galleries started moving back closer to the centre. It can be linked to an economic slowdown during that period that opened up some vacancies and depressed the rents and some art establishments benefitted from it.

Despite that general dispersion of galleries away from the oldest central section of town it continues to house a large portion of the most stable anchor galleries. Indeed, between 1989 and 2004, one half of them were located not farther than 400 m from Krakow’s central point, and after 2005 that distance has only increased to 700 m.

Fig. 1. Art galleries and their clusters in Krakow inner city in 1980s (A) and from 1989 to 2019 (B–G).
Source: own study.
5.2. Old Town and Piasek - market-oriented art gallery districts

Development or shrinking of clusters is the result of several disparate processes: the arrival of new galleries (their establishment or relocation to the district), their stabilization (embeddedness or relocation within a cluster), or disappearance (closing down or moving out of the cluster) (Fig. 3). The Old Town district has experienced its highest intensity of new gallery openings right after the general liberalisation of business activities in 1989. The early 1990s were also a period of frequent gallery relocations within the area. The historical core quickly regained its prominent status of the main artistic centre, both in symbolic and economic terms, after a period when values associated with its bourgeois and aristocratic heritage were negated (see Romanczyk, 2018). After 1989, it attracted commercial art galleries because of its proximity to the emerging well-to-do class and the arrival of increasing numbers of foreign visitors. Both commercial and non-profit art spaces were resorting to meanings associated with the oldest part of the city (see Klekotko et al., 2015; Wallis, 1994), where centuries-old cultural heritage constituted an appropriate background for art consumption, especially in its more traditional forms. Locations in the Main Market Square and along principal streets of the Old Town along the Royal Route (Floriana and Grodzka streets) were especially perceived as the most prestigious.

Judging from the first private view, it is promising to be a new and highly exciting gallery that will not house the pseudo-artistic fancy goods in a boutique style, but a proper-standard, carefully selected genuine art. The competition will be strong, because Floriaska is a gallery street, but Fejkiel gives the impression that it will take it in its stride. [J.B., 1991, Panek w nowej galerii na Floriáskiej, Art & Business, 3, p. 53.]

Many initiatives turned out to be short-lived, but at the end of the 1990s a group of a dozen or so Old Town galleries became a constant feature of Kraków’s artistic landscape, gaining national and international recognition. Two of them, Zderzak and Starmach, remain among Poland’s top galleries until today (Bazylko & Masiwiec, 2008). Zderzak went from its origins as a non-profit, semi-legal art space established in the mid-1980s at the margins of the inner city to become a commercial gallery and prestigious exhibition venue in the very central location in the 1990s and forward. It relocated three times within the Old Town until it obtained municipality-supported premises at the 3rd floor of a townhouse in Floriaska street. Starmach started, in 1989, already as a market-oriented initiative operating out of a medieval cellar location in the Main Market Square. In the late 1990s, it made a surprising decision to move to the Old Podgorze neighbourhood, then regarded as an extremely peripheral location. Starmach Gallery is the only gallery from Krakow that goes to the Art Basel fairs and this success could explain how it was able to detach itself from other galleries in the prestigious Old Town cluster and survive on its own. The contacts with Polish and international art collectors it has managed to establish will have helped.

The second half of the 1990s was characterized by a growing commercialisation of the Old Town and by its functional change (involving a decline of the population and an increase in the number of restaurants, cafés, shops, hotels, offices, banks, etc.) (Górka, 2004; Pawlusński & Kubal, 2018). Art galleries, even those regarded as anchors, were being squeezed out by the increased rents from attractive premises along main streets and squares to more marginal side streets and from ground floors upwards or into the basements. This was their only way out if they wanted to remain in the favourable central district. Some of them, however, had to cease their activity or relocate. Eventually some of them turned out to be among the pioneers of the Kazimierz cluster.

Fejkiel Gallery is to close soon. After all, the premises are commercial, at the very heart of the city, and the rents are skyrocketing. Floriaska street will become empty. Not only because of this one storefront. It is about the image of the city of art, of great art as Krakow wants it to be, and it is after all. The Main Market Square and its surroundings are becoming empty too … In the inner city there will remain only galleries that either do not have to pay rent or that will survive hidden somewhere in a commercially unattractive backyard willing to make heavy sacrifices. [M. Porębski, 1997, Galerie Krakowa, Tygodnik Powszechny, 11, p. 13.]

This gallery [Goloński Gallery] was located twice on the ground floor and as many times in the cellar. At Sławkowska street, for the
first time, it climbed up to the first floor; this is slowly becoming the standard for inner city galleries. [(AN), 2001, Najstarsza po nowemu, Dziennik Polski, 240, Kronika Krakowa, p. II]

One of the responses to these adverse, from the point of view of gallery owners, transformations in the Old Town was the municipal policy to offer premises with lower rents for the most renowned commercial art galleries. Its main aim was to keep them in the Old Town, but it envisaged art spaces to be instruments of urban regeneration of Kazimierz, the Old Podgorze and Nowa Huta, an aim that would be
partially successful only in the first case.

Despite the growing constraints for the operation of art galleries in the Old Town, after 2000 the cluster achieved a relative balance between the number of new entrants, the closures and relocations, whether into, out of, or within the cluster, and those well established and embedded in the district. However, there was a wide-spread conviction that the oldest district was not attractive anymore for new generations of artists and gallery owners.

In Krakow, everyone heads to the Main Market Square. In the atmosphere of café and pub terraces, in the shadow of the Cloth Hall, when looking at the tower of St. Mary’s Church, you feel that you are in the heart of the city. But gallery life is buzzing elsewhere. The most interesting places can be found away from the hustle and bustle of the city. The address at the Main Market Square somehow became commonplace. Meanwhile, on the outskirts, in places that are often surprising, there appear interesting gallery spaces, where you can see good art [L. Gazur, 2007, Subiektywny przewodnik po galeriach krakowskich, Gazeta Antykwaryczna, 3, p. 52]

Yet, by the end of the 2010s, a petrification of the Old Town cluster was noted with a domination of older, established galleries and little to no space for new initiatives. This could be related to the growing overtourism in the city centre and the popularity of short-term rentals that were also investing upper floors of historic buildings (Kowalczyk-Anioł, 2019; Murzyn-Kupisz & Hołuj, 2020). For the first time, the number of galleries in the Old Town and Kazimierz became similar.

The Piasek district cluster could be considered an extension of the central gallery district that offers both the prestige of a ‘good’ district with long-established art institutions (the Association of Visual Artists and the Academy of Fine Arts) and some remaining niches for more ephemeral alternative initiatives, often run by art students. Its artistic ecosystem, beside commercial galleries and non-profit art spaces, includes auction houses, drawing schools, and art and frame shops. Despite a relatively low number of galleries, some of them have gained significant reputation (e.g. Ars Agenda Nova that moved here from Kazimierz) and intend to build a stronger position on the Polish art market by participating in the Warsaw Art Fairs. However, this cluster has never developed a clear-cut image in the media discourse, unlike the esteem associated with the Old Town or the bohemian representation of Kazimierz, or later of Old Podgórze.

5.3. Kazimierz and Old Podgórze – artist-oriented art gallery districts

The art gallery cluster in Kazimierz constitutes a good example of an evolution from a ‘terra incognita’ with no galleries before 1989 to the second-most important centre of gallery life in Krakow. Its success corresponds to the adverse processes experienced by private art establishments in the Old Town, but also to emergence of new generations of artists and gallery owners that were looking to set themselves apart from their predecessors. Its further development represents more universal trends of transformations of degraded neighbourhoods in the post-socialist cities (Górczyńska, 2017; Murzyn, 2006; Smagacz, 2008; Standl & Krupickaitė, 2004) and reflects the emergence of similar, deemed unique and authentic, bohemian artistic quarters in other large cities such as Le Marais in Paris (Moulin, 2009; Quemin, 2020b) or El Raval in Barcelona (Rius-Ulldemolins, 2014).

Five stages of the development of this gallery cluster were identified (Fig. 4):

A. The establishment of the first commercial galleries in 1989 and in the early 1990s at the edge of the district, closer to the Old Town, that was often met with disbelief by art journalists as too far from the central gallery clusters. However, their owners anticipated future transformation of the district into an artistic quarter.

B. Slow penetration in the mid-1990s inside the district by galleries that were often part of the Jewish heritage revival and were invoking the local history and specific atmosphere.
C. Accelerated growth of an artist-oriented cluster at the turn of the 1990s and 2000s, with galleries representing young generation of artists, many of whom chose to live in the district. At that time, Kazimierz offered low-priced premises on ground floors, sometimes with additional support of the municipal programme. New art spaces constituted an important contribution in the development of a nascent bohemian quarter dubbed at the time Krakow’s Montmartre (see Standl & Krupickaite, 2004). The highest concentration of art galleries (accompanied by antique shops and art cafés) was along Józefa street, which had developed into Krakow’s new gallery street, but with strong bohemian feeling. The image of a ‘magical’ neighbourhood with an ‘authentic’ atmosphere was contrasting with the commercialisation of the Old Town, which was perceived as not conducive for artistic development. Kazimierz was attracting art enthusiasts, who could explore this unique district as part of their artistic consumption experience.

Kazimierz was perfect to become the city of art. Poor and ugly, deserted by the rightful inhabitants, notorious both then and now, gussling and bastardized, it could take in artists to its filthy and vodka-stinking streets, because only they could be proud of it; for others it would be dishonourable to live here. Only this place could become Krakow’s [quartier des artistes], it was a district open to change, a fabric that could be shaped, soft and malleable like clay. [Z. Grzywacz., 2001, Mój Kazimierz, Przekrój, 10, p. 52]

The gallery is located in Krakow’s Kazimierz, commonly known as a place with magic, with vibrant life, where history and the present mix together, where you can feel a new quality created both by artists who are very fond of this place and the residents of this district, pub-goers or more and more tourists. [Description provided by Galeria 2 Święty on the official Krakow municipality website]

Gradually, the Kazimierz cluster became a mix of art galleries; new endeavours and recognized establishments that relocated from the Old Town; both the more numerous non-profit and artist-run initiatives with a clearly alternative agendas and the less commercially-oriented galleries among them. At the peak of its development, in the first half of 2000s, they managed to organize a monthly event when galleries and antique shops in the Józefa street and nearby would schedule private-views of their new exhibitions (see Moulin, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016). All in all, it led to growing belief that Kazimierz constituted the second artistic and gallery centre in Krakow, standing in opposition to the Old Town, but still lower in the hierarchy.

D. Its decline at the turn of 2000s and 2010s, due to gentrification and overtourism (involving functional change of buildings and higher rents) that resulted in process similar to the ones experienced by the Old Town a decade earlier: ceasing of activities or relocations within the district or out of it. The growing popularity of the district forced some of them to look for niches on less popular streets or less attractive premises (narrow storefronts or higher floors). It resulted in a dispersion of galleries across the district and the loss of significance of its core concentration along Józefa street. At the same time, to some representatives of the next generation of artists and gallery owners, Kazimierz was evolving towards orthodoxy and heteronomy, and thus was becoming less attractive in symbolic terms. As a consequence, the artistic exploration other marginal locations at the edge of the inner city has commenced (see Dzialek, 2021).

This part of Krakow is still undiscovered, neutral. We didn’t want a gallery in a trendy place like Kazimierz. (TYM), 2005, [Dworcowe życie po życiu, Dziennik Polski, 264, p. 6.]

Galleries relocating from Kazimierz were opting for a range of strategies. Those evolving towards a more commercial focus moved to the Old Town or to Piaśek. Others that wanted to keep their heterodox position followed the artistic communities that were settling on the other side of the river, in the district of the Old Podgórze, which would eventually become another artist-oriented gallery cluster.

Olympia Gallery is abandoning its location in Krakow’s Kazimierz at 18. Józefa Street and moving across the river to Podgórze. Krakow’s Kazimierz has dashed our hopes, forever losing its opportunity for development, and Józefa Street became a route for representatives of mass tourism devouring tons of ‘zapiekanka’ fast food sandwich during the day (and at night). In addition to street food consumption, tourists are busy taking pictures and blocking pavements and streets. It’s hard to break through this crowd. Therefore, for the convenience of people who are sincerely devoted to contemporary art and ready to climb wide, if winding stairs, we are opening Olympia Gallery at 24 Limanowskiego Street in studio No. 4b. There, in a ‘homely atmosphere’, we will take refuge from the hustle and bustle of the street crowd and escape from the ‘loud, group and mass exultation’ inherent to museums. [Galeria Olympia w nowym miejscu. Artidomowo 8.X–29.XI.2013, 2013, Retrieved April 20, 2020. Available from http://www.olympiagaleria.pl/pl Артидомowo.html].

E. Its revival in the second half of 2010s, with signs of stabilization as the second gallery cluster of Krakow, right behind the Old Town. It is showing signs of a slow transformation towards a stronger market orientation, although still not to the same extent as in the Old Town and Piaśek clusters. Kazimierz-located galleries very rarely participate in art fairs in Warsaw. However, several of them has gained city-wide reputation as commercial galleries or non-profit art spaces. They are less and less relying on the ‘magic’ image of the quarter. In spatial terms, this stage represents a continuation of the deconcentration trend within the district.

The relocation of the Olympia gallery, in the first half of 2010s, from Kazimierz to Old Podgórze represented a symbolic transfer of the status of the emerging artist-oriented cluster to the other side of the Vistula River. It repeated the earlier processes, when a new generation of gallery owners preferred Kazimierz to the Old Town. The Old Podgórze (working class residential area) together with Zabłocie (a neighbouring post-industrial area) offered economic (availability of affordable spaces), social (relatively tranquility as compared with already tourist-ified neighbourhoods) and symbolic (discovery and exploration of ‘authentic’ quarters) advantages. Additional stimulus was provided by a pedestrian bridge across the river Vistula, inaugurated in 2010, that connected Kazimierz and the Old Podgórze stimulating new flows of both the residents and tourists in this part of the city. It allowed them to keep contact with the established gallery clusters in more central locations. The same year, Zabłocie became home to Krakow’s Museum of Contemporary Art, initiated and managed by the owner of Potocka Gallery, one of the longest operating (from the mid-1980s) and most recognized non-profit galleries in Krakow.

It should be reminded that back in 1997 Old Podgórze was the final destination for one of the most prestigious Old Town galleries, Starmach Gallery, that has defied the logic whereby this kind of institutions had to be located centrally. Due to its exceptional position in the field of art, its bold move to this then ‘bad’ neighbourhood was not followed neither by other commercial galleries, nor by alternative art spaces. For many years it was sort of a proud cathedral on an artistic desert. It has adapted a red brick building of a former Jewish prayer house, emulating trends that their owners witnessed in global art cities they have visited.

Since visiting New York a few years ago, he and his wife dreamed of having a gallery like they had seen in Soho: converted from a former factory or a warehouse. [K. Bik, 1997, Dzieło siê raczej pozaziemskich, Gazeta Wyborcza, 116, Gazeta w Krakowie, p. 1.]

It was not only until the turn of 2000s and 2010s, when the Old
Podgórze and Zablocie were entered in by experimental artist-run project spaces that represented the youngest generation of radical and socially engaged art. Often, they were aware of their ambiguous role in the gentrification processes. However, most of them managed to remain in the Old Podgorze district despite a growing investment pressure in this part of the city, though some of them had to look for other spots in this area. Meanwhile, initiatives using the post-industrial setting of Zablocie were much more ephemeral, when old factories, warehouses and old office buildings were in relatively short time demolished and transformed into housing projects with no or little reference to their industrial past (see Zwiech, 2018).

It is not that I believe in the utopia of ‘community action’ and regret that we are not able to implement it. We have never even tried to act in that way. The objective truth remains, however, that Goldex [Goldex Poldex Cooperative – independent art space] is situated in a rather poor part of Kraków’s center (Old Podgórze), where mainly the urban proletariat lives, and our activity is simply the avant-garde of gentrification. In this respect, we are a victim of the economic base, which everywhere determines a similar mechanism of a socio-urban transformation: we opened Goldex where it was cheap, and at the same time close to the centre. We would not be able to operate anywhere else, because we cannot afford the high rent, and nobody would like to go to Nowa Huta [post-socialist district far from city centre]. It is true that we did not try to reach our neighbours in any particular way, but we did not want to exclude them in advance. In practice, the posters of our events, which we sometimes hang on the door of the tenement house in which Goldex is located, are immediately torn off by the residents themselves. (J. Sowa. (2009). Goldex Poldex Madafaka, czyli raport z (oblężonego) Pi sektora. In M. Lind, R. Minichbauer (Eds.), Europejskie polityki kulturowe 2015. Raport o przyszłości publicznego finansowania sztuki współczesnej w Europie. Warszawa: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, p. 24.)

6. Discussion and conclusions

The social, economic and political changes initiated in Poland in 1989 provided a unique opportunity to trace the transformation of the territorial subfield of art galleries developing from its outset. As in other art cities, high concentration of galleries was observed in the central, historic part of the city, but it exhibited a consistent trend to disperse outwards and into a structure of distinct clusters of different character. Oppositions between market- and artist-focused clusters, between orthodoxy and heteronomy, and between heteronomy and autonomy were quite clearly reflected in the urban space. The emergence of new generations of artists and representing them galleries has led to the development of artist-oriented clusters.

Their development farther from the oldest central district was also a consequence of a gradual functional change of the inner city districts initially experienced mostly in the Old Town, and subsequently spreading outwards. Old Town and Kazimierz gallery clusters were especially affected by commercialisation and overtourism (see Kowalczyk-Aniot, 2019; Murzyn-Kupisz & Holuj, 2020; Pawlusinski & Kubal, 2018).

The stages of growth, stabilization and decline in the life of the primary gallery clusters were often synchronous: a stagnation of one was linked with the development of its rival (Fig. 5). It was reflected by adaptive spatial strategies of gallery owners who responded to opportunities and constraints as they arose and wanted to continue their artistic endeavour. They had a choice of continuing their business within the established cluster, but in a more marginal location, sometimes by resorting to public support, or of moving out to another neighbourhood, sometimes to a newly emerging cluster, especially if they wanted to keep their heterodox and autonomous orientation. Their actions would often be followed by other gallery initiatives.

This paper has contributed to a better understanding of how spatial choices of individual galleries (both commercial and non-profit, of lower or higher prestige), often including a string of relocations, shape the territorial field of art. That some of them are stable, but less numerous long-established anchors, while others are shorter-lived, but mobile initiatives vulnerable to pressures exerted by other urban stakeholders. This ephemerality makes them good indicators of the urban change ongoing in the inner city districts. The study has demonstrated that the development of distinct clusters within the territorial field of art is a result of a combination of factors both economic (accessibility to art buyers, competition on real estate market) and non-economic (artistic opposition and hierarchies, symbolic associations with different part of the city, e.g. prestige and tradition vs authenticity and transgression) in nature.

Future studies could encompass in-depth interviews with gallery owners to get additional insight into the logic of their profession and their artistic and organisational (including spatial) choices (see Moulin, 2009; Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012; Ubaldi, 2020), which were not always easy to construe when using a nonreactive research method such as qualitative content analysis. Another study that could complete this picture involves media coverage of exhibitions organised by art galleries, which are regarded as yet another indicator of artistic hierarchies existing within this subfield of art spaces (Rius-Ulldemolins, 2012).

The current pandemic and future post-pandemic situation could be expected to have a strong impact on the structure of the territorial field of art in Krakow. The existence of commercial galleries could be threatened due to erosion of the demand-side of the art market during the foreseen economic downturn and restrictions on the tourist traffic. Non-profit art spaces might be less concerned by this situation, as they depend more on the local community of artists and art enthusiasts.
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