

The Influence of Political Engagement on Artistic Reputation. Self-Evaluations of Artists

Der Einfluss von politischem Engagement auf die künstlerische Reputation. Selbsteinschätzungen von Künstlern

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Abstract

Despite the study of political art by many scholars, an in-depth analysis of how artists express themselves politically and assess their political expression as part of their artistic reputation is still missing. How do artists value their political action in view of their artistic reputation, and why? A promising theoretical entry to this question is Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. We used his concept of field-specific symbolic capital in cultural production to study political expression by artists; findings are based on empirical research in the cities of Hamburg, Hanover, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. In previous publications of this multi-stage research project, we identified five artist types that are involved in urban political action in different ways—the autonomous artist, social activist, political artist, political activist and high status artist. In this stage, we assess their political behavior as a factor of symbolic capital. We found that autonomous artists reject political action as detrimental to their symbolic capital. High status artists have such a high artistic position that they can ignore any possible damage to their reputation caused by their political activities. Social activists believe that overt political action might be harmful for their symbolic capital, and we label their political artistic action as social art. Political artists declare that their artwork is political, which promotes their symbolic capital as long as their political expressions are restricted to their artwork and not seen as personal expressions. Political activists do not draw a line between their artwork and personal political expression, as they understand both as reputation enhancing. We thus reject the negative correlation between artistic autonomy and political heteronomy in the art field as simplistic.

Obwohl sich viele Wissenschaftler mit politischer Kunst befassen, fehlt eine eingehende Analyse der Art und Weise, wie sich Künstler politisch äußern und ihren politischen Ausdruck als Teil ihrer künstlerischen Reputation bewerten. Wie bewerten Künstler ihr politisches Handeln im Hinblick auf ihre künstlerische Reputation, und warum? Ein vielversprechender theoretischer Zugang zu dieser Frage ist die Feldtheorie von Pierre Bourdieu. Wir haben sein Konzept des feldspezifischen symbolischen Kapitals in der kulturellen Produktion genutzt, um politische Äußerungen von Künstlern zu untersuchen; die Ergebnisse basieren auf empirischen Untersuchungen in Hamburg, Hannover, Jerusalem und Tel Aviv. In früheren Veröffentlichungen dieses mehrstufigen Forschungsprojekts haben wir fünf Künstlertypen identifiziert, die auf unterschiedliche

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Weise in die städtische Politik involviert sind – der autonome Künstler, der soziale Aktivist, der politische Künstler, der politische Aktivist und der Künstler mit hohem Status. In dieser Phase bewerten wir ihr politisches Verhalten als Beitrag zur Bestimmung des symbolischen Kapitals. Dabei kamen wir zu dem Ergebnis, dass autonome Künstler politisches Handeln als nachteilig für ihr symbolisches Kapital ablehnen. Künstler mit hohem Status haben eine so hohe künstlerische Position, dass sie eine mögliche Schädigung ihres Rufs durch ihre politischen Aktivitäten ignorieren können. Soziale Künstler sind der Meinung, dass offenes politisches Handeln ihrem symbolischen Kapital schaden könnte, und wir bezeichnen ihr politisches künstlerisches Handeln als soziale Kunst. Politische Künstler erklären, dass ihr Kunstwerk politisch ist, und dass dies ihr symbolisches Kapital fördere, solange ihre politischen Äußerungen auf ihr Kunstwerk beschränkt seien und nicht als persönliche Äußerungen angesehen würden. Politische Künstler ziehen keine Grenze zwischen ihren Kunstwerken und persönlichen politischen Äußerungen, da sie beides als reputationsfördernd verstehen. Eine negative Korrelation zwischen künstlerischer Autonomie und politischer Heteronomie im Kunstbereich erscheint daher als zu einfach.

Keywords

Art field/Kunstfeld, field theory/Feldtheorie, political expressions/politischer Ausdruck, artistic reputation/künstlerische Reputation, symbolic capital/symbolisches Kapital

Introduction

Of course, we are dealing with power relations. We cannot escape that.
(LM, artist in Jerusalem)

If people do not recognize you, there is no career.
(TS, artist in Hanover)

The study of the reciprocal relationship between politics and art has a long tradition in art history and social sciences. The Enlightenment philosophers Kant and Rousseau were among the first to make important contributions to politics and aesthetics (HASKINS 1989; SIMON 2013). Contemporary artists are frequently political themselves as agents of social change and as sources of public controversy. Over the last decade, social science scholars have examined issues of arts and politics mostly from a theoretical perspective, studying post-democracy and art, public art, and the relations between aesthetics and political ethics (STEYERL 2010; LEWITZKY 2015; RAUTERBERG 2015; EMMERLING/KLEESATTEL 2016; BISHOP 2012; PREZIOSI/LAMOUREUX 2006; RANCIÈRE 2015). Only a few studies concentrate on the artist's position between the artistic and the political fields. A notable exception was Pierre Bourdieu's study of intellectuals and artists meant as critical forces in public life. In his fundamental text on field theory, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Bourdieu (1993) traces the success of producers of art and

culture to their discursive power: “Political acts or pronouncements, manifestos or polemics, etc. [are] inseparable from the space of literary or artistic positions” (BOURDIEU 1993: 30). Political action thus has effects on the position of artists in their art field. Artistic recognition moves from the pole of artistic autonomy, defined as an art for art’s sake consecration that increases symbolic capital, to the pole of artistic heteronomy, defined as an art for non-artistic purposes that decreases the artist’s symbolic capital. The political and the art fields are both fields of symbolic struggle where symbolic capital is of primary concern (SWARTZ 2013). Heteronomic forces in the field of power can be economic and political (BOURDIEU 1993). This article looks at political acts by artists and their art that might have a consecrating effect on them. More specifically, we explore the heteronomic effects of artistic political expression by eliciting and interpreting artists’ own statements about their political attitudes and their expressions in their artwork.

The political context undoubtedly affects the production of art. Artists react to this context, especially in times of crisis, by becoming political in their artistic work, by eschewing the appearance of being political, or by not being political. The political context—for instance, a sympathetic interest in or critical skepticism about artistic-political actions—is a factor in their considerations about how political action can change their symbolic capital. How do artists look at their artistic-political practice in view of their political context, and what do they consider the effects will be on their symbolic capital, on their success as artists or on their success as political activists? How does an artist’s political expressions affect artistic recognition? To what extent does a certain type of artist expect that artistic-political expression will have field effects on their symbolic capital?

Political Action and Artistic Consecration

Artists are granted symbolic capital by the authority of powerful institutional and public agents of consecration (WACQUANT 1998). Symbolic capital has a genuine social foundation based on recognition by field actors who already have high levels of field-specific capital. The objective of ‘field feuds’ is the accumulation of this particular kind of capital (BOURDIEU 1985). To make a recognized name for themselves, artists need powerful agents in the field to consecrate their artworks

with a specific brand, through exhibitions, publications, awards; this gives them legitimacy or market value (BOURDIEU 1980).

In *The Rules of Art*, Bourdieu identifies independence and dignity as essential characteristics for the public intellectual in arts and literature, with reference to Emile Zola.

[Zola] constituted, as a deliberate and legitimate choice, the stance of independence and dignity appropriate for a man of letters, by putting his own kind of authority at the service of political causes. To achieve that, Zola needed to produce a new figure, that of the intellectual, by inventing for the artist a mission of prophetic subversion, inseparably intellectual and political. [...] The intellectual is constituted as such by intervening in the political field in the name of autonomy and of the specific values of a field of cultural production, which has attained a high degree of independence with respect to various powers (1996: 129).

To intervene as a public intellectual, the artist gains status through symbolic capital. Public intellectuals do not enter the political arena directly as political actors but, first, as recognized actors of their artistic or scientific fields. The field of cultural production is not only occupied by established inside actors such as professionals like artists, curators, critics, art historians, collectors and art dealers but also by an outside public, that is, institutions and people who are not involved in the production and distribution of art. This outside public is also able to award consecration by applying different criteria than the artistic field members. For instance, CATTANI et al. (2014) have studied the positioning of artists in a consecration hierarchy by analyzing the award system of Hollywood's film industry. They find two powerful groups responsible for providing institutional consecration. The first group is the internal, elite peers and film producers at the power center of the social network, the second group is the external critics, "arbiters of taste and [change] agents of consecration [...that] discover new talents" (CATTANI et al. 2014: 264). Criteria of consecration are very different for these two groups; peers tend to be more static and self-referential, whereas critics tend to be more dynamic and innovative. Critics favor the peripheral actors as fresh creatives whereas peers apply established norms for maintaining the consecration of the established. On a cursive approach, Bourdieu does not consider such forces of consecration outside the immediate artistic field to have the authority to provide an artist with significant artistic reputation (BOURDIEU 1993; BEHNKE et al. 2015; VARRIALE 2015; BUCHHOLZ 2018; BENNETT 2015; KARSTEIN/ZAHNER 2016).

However, there is a field-external recognition of political action for an artist's symbolic capital, as David Swartz points out, "Whereas Bourdieu did not pay much attention to political processes [...] his sociology

attempts a broader sweep of political issues than those delineated by the boundaries of academic disciplines” (2013: 2f.). The power of a field to give or take away artistic reputation is extended to the administrative, academic, economic, and especially the political field (BOURDIEU/WACQUANT 1992; BOURDIEU 2018; SWARTZ 2013).

Institutionalized politics is not the only field of power exerting its force on the field of cultural production (BOURDIEU 2001, 2005; SWARTZ 2013). In *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1987) confronts the static, institutional and conservative political apparatus with dynamic non-institutional and progressive grassroots action. Drawing on Marx and Engels’ reflection on the “concentration of the capacity for artistic production in the hands of a few individuals” (ibid: 397), he equates the field of artistic production with a dynamic political field that generates participatory utopias that transgress the established status quo. Bourdieu describes artists as less inhibited intellectuals who are positioned between the artistic and political fields. “The struggle for autonomy is [...] a struggle against the institutions and agents which, inside the field, introduce dependence upon external economic, political, or religious powers [...] inside the field.” (BOURDIEU et al. 1991: 663). If artists gain artistic reputation in their field, they give their political interests more force. In the artistic-political works of Hans Haacke, Bourdieu sees how artists can become such political actors. “I suspect that your work is groundbreaking for what intellectuals could do [...]. They should be inspired by works like yours to bring out the full symbolic impact of your analyses of social mechanisms” (BOURDIEU/HAACKE 1995: 112).

Extending Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital

In her analysis of the politicization of writers as intellectuals in the French literary field, Gisèle Sapiro (2003) shows that a static model of opposing autonomous artists and heteronomous political actors does not reflect Bourdieu’s dynamic interplay. On the contrary, aesthetic works and political action “are intimately linked, both through their habitus and through the position they occupy in the social space and in a given field” (SAPIRO 2003: 633f.). Some artists receive artistic consecration because of their distance from political issues, while others achieve consecration by political action as a “prophetic discourse” (ibid: 638). Sapiro positions four artistic-political types in a two-dimensional coordinate system between consecration and institutionalization: one

dimension for the artist's symbolic capital, and the other for their politicized discourse. "Aesthetes" are writers of literary competence, who produce highly regarded essays without political content. Their reputation is based on a clear "separation between art and politics to protect the independence of aesthetic judgement" (ibid: 642). The aesthete refrains from political and economic gains but acquires symbolic capital from the strict reading of the field doxa. "Notabilities" have a high level of consecration and are frequently recipients of state awards and are close to national elites and institutionalized government circles. In contrast to the aesthetes, they express themselves politically, foster literary discourses about politics, and are mainly politically conservative. Their high consecration relies on a high reputation in government circles and on their conservative political expression. They "view literature as a social order-maintaining instrument" (ibid: 644). The counterpart to the notability is the "avant-garde writer," who increases their non-institutional reputation by presenting themselves as politically subversive, progressive, and anti-establishment. They "ascribe political portent to their protest" (ibid: 643), and gain consecration from the heteronomy of political progressivism. The "journalistic writer" is an outsider because they have neither High Art's symbolic capital nor institutionalized consecration. Instead, they rely on their commercial earnings from writing about "current events, social issues and short-term stakes" (ibid: 642). To transfer Sapiro's findings about the literary field to our research, we relabel her types. The aesthete is the autonomous artist, the notability is the conservative public intellectual artist, the avant-garde is the progressive public intellectual artist, and the journalist writer is the disenfranchised artist.

Ancelevici (2019) further explores the dynamics of Bourdieu's thesis regarding political action. He shows how specific historic situations, or "field opportunity structures," (ibid: 2) allow those outside the political caste to succeed in acting politically. We transfer his concept to the art field. The emergence of new field opportunity structures in an art field create a new doxa, that is, a taken-for-granted sphere of unquestioned rules and goals, and thus a new appreciation for political action as artists and in the art, which might stimulate political artistic action. Artistic-political mobilization could then contribute to an increase in artists' symbolic capital. The importance of such game-changing field opportunity structures is related to societal crises where the established artistic logic is superseded by a superior political logic. Ermakoff (2013) argues that in a crisis where the doxa of a field becomes unstable, deeper

meta-reflection on what is going on uncovers the obsolete framework that ruled a field in calmer times. The disruption of everyday routines causes the appearance of a critical politics, a novel “intersubjective coordination of action” (REED 2015: 271) takes over. At that point, artists can become important change agents looking for new rules and alternatives in a rapidly changing field.

An empirical study of this field of opportunity structures (SAPIRO 2013) shows how the German invasion of France during World War II weakened the autonomy of the literary field and subordinated it to the political field. The formerly established logic between aesthetes and avant-garde in the literary field lost importance in view of the supremacy of a new political logic. Literary institutions collaborated with the Vichy regime (national literary awards, for example) and gained high symbolic artistic capital and high institutional artistic consecration. The literary resistance (such as the Communist national committee of writers) lost reputational value. In other words, it had low symbolic capital and institutional consecration. A Vichy institution like the *Académie française* had high institutional consecration but low symbolic capital, and avant-garde institutions like leftist poetry magazines had no institutional consecration but high artistic symbolic capital. Of course, the liberation of France completely changed this distribution, again. Sapiro thus proves that in times of societal and political upheaval, the literary field could not remain untouched with respect to consecration. Issues of autonomy that had been defended vigorously before the crisis were abandoned and replaced by a new consciousness of the insignificance of the old and the search for new rules (ERMAKOFF 2013). Our study is based on three hypotheses.

1. Political action and artwork correspond to artistic reputation. A distance from politics is beneficial for the autonomous artists (“aesthetes”), and a proximity towards politics is beneficial for the progressive public intellectual artist (“avant-garde”) (SAPIRO 2003).
2. Autonomous artists and politicized artists are opposites. The former eschew political action for maintaining an established consecration according to the dominant doxa; the latter express themselves as political and do not fear the loss of consecration (BOURDIEU et al. 1991; 1995).
3. A societal crisis affects the assessment of political expression and consecration in an art field (SAPIRO 2013). A crisis might provide new field opportunity structures that create a new doxa (ANCELOVICI 2019), with different judgments of artistic political activities.

Methodology

To determine how an artist's reputation is influenced by their political actions, we interviewed artists in the cities of Hamburg and Hanover in Germany, and Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in Israel. These cities were mostly pragmatically selected (the German research team is stationed in Lüneburg between Hamburg and Hanover; the Israeli research team in Jerusalem). We also justify the selection of cities as contrasting cases (cf. KELLE/KLUGE 2010). The interviews were part of the research project 'Critical Art(ist)s and Urban Development' (acronym CAUDE), a collaborative project of Leuphana University of Lüneburg and Hebrew University of Jerusalem under the guidance of Volker Kirchberg (Leuphana University) and Avner de Shalit (Hebrew University). This collaborative project was part of a Lower Saxonian–Israeli research program financed by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture in Germany, which promotes academic cooperation between the two countries. Apart from this political background, the comparison of cities and nations as factors of attitudes of critical artists was the objective of the research. However, this article does not explore this objective, which was the focus of another article of this research project (KADDAR et al. 2022).

The distinctiveness of cities as places embody a specific spirit of the city (BELL/DE SHALIT 2013), and specific collective identities emerge from the intrinsic logic of cities (LÖW 2012). These urban factors affect the content and scope of the local artists' critical political awareness and behavior. The significance of specific urban contexts for the degrees and the forms of political artistic activities is not the subject of this article but has been analyzed elsewhere by us (KADDAR et al. 2020, KADDAR et al. 2022, HOOP et al. 2022).

For collecting qualitative data, we created a semi-structured interview guideline based on the above theoretical considerations. We conducted and compared 92 qualitative interviews: 20 artists and 5 artistic support people in Hamburg, 10 artists and 7 artistic support people in Hanover, 16 artists and 6 artistic support people in Jerusalem, and 22 artists and 6 artistic support people in Tel Aviv.

The interviews were carried out as individual interviews and as focus group discussions (LONGHURST 2010) between 2016 and 2018. In order to capture mechanisms of consecration in the field, we not only interviewed artists but also artistic support people, such as art critics, art dealers, collectors and curators (BECKER 2008). To rule out the possibility that the difference between the artists' engagement patterns was

connected to a specific kind of art, we focused on visual and performance artists: painters, sculptors, conceptual artists, video artists, installation artists, performance artists and photographers. Our initial selection of interviewees was based on prior knowledge of artists working in each city, whom we contacted directly. We subsequently contacted more artists by means of snowball sampling. For instance, starting from our knowledge of the pool of the German Association of Visual Artists BBK, we interviewed specific BBK artists that were known for their urban political interventions by their peers. Some of the interviews followed ad-hoc requests for an interview with a person engaged in a meaningful action in a relevant location. Our sample of artists in each city included a variety of ages, genders, career stages and degrees of public visibility.

The interviews were transcribed in their entirety, and the transcripts were translated, as needed, from German or Hebrew into English. The data analysis is based on systematic qualitative content analysis (MAYRING 2019), assisted by the content analysis software program Atlas.ti. The interviews yielded a coding scheme (FRIESE 2019) derived from deductive reasoning based on theoretical considerations, and from an inductive coding process that added new categories to the theoretical constructs. In this way, we identified the main themes of artistic political action and the main statements regarding reputation in the field. The coding scheme captured different aspects of the themes such as the understanding of politics among the artists; motivations for their political expression; possible strategies, tactics, goals and methods of implementation; and assessments of their changes of artistic reputation as a result of engaging in political action.

Empirical Analysis

To answer the research question about the effect of political expression on artistic reputation, we revealed five ideal types (SHILS/FINCH 1997) of artists' political expressions, practicing political agency in their cities. In our preceding analysis of artists' political urban interventions (KADDAR et al. 2020), we found three dimensions to artists' political engagement in the city: civic participation, contestation, and efficacy. Civic participation concerns the extent to which an artist participates in the process of social and/or political action—from not involved, to a committed and continuous participation. Contestation is measured as the degree to which an artist contests political power—from not contesting power,

to intentionally and intensely contesting power. Efficacy is the ability or belief in an artist's ability to influence social transformation, further differentiated into internal efficacy (how the artist perceives their ability to initiate transformation) and external efficacy (how the artist perceives the ability of the arts in general to affect transformation). Based on these three dimensions, we found five artist types (KADDAR et al. 2020 for a more detailed explanation of the typology construction).

1. *Autonomous artists* refrain from making political statements and do not participate in overt political behavior. This does not mean they do not have political beliefs or avoid politics completely; however, artists of this type do not allow political or social influences to interfere with the autonomy of their artistic work. Autonomy is pivotal for this artist type (see KARSTEIN/ZAHNER 2016).
2. *High status artists* have a good reputation created not only among peers but also by critics, media attention, and the art market outside cultural production. Note that in our usage, high status is not equivalent to Bourdieu's consecration; rather it is closer to the concept of prestige as defined by Weber (see WEGENER 1992), an honorable status gained by general recognition and respect for an individual's virtue. In our sample, such high-status artists were aware that they could use their position in the art field for political purposes, and they did this effectively.
3. *Social activists* do not participate directly in political contestation but do so through their art (hence *artist*). They are intensely involved in urban social action. For example, this artist type seeks to improve the social welfare of those in deprived milieus by means of conceptual art. Many of their actions are directed toward everyday matters (DE CERTEAU 1984) and not abstract political objectives on the broader level of societal transformation.
4. *Political artists* express themselves politically through their art only; outside their art, they remain silent about political issues. Grothe (2012) considers political art to be primarily about artistic, not political action, and aims to enhance the image of the actors or change the existing power relations within the field of art (ibid: 246). Political expression is confined to the art field as these artists fear that being politically active outside their art will lead to a loss of their artistic reputation (DOWNEY 2007; BISHOP 2004). This does not mean that they cannot be highly effective in their urban artistic interventions.

5. *Political artists* want to have an impact on society and politics through their art and through their personal engagement outside art. This type of artist is highly participatory and effective in their political engagement, with the intention of contesting existing socio-political power structures (GIELEN 2011).

Based on these typologies, we posit that each artist type has a specific expectation about how political expression affects artistic consecration. The content analysis of the interviews provided us with a comprehensive set of statements from the interviewed artists, their artistic-political expressions, and the effects of these expressions on their symbolic capital and their consecration in the urban political art field. As expected, these self-assessments fell relatively neatly into the five political artist types.

Autonomous artists

Autonomous artists emphasize their distance from any political action. The Hamburg artist CD stresses, “I don’t think much of it when artists have their own political handwriting [...] when you react artistically to current political issues. As a rule, I don’t think much of it because I think it’s populist.” The Hanover artist JN escaped from an East Bloc country during the Cold War and has been skeptical about political art ever since. “It still annoys me when I keep repeating [...] political slogans. Because it’s pushing myself in a very definite corner and I don’t want that [...] I’m actually engaged in works that are public but [...] if it’s highly political, it would somehow irritate me or limit me.” The Hanover artist JPL insists on the intentionally purpose-free character of art. “Art is also a luxury; each of us could live without art. The more useful art becomes, the more it becomes design. Art must stand for itself, and the artist and his opinion must work around it.” The Hamburg musician JS connects political action directly with his reputation as an artist. “Political content would totally weaken my value, it sinks minus three thousand times, because that doesn’t fit in well enough.” The detrimental effect of being politically outspoken on the field consecration is paraphrased as ‘populist,’ ‘limiting,’ ‘cosmetic’ or ‘value-lowering.’ Autonomous artists in Hamburg and Hanover are convinced they must distance themselves and their art from any kind of political expression because they believe this will reduce their artistic credibility.

Autonomous artists in Jerusalem and in Tel Aviv also avoid political action and, like their German counterparts, they stress it would be

potentially damaging to their artistic reputation. The Palestinian-Israeli artist NRB (Jerusalem) does not want to limit her artistic scope by engaging in political action since the expression of any kind of non-artistic ideas might lessen her artistic reputation. “I’m trying to get as far as I can away from the categories people try to fit us in: political artist, social artist, feminist artist and so on and so on. These definitions limit my possibilities. When they say I’m a political artist it means I have to only stay in the political realm.” However, due to the unstable political situation of the region, for other Israeli artists the reasoning is slightly different. These artists insist on their artistic autonomy and their rejection of political art due to the futility they have experienced when trying to change the perilous situation for the better. The status quo, focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is on the mind of many of the Israeli artists we interviewed. As NM (Tel Aviv) puts it,

I want a quiet life. I want a nice life. I want to do whatever I want. I don’t want to shout with all the others, there are so many people who are shouting, so many people are dealing with politics and I just want peace of mind [...] There is so much hate between people already. I don’t want to fuel these fights through my art.

Political disenchantment leads them towards a *l’art pour l’art* autonomy. “I side with those who think art cannot change anything in the world... All other discourses are much more influential and stronger [...] Why would you even ascribe this kind of responsibility to art?” (GZI, Tel Aviv). Autonomous artists strictly separate political activism and artistic work. “I do not paint political symbols... My painting is going beyond all these dichotomies and binary oppositions. And political activism somehow always gets stuck as the situation here gets worse. So, my painting and my political activism take different directions” (SB, Jerusalem). Being an autonomous (and thus a non-political) artist in Hamburg or Hanover seems to be more a rational decision to avoid a loss of artistic reputation, whereas being an autonomous artist in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv is more of an emotional reaction to the energy-draining and nerve-wracking political situation in the Middle East.

High status artists

High status artists deliberately use their consecration for political purposes, knowing their internal and external efficacy. The renowned Hamburg concept artist CS regularly uses his artistic symbolic capital when negotiating with politicians about urban development projects in his

neighborhood. “The local district mayor was describing this project in our neighborhood to the [Hamburg urban development minister], and that we do a fantastic job [...] I then picked them up and I gave them a tour [...] And after the third stop the [urban development minister] said, okay, to sum it up, everybody is behind your idea.” High self-confidence and recognition go hand in hand. In other cases, high status artists expect that their artistic status will translate directly into political power. For instance, in 2009 the visual artist DR became the front figure for the artists and others squatting in a few historic buildings in central Hamburg, the *Gängeviertel* (Gangway District) which were scheduled to be torn down for yet another anonymous development of glass, steel, and concrete office buildings. He said,

There was real surprise when the *Gängeviertel* quarter was squatted. Shortly before that, I was in the local newspapers because of my major exhibition. I was the ‘international star painter.’ And when I gave my name in interviews and promoted the *Gängeviertel* stuff afterwards, I could reach out to people far into the bourgeois camp. I became an urban ‘heritage keeper.’ I did practically nothing, but the effect was amazing [...] It’s good if something like that works.

DR’s public prestige as an artist was especially attractive for members of Hamburg’s political caste, and his high artistic consecration was translated into political symbolic capital and political capital by them. According to the logic “the higher one’s own consecration, the higher the ability to consecrate [other] work or authors” (WUGGENIG 2012: 295), the symbolic capital of high-status artists can be transferred to other politically minded fellow campaigners.

For instance, without any formal application, Hamburg artist DR was selected by the mayor, the state culture minister, members of the political caste and the mainstream media to become a non-official representative and mouthpiece for the progressive urban development initiative *Gängeviertel*. His fellow Hamburg artist HS believes that DR “was the first artist who carried the dissident generation of punk and hardcore as a positive reference into the bourgeois art reception. That was the first time, I think, and it worked.” However, in most cases, the usual causal direction of the high-status artist using political intentions to enhance artistic reputation is reversed; as they are already a highly consecrated artist this makes it possible to also become a highly participatory and effective political figure. The internationally famous and award-winning Tel Aviv artist DK created politically controversial and thought-provoking memorials and monuments all over the world for more than 50 years. He is well aware of how he deploys his high artistic status as a

political tool, which he considers within his artistic rights. With an established reputation as a famous artist, he is—like other high-status artists—no longer concerned about losing symbolic capital when he acts politically. Instead, as a public intellectual, he regards his reputation as a privilege that obliges him to intervene with the political caste. “I have been using my privilege. But more than a privilege—it’s my duty [...] to use this privilege [...] to speak my mind about what is going on here.” His high political capital allows him to cooperate with sympathetic political institutions, like left-leaning media. “When I want to express my political opinion, usually Haaretz [the Israeli left-leaning newspaper] will publish it. [...] I will get published because of my status.” High status artists may also have their political role imposed upon them by their clientele. In his role as a well-known artist, and thus public intellectual, the Arab painter DB (Tel Aviv-Jaffa) thinks, “that in the Arab sector, when someone is an intellectual, an artist, people listen to him. Artists are profound people, usually. When I speak, people from the Arab sector pay attention.”

Social activists

The Hanover social activist MF lamented the loss of consecration when she moved from Berlin to Hanover. In Berlin, she was well known and a rambunctious political artist, but in the more subdued town of Hanover, her political activism did not go over well with the more conservative elites that were effective agents for consecration there. She changed her form of political-artistic performance to a form of social art in order to maintain at least a certain level of local consecration.

The recognition [I had in Berlin] did not work anymore. Before Hanover, I was interviewed on television and all that stuff. Of course, I also get recognition in Hanover from the people I work with. But I never got recognition from the city and I was bitter that I wouldn’t get it. And then I freed myself from this kind of recognition. I get it from [ordinary] people and have freed myself from any official recognition [...] You create other connections, networks and so on; I get that kind of recognition now.

Her switch from being a political artist in Berlin, prominent for her political outspokenness, to a social activist in Hanover, performing her artistic presence as more subdued social action, allowed her to maintain a certain degree of symbolic capital. This causality was confirmed by other social activists in all cities, who refrain from being openly political because, in their urban contexts, they regard political action as shallow

and attention craving, and without artistic merit. The Hanover artist SST does not criticize artistic actions intended to improve society per se, but he does criticize artists wanting to become politically famous. “It’s harmful to say I’m critical when you put it that way. It is really terrible to say I’m a critical artist.” He rejects political action as a tool employed to increase an artist’s symbolic capital but endorses artistic social action that, purportedly, authentically connects with and serves people.

I’m never an artist who deals with political issues and political intentions. On the contrary. I would say that art is a way of expressing themes that interest me. I take them outside and connect them with people. I actually do my projects for people, but even if they carry political aspects with them, I’m never a political artist.

Being a social activist communicates the message of being honest and authentic, and this type sees a lot of deception in the institutionalized art field. The Tel Aviv artist AK expresses it like this:

Obviously, at the end of the day I want to be a successful artist—exhibit in galleries and such, right? But really, what’s important to me are the people, it’s important for me to reach out to the people, not just to galleries or museums. I want to change reality, even if that sounds pretentious.

Critical self-reflection is part of being a social activist. “Why is [social action] art? Because I publish it in an artistic context and use my artistic language. Why do I do it? I’m not looking to promote myself or my interests, but it’s done in order to be a useful citizen if you wish” (HO, Jerusalem). According to the Jerusalemite MI, his socio-artistic action as a member of a public art project, in an inner-city social hotspot in Jerusalem, is not led by the career aspiration of climbing to the top of the art field.

Art today is one of the few domains that could work horizontally. Most of the other domains—academia, research, even hi-tech—always focus on a very small niche and go in deep in order to say something new. In the art world, we say something new horizontally. What does that mean? Change in the way we understand ourselves, our aspirations to become famous for our art, change in society, and change in the ways we think about community, and we think about the environment, they all need to be taken on horizontally. It’s not enough to work through only one of these dimensions, for example, succeeding myself without taking into account the community or the environment. It has to be a format that incorporates all these things together.

Social activists create the impression that their personal intentions are secondary; their prime purpose is the betterment of society, especially of living conditions in the places they feel connected to. However, overt statements by social activists might not always match their latent objectives.

Urban sociologist Aharon-Gutman (2018) evaluates the intentions of an artist collective in a social hot spot in Jerusalem.

What brought this group of artists to this poor neighborhood identified with Jewish emigrants from Arab countries? Each party recognized the others' symbolic capital that could benefit them. The artist group saw the potential value of [this neighborhood's] social protest led by the [Jerusalemite] *Black Panthers* in the 1970s. Due to [this neighborhood's] history, and its connection to a legacy of social action in the country [...] the neighborhood bore great potential and promise. (AHARON-GUTMAN 2018: 3483f.)

The collective itself would never have put it this way because they would never describe their social activism as calculated to advance their own careers. However, other types of artists see the pretentiousness of this kind of social activism for social betterment (SCHRAG 2018). Social activists do not believe in one single art field and thus deny the doxa of such a field. "We understood intuitively there's a problem, and so we decided we wouldn't take part in this game, and we opened a place of our own, and *que sera, sera*" (GS, Tel Aviv).

For social activists, the anti-institutional logic of socio-artistic action in their art field increases their symbolic capital without being manifestly political. They do not need to perform politically to increase their specific symbolic capital in their art field. It is rewarding enough, for example, to do community work in local neighborhoods, which gives them a special form of artistic consecration. Artists of this type believe their artistic intervention in social issues is truer and more honest, and less open to exploitation for political purposes. In stark contrast to the logic of the institutional art field, with its big players like art museums, art galleries, auction houses and performing arts houses, socially engaged art increases artistic reputation within its own peer group.

Political artists

The political artist is the only artist type who differentiates between political expression inside and outside their art. Political expression in and through artwork is the only legitimate means to promote artistic reputation; personal political expression must be avoided at all costs. Thus, political artists have a pronounced dislike of political activists, as TBH, an artist from Jerusalem, points out.

Maybe when I say political, I think about activists that stand in the streets—yelling in anger, angry about the things that are the way they are. I guess activism to me is

always a very violent action. It's just not what we want [...] If you care about doing an activist thing, you forget [...] what happens to art. (TBH, Jerusalem)

Hanover artist BJ, who works in a theater, acknowledges the legitimization of political provocation but feels that, artistically, this should only happen on stage. The local state theater where she works has “chosen directors who are internationally famous for getting into trouble [...] Political artists get their reputation from the trouble they cause by their performances!” US (Hanover) welcomes the need “to set political accents [...] Politics and partisanship play a very important role here [...] but you must integrate it somehow into your work.” LM (Jerusalem) states that politics is only allowed as an artistic expression that then enhances artistic status, “We put aside political values that for us personally are important. On the other hand, it is important for us to express them as art.” MW (Hamburg) emphasizes that artistic political expression has to be detached from non-artistic political expression; artistic intentions should not be linked with personal intentions. “The political always happens to me by accident. People like to say that I became political, but somehow, I did not think about it that way. [...] My art becomes political.” The political artist holds up the flag of autonomy; art always has to be independent, that is, free from personal expectations. “We prefer to keep it independent [...] and not to feel that we have to respond to any external agent” (LM, Jerusalem). Still, creating political art is seen as a tool to increase one's reputation in the art field. TS (Hanover) directly links his political art with consecration, “A reputation is very important [...] If people do not recognize you [...] there is no career [...] For the art associations [I am working with] that are more dedicated towards experimental arts, to be a political artist is also a good thing.” The political artist feels that making his art political increases his artistic reputation but omits the heteronomy of commercial success. By engaging in political art, an artist gains “recognition, trouble and no money.” (HG, Hamburg)

Political artists

The political artist has the highest degrees of civil participation, contestation and efficacy of all the artist types interviewed. This type is political through their art as well as through their personal actions. They demarcate their works sharply from an art influenced by hegemonic forces, that is, by institutionalized political and economic determinants. As CE (Hamburg) points out, “It's quite good for an artist to be

a political activist, working on certain issues, criticizing globalization or your own government or other special social issues; that's quite good for your reputation." This is especially true for an affluent bourgeois and top-down governed city like Hamburg with its clear agenda of state-driven neoliberal growth. As a countermovement to this official doctrine, in 2009 artists and other activists in this city founded a Right to the City network, which has become a political player that cannot be ignored in this city (KIRCHBERG/KAGAN 2013). The artist CS (Hamburg) is a key example of a local political activist because he blurs the borders between politics and art and softens the institutional constraints of both in order to realize his political objectives. "We wrote the concept for our political project, and we challenged the authorities with it. As artists, we [...] regarded the artistic concept as a weapon, our wishes were weapons." Tel Aviv is also a city with a clear agenda of state-driven neoliberal growth. Tel Avivi artist RF also fully believes in the effective transforming power of a political activist, "We have a very decisive role [...] to do what is called in political theory, 'voice' [...] We have other [than economic] forms of capital in all of this, so we are very vocal and influential... The bad guys want Tel Aviv to be run their way, and we offer alternatives." None of these political activists are concerned about their loss of consecration because of overt political activism. On the contrary, they believe their activism increases an artist's reputation among their peers in the art field.

However, if an artist uses political activism to gain artistic reputation, this is quickly seen through, and results in a loss of artistic reputation. Major art institutions have donned ostensibly progressive agendas and are beginning to appropriate political programs that were once only proposed by non-institutionalized artists. This leads to a quarrel among political activists who have to deal with accusations of their political activism being nothing other than a blatant attempt to secure economic or reputational objectives (BEHRENS et al. 2012). CE (Hamburg) refers here to

mainstream cultural organizations who pretend to be very political, even if they really aren't political at all. They do projects with refugees, not paying them at all. One organization looked for them, but all the refugee actors had already been hired months before by other theaters. At the very end, they came to us, "Can you please tell us where we can get some refugees?" This is getting crazy.

Sarcastically, CE adds that she would rather work with non-political artists who do "flower paintings" (her wording) than with institutionalized cultural organizations she sees as hypocritical in their political intentions.

Correspondence between Artist Type and Urban Political Action

What political issues does the artistic engagement of these artist types revolve around? Although the autonomous artist eschews any kind of overt politics, all other artist types are politically engaged with a long and diverse list of urban issues. In our interviews, the artists mentioned a broad field of economic or social, authoritarian or liberal, conservative or progressive discourses when discussing political issues in their cities. Some specific critiques and visions about the city stand out, and these can be assigned to the different artist types. These issues include neoliberal economics and urban development, diversity and segregation, appropriation of urban spaces by the underprivileged, the threat of gentrification, community issues, the beautification or aesthetization of the city, and the communication of an urban image.

The *autonomous artist* does not hold back in discussing many urban issues but avoids being political in their artwork. The issue of urban aesthetization might be the closest to a political topic. For instance, the artist NS demands support for neighborhood improvement projects, “Look at this wasteland, for thirty years nothing has happened. So, do something! When people are willing and able to, give them the space to let them try to make something out of it. They are artists, they’re not really into the political stuff but they’re just full of new ideas.” Asked about the impossibility of preventing urban politics from infiltrating art, another artist (JN) replies sharply, “I would certainly defend my freedom! I do not see myself playing a role in politics.”

The *high-status artist*, on the other hand, is especially sensitive regarding media reactions that their political engagement in the city might produce. For instance, the Hamburg artist DR says regarding the publicity he created, “In a way, I got into the role of an inner-city keeper, a history keeper. The effect was amazing.” But he also criticizes the media hype around this action that he never meant to be particularly enduring, “I find a really continuous commitment important, but I couldn’t do it myself. I found it amazing that there was so little media attention going on for a longer time. Look at the stories about the Kurdish liberated areas in Iraq and Turkey, it just fizzled out.”

The *social activist* has a focus that is overtly social but only latently political. The social dimension of their artistic work is mostly educational. This is exemplified by MF’s work with neglected children in so-called social hotspot schools. “I was happy to be brought to hotspots [...] to bad schools, because these teenagers there always love graffiti [...] the stigma

of graffiti, rappers and bad schools. And of course these guys were always from Croatia, from Turkey, I don't know where from. But they were just my teenagers." The sculptor CO interprets her artwork as a work of social education:

The artwork was in a cemetery. The project was called *City Flowers*. This was 1999, at the turn of the millennium, so I laid it out a bit like that, one millennium dies, and the next one begins. I've read Philippe Ariès' book *The Story of Death* because death is so taboo. But a cemetery could also be a kind of social place the way the tombs and the small front gardens are designed. Somewhere it's almost like a row of houses the dead 'live' in. Two hundred years ago, it was a place where people met, it was very much alive. It is relatively new, actually, that this is a place of silence and contemplation. We worked very much against this experience; including video installations in a crypt, [...] it created contradictions and opposition. There have been taboos that have been 'touched and broken' by us.

The *political artist* assumes a seemingly problematic position between political intervention and a non-political stance. Artists of this type often mention problematic examples of artists engaging in political art, for example, the renowned artist cooperative Center for Political Beauty or other collectives that come close to being media machines, generating political spectacles, rather than communicators of quieter but more intense political information. The artist couple TS and LL do not communicate big political issues but instead focus on smaller topics in their neighborhood; they create art with political substance in a small artist workshop in an urban backyard.

Well, our task is to reflect more and to allow people to participate in this reflection [...] Can I say for both of us that we are very political? We start researching, reading up and exchanging ideas, and then there is a situation where an art association asks for an exhibition, a great place happens by chance, or money is available, and then you add an artwork to it.

The *political activist* is the artist type most oriented towards specific and problematic political issues like diversity and segregation, appropriation of urban spaces by the powerful, and the fight against gentrification. Probably the best example is artist CS who used his artistic background to organize such a participatory urban initiative. He saw this as a tool for an effective bottom-up planning of a community and residential building in the Hamburg-St. Pauli district. This initiative has a diverse membership mirroring the composition of the surrounding neighborhood.

[Political activists] come from very different life paths, and one of the main demands was that all these people do the planning themselves. We joined forces with another resident initiative, and then we started negotiating with the city about being a real part of the planning process.... We really wanted to talk with everybody

in this neighborhood here [...] and we work with art people because these participatory concepts have been already done by them so much prettier in the 1990s!

The artists interviewed used the words 'political' and 'politics' in a manner corresponding to their political type. A content analysis of the occurrence of these words in the interviews resulted in a clear assignment of artistic type and the use of 'political' and 'politics'. Social activists talked about politics especially related to the fabric of urban politics; political artists talked about politics almost only using the word 'political'; and in their majority, political activists use the general term 'politics' instead of 'political art' or the more specific 'urban politics'.

Correspondence between Artist Type and Artistic Consecration

Content analysis gave evidence for different relationships between artistic-political expression and an artist's expectations about its impact on their symbolic capital, or consecration in an art field. The differences rely on the five different, politically engaged artist types.

Autonomous artists carefully distance their art from any external utilization. They expect that political expressions of any kind will decrease their symbolic capital. The logic is slightly different in Hamburg and Hanover than in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. In the two German cities, Bourdieu's rule holds that an infiltration by economic or politically heteronomous forces decreases an artist's symbolic capital. In the two Israeli cities, however, there is an additional reason for an artist to become autonomous. In this troubled region of the world, autonomy is a retreat, where art is not a powerful tool for social and political transformation but a respite from a threatening environment.

High status artists are similar to Bourdieu's public intellectual and reflect Sapiro's notability. From their high vantage point, they are unconcerned about engaging in politics that could entail a loss of symbolic capital. On the contrary, they consider art as a means to achieve the political goals they believe in, and they do not care about its impact on their consecration. They even assume that political fame might also have a positive bearing on their artistic consecration. This type of artist generally accepts their role as a mouthpiece for political causes, but some stated they had not consciously or actively pursued a political role. They were surprised by their sudden position as a public intellectual, a role that had been imposed on them by other politically interested artists,

politicians or the media. They accepted this role, and were often pleased with the results, not only as artists but also as political actors.

Social activists do not affirm the autonomy of the arts either, as they believe that public artistic intervention is a form of community work that is truer and more authentic, and less open to exploitation for non-art purposes. As engagement in direct political actions is not a priority for them, and social action as a form of conceptual art does not fit their definition of political work, they do not fear a loss of artistic reputation. This positioning between the autonomous artist and the political artist may reflect differences in individual biographies, or in the limited possibilities for open political agitation that affect structural contexts. Personal political expressions may also be rejected as superficial attention seeking. Often disenfranchised as artists, they aspire to symbolic capital only in art fields outside institutionalized high culture fields, defining themselves through peer consecration on the social level, with peers playing a central role.

Political artists express their political intentions solely through their artwork because political intentions are only considered legitimate if they assure the autonomy of their field of art. They believe any political expression outside their artwork compromises the autonomy of the field because it would be seen as succumbing to the forces of heteronomy. An artist's political action outside their artwork is not considered acceptable for consecration, but their political artwork is. Connecting politics and art in this way emphasizes an artist's autonomy and lets them expect an increase in their artistic consecration. Institutionalized players such as established art galleries, museums and theaters (and their notabilities) regard political expression in artwork, but not by artists, as valuable contributions to consecration.

Political activists believe that their political expressions, both in artwork and outside their art, will increase their artistic reputations. Political activists see themselves as both artists and as political activists, unconcerned by potential sanctions in the institutionalized art field. The political activist, in contrast to the autonomous artist, the social activist and the political artist, values their overt personal contribution to political action as much as communicating political intention in their artwork, while simultaneously believing in the power of personal and artistic expression to influence politics. Artists of this type deny their political artwork will have any negative impact on their artistic consecration; on the contrary, they expect a higher degree of consecration in the art field

because they do not regard themselves as dependent on endorsement from established arts institutions.

These findings on the scope and contents of political expression and the artist's expectations of symbolic capital and consecration for the five artist types are summarized in Table 1.

artist type	political expression	expected consecra- tion	expected other consequences
Auto- nomous artist	Engages in neither artistic nor personal political expression	Artistic consecration would decrease	Political expression would reduce artistic autonomy
High sta- tus artist	Engages in political issues mostly through personal political expression	Artistic consecration would remain high and increase	Political purposes served by high artistic consecration
Social artist	Engages in social issues; political expression is secondary to social action	Artistic consecra- tion would remain untouched or increase slightly	Social engagement served by artistic expression rather than by overt political expression
Political artist	Engages in political issues solely through artistic works	Artistic consecration would increase when the artwork is political, and decrease when the artist is political	Personal political expression problematic outside artwork
Political artist	Engages in political issues through artistic and personal expressions	Artistic consecration would increase	Political engagement served by political expression both in artwork and by person

Table 1: Expected consequences of political expressions on consecration. Artist types in column 1 and political expression in column 2 are based on findings in KADDAR et al. (2020).

Conclusions

Bourdieu's demands on intellectuals were high.

My dream would be to create an international of artists and scientists which would become an independent political and moral force capable of intervening, with authority and with a competence founded on their autonomy, about problems of general interest (such as nuclear power, education, or the new biotechnologies). They would not rule but, while remaining in their place, they would constitute a very serious control over rulers, especially in those domains, where they know a

great deal, if only by saying that we do not know enough" (BOURDIEU quoted in WACQUANT 1993: 38).

This representation of art as a critical force shows Bourdieu's vision of the position artists can take in public life as public intellectuals. This would come closest to the high-status artist or to the autonomous artist in our typology. We show that according to their personal assessments, artists' engagement in politics clearly does not result in a one-size-fits-all positioning and has different effects on their artistic reputations. The strong differences in the expression of political beliefs by the five artist types shows that there is no simple opposition of (artistic) autonomy versus (political) heteronomy. The greatest conformity to Bourdieu's rules of art is shown by the autonomous artist, whose field position is characterized by total resistance to any heteronomous (political) force. The other four artist types assess the consequences of engaging in political action differently. The politically active high-status artist expects an increase in symbolic capital and ignores the possibility of repercussions on their level of already acknowledged consecration. Social activists, in their own opinion—already disenfranchised from the institutionalized art field—are neither interested in consecration by institutional field players given that the outside field objective of successful social engagement is more important, nor do they aim for an increase in symbolic capital, although they might expect some recognition from other local social activists. The political artist provides a different case of autonomy-heteronomy antagonism. This type expresses political beliefs only in and through their art and avoids any expression of politics outside their art. The political activist meanwhile is the type most distant from Bourdieu's conception of artistic autonomy. Their immersion in non-institutional politics is accompanied by a striving for reputational benefit, or at least not a negative change.

Where does this leave us with regard to the significance of politically heteronomous forces in an art field? Although Bourdieu paid more attention to economic interests, he does mention political interests as a heteronomous force. Moreover, he understood field theory as a dynamic model characterized by the "temporality of the field of artistic production" (BOURDIEU 1996: 159). Art fields change from one generation of artists to another, replacing established rearguard field rules with a new avant-garde. While being openly political might have been a problem for an older generation of artists, this has not been the case for successive generations. Art fields evolve over time. While at one time an artist might be awarded high consecration, and thus rise in the artistic

reputational hierarchy, at another time—when a societal crisis puts the doxa in question—the consecrated might suffer a deep fall. This concept of art fields is very similar to Becker's (2008) stable art worlds, which do not change from within but are forced to develop further by outside pressures. Entrepreneurial artists always struggle with the old art world when creating a new art world with new conventions (KAGAN 2008). Further exploration of this topic might reflect how the ongoing global crisis of the city is reflected in a corresponding global change in the urban art field.

One surprising finding in this study—and another opportunity for further research—is the strong skepticism we found among artists about the integrity of peers engaging in political activism. Supposedly, subversive critique was seen as superficial and artificial (OSTEN 2003). The artists we interviewed often refused to acknowledge the artistic credentials of political artists, suspecting they were not acting out of any real political conviction but instead seeking to increase their commercial value by attracting public attention. Artist HS talked about the pretentiousness of being a “rebel artist”, adding that “It stinks that one asserts the aura of danger, for example as a squatter. People use it for branding, I find that sometimes unpleasant.” SK expressed the same attitude about using political activism as a means of attention seeking to improve symbolic capital. “This is the crux of the artist, always having to be invited somewhere or to make themselves heard. [...] Everything is always bought. I’m a brand and my brand promises a certain critical questioning, that’s part of it.” Artist TS illustrated this attitude with the example of the well-known artist collective Centre for Political Beauty. “Under certain conditions, political action can promise a gain in reputation. But I don’t think you can calculate that, otherwise the Center for Political Beauty wouldn’t be so insanely bad. They don’t want to be regarded as predictable, but they don’t succeed.”

An artist’s reputation suffered if they appeared to be making a strategic move. Instead, they must be seen as doing something that ‘just happens’ out of their own deep conviction. The most important rule of the game, now valid for all art fields, states that to be autonomous all artistic expression must happen non-strategically and without political intention. The empirical data of this study shows that the status of a member in an art field can be damaged by even a rumor that their actions were calculated. And in fact, many of the artists we interviewed repeatedly refused to be labeled as political artists. This is very similar to the artist’s denial of “being commercial” (BOURDIEU 1993: 136).

The field of cultural production is an economic world reversed, in which renouncing economic capital is a precondition for gaining symbolic capital. Beneath the surface, economic forces do play an important role in art fields, but this denial is a necessary illusion of the field. According to Bourdieu, there is a practical sense in the game played by artists wanting to acquire symbolic capital, “the idea of strategy, understood as an orientation of practice that is neither conscious and calculated nor mechanically determined, but rather the result of [...] a sense of that specific game that honor is supposed to play” (Bourdieu 1992: 37). Similarly, we posit that politically active artists must distance themselves from any form of political attention-seeking if they are to be taken seriously in their art fields. They must practice appropriate impression management (GOFFMAN 1978) in order to be regarded by their fellow artists as following the rules of their art field—and not engaging in political circus-like behavior. In Goffman’s terminology, these artists have to maintain dramaturgical discipline in their teams so as not to be sanctioned for gaffes in the expression of their political beliefs. The prevailing skepticism towards the political artist and political activist types among their fellow artists confirms Bourdieu’s thesis of the dangers of heteronomous interests within an art field. Critique is always forthcoming of any overt political activism and economic interests in the art field. Any kind of instrumentalization of art is seen as an attack on the autonomy of the art field, particularly when conducted by its members engaging in personal branding, whether commercially or politically oriented. Clearly, the politically active artist must be very skillful in impression management to avoid stigmatization and a loss of reputation. However, an analysis of impression management in art fields is a task for future research.

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