

**THE FORMATS OF STRUGGLE FOR THE CITY IN NEW MEDIA  
(CASES OF THE “*LOCAL BLOGS*” PROJECT AND  
THE MOBILE APPLICATION “*INGRESS THE GAME*”)**



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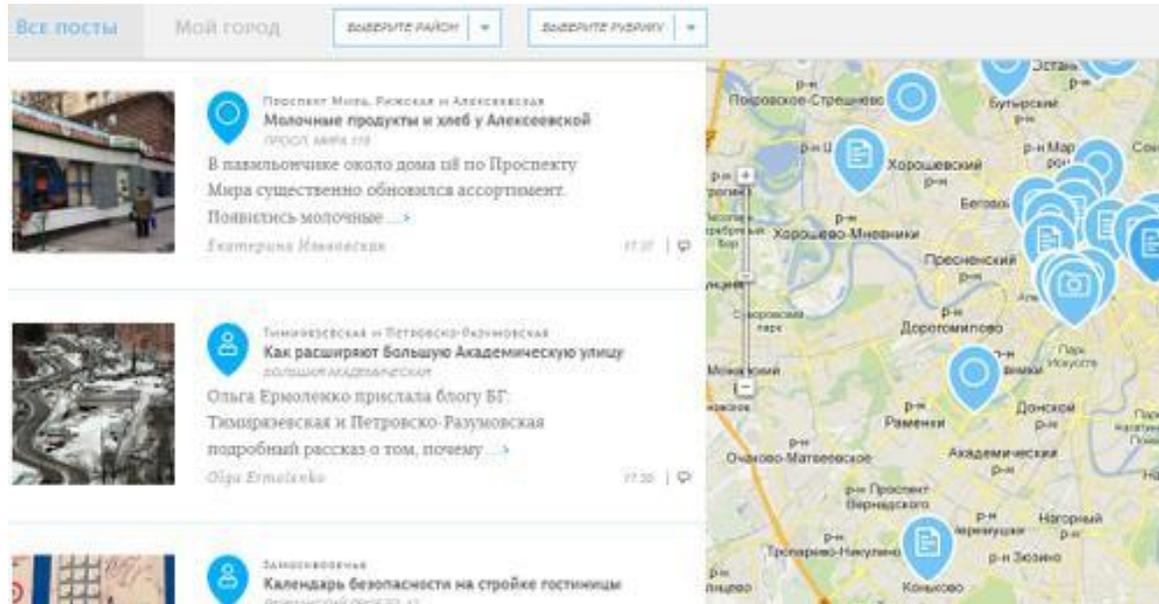
SSG "Strategies of mixed methods research"



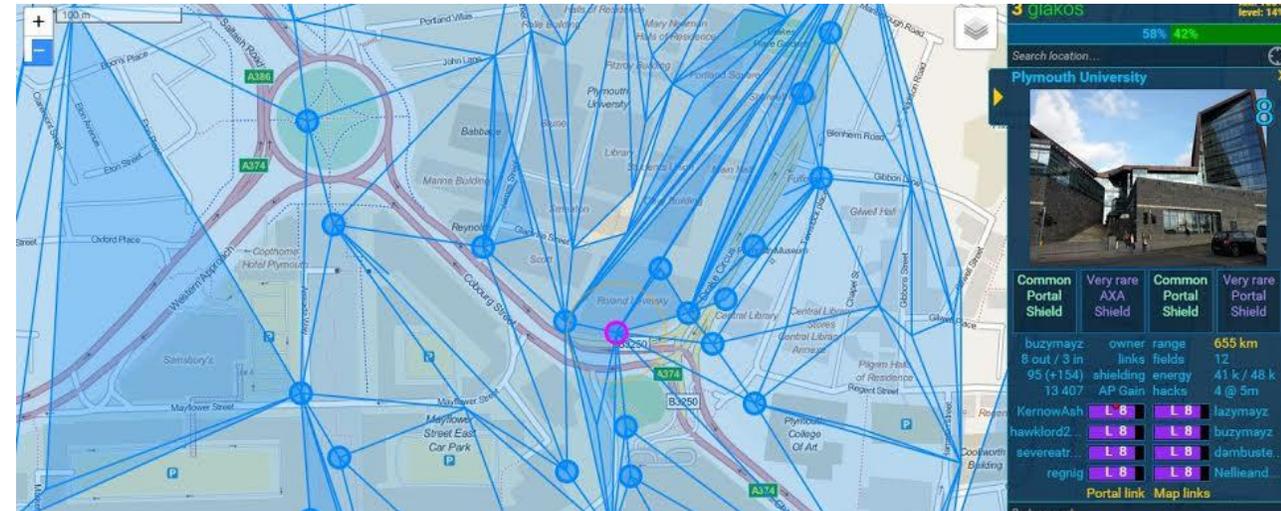
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# TWO CASES

## THE “LOCAL BLOGS” PROJECT



## THE MOBILE APPLICATION “INGRESS THE GAME”



- TO PRODUCE A LEGITIMATE LANGUAGE OF URBAN DESCRIPTIONS -> **LOCAL BLOGS**

- TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OVER THE URBAN SPACE -> **INGRESS THE GAME**

# MEDIA FORMATS

specific organization of citizens' participation in urban life

delineate mechanisms and circumstances in which urban descriptions function (who are user's target audience, what kind of message or action you could produce within this media platform)

present different elements of the city as meaningful and connected to each other; and provide different roles for citizens in the description of the city.

# GOALS

how everyday life practices, an imaginary dimension of the city and technical issues of communication are linked together

how the format of new media (mechanisms and circumstances in which urban descriptions function – who are user's target audience, what kind of message or action you could produce within this media platform) influences on practices of city appropriation and where is the border between what we could program and what we could not predicate

analyze initial goals and failures - where is the border between what we could program and what we could not predicate

problematize the idea of new media as a special structure (“why if new media does not work as new media?”) and the idea of urban community (“what we could relate to it?”)

# METHODOLOGY

## THE “**LOCAL BLOGS**” PROJECT

participant observation and discourse-analysis. For a one year of local journalist-blogger’s job (2012-2013) we collected materials (news, posts, photos) containing urban descriptions of citizens

## THE MOBILE APPLICATION “**INGRESS THE GAME**”

8 interviews with players of each fraction in the period of autumn 2014.

the Internet questionnaire (March 2015) and collected 709 responds. After clearing the dataset we get 497 responds, 231 from which are from Moscow.

Considering the total amount of active players held at the official community (general population in Russia equals about 7915 people, in Moscow – 1771 people).

# THE “LOCAL BLOGS” PROJECT

Moscow as a former USSR capital: (1) the lack of local memory (2) and of comfortable infrastructure, (3) the necessity to form new leisure and consumptive strategies in capitalistic environment of the city

Solutions:

- the new way of urban life as a consumption of “right” cultural products and visiting “right” places - first magazines
- to overcome Soviet modest style through by transmitting “natural” speech and description of multiple citizens’ “habitués” (unusual places and stories) – “Big City” magazine, 2002 - 2014

# THE “LOCAL BLOGS” PROJECT

Image of the City as legible and complicated,

- as a homogenous group is in characteristics of age, cultural capital, etc (Lynch, 1960).

In the end of 2000s the “Big city” magazine started to raise a popularity rapidly, and in 2011 became the main translator of protest movement ideas.

- by the end of 2000s there was formed a strata of people, whose image of the city coincided with image, constructed by the “Big city”
- they have not already been satisfied with culture consumption, but tried to promote their political interests

# THE “LOCAL BLOGS” PROJECT

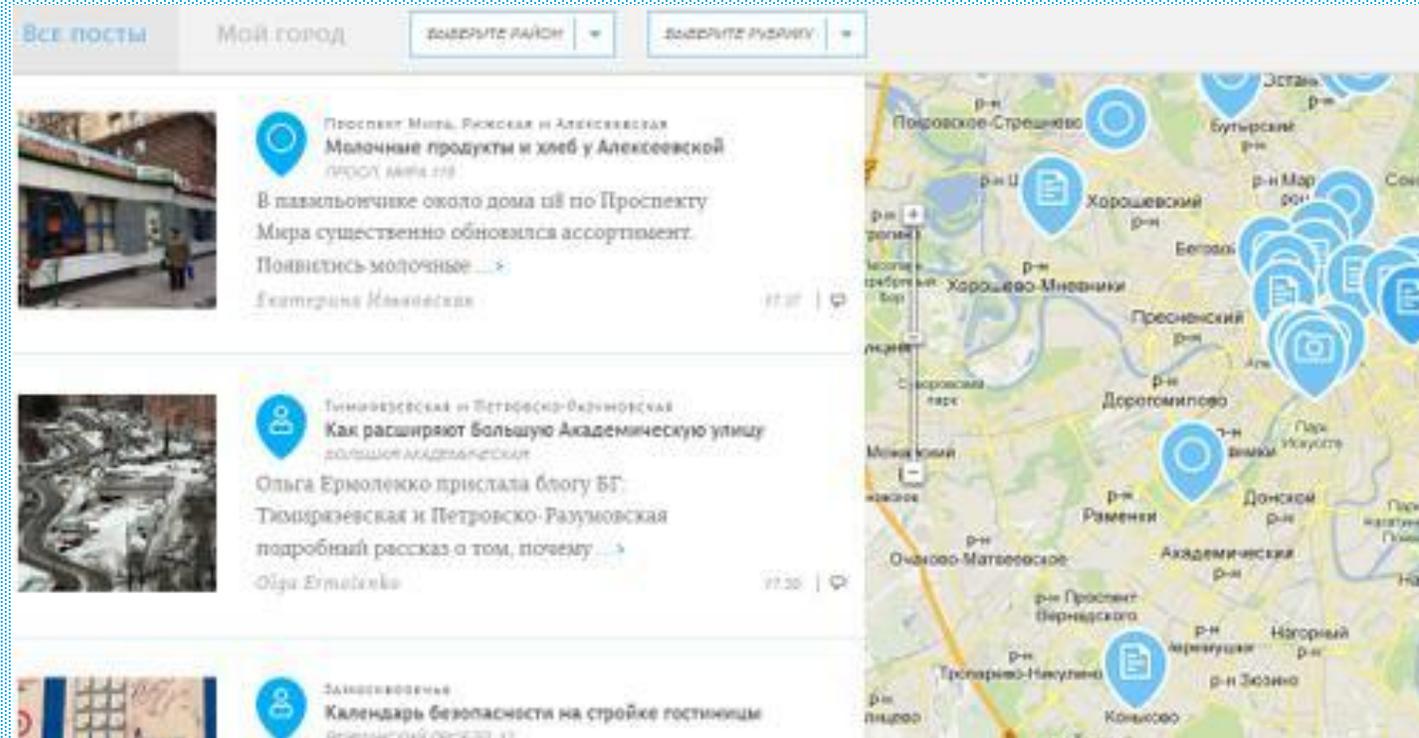
What is first?

**The new class of citizens VS The new language of city description**

The element of utopian imaginary in the work of Moscow magazines in early 2000s:

“we wrote about the city as if it is interesting to live there” (Jury Saprykin, the editor of a popular magazine “Afisha” (*translated as “poster”, “billboard”*) and “Big city”)

# THE “LOCAL BLOGS” PROJECT



Launching the “Local blogs” project, 2012:

Every person could offer his own post, which had to be approved by blogger in several hours; also, everyone could automatically post a photo from Instagram with special blog tag.

Bloggers encouraged and even provoked people to share their questions and advices.

An intensive reaction in the journalistic field and conversations about “new era of journalism” 9

# THE “LOCAL BLOGS” PROJECT

Results:

Not so much people will to create their own posts, they rather prefer to comment or read them.

Stop their work because of financial problems, city community did not support project functioning.

The blogs' format (very modest user's profile, no friends list (unpredictable auditorium of publication), no encouragement for posts) was unsuitable for accumulation of social, economic and symbolic capital.

# THE “LOCAL BLOGS” PROJECT

The growing popularity of the "Big city" magazine expressed the need for creating a new language of city description, which let new strata of Moscow citizens symbolically “appropriate” city space, to perceive it as familiar and open.

The element of utopian imaginary was projected beyond the borders of editorial staff and created overstated expectations from media platform (free discussion as a sufficient ground for community organization) and from Moscow citizens as well (they had a clear interest to participate in discussions about the city).

The new language was not actualized in the framework of the blogging in magazine’s website, but in the parallel structures of social networks (photos in Instagram as a display of non-routine optics on city environment, Facebook self-organizing groups for local problems discussion).

# INGRESS THE GAME

## Johan Huizinga “Homo Ludens”

- Game is opposed to Everyday Life
- Game is opposed to Puerilism

# INGRESS THE GAME

Projects of game interventions in the urban space

- Psychogeographic, Guy Debord
- Architectural, Archigram of David Green and “New Babylon” of Constant

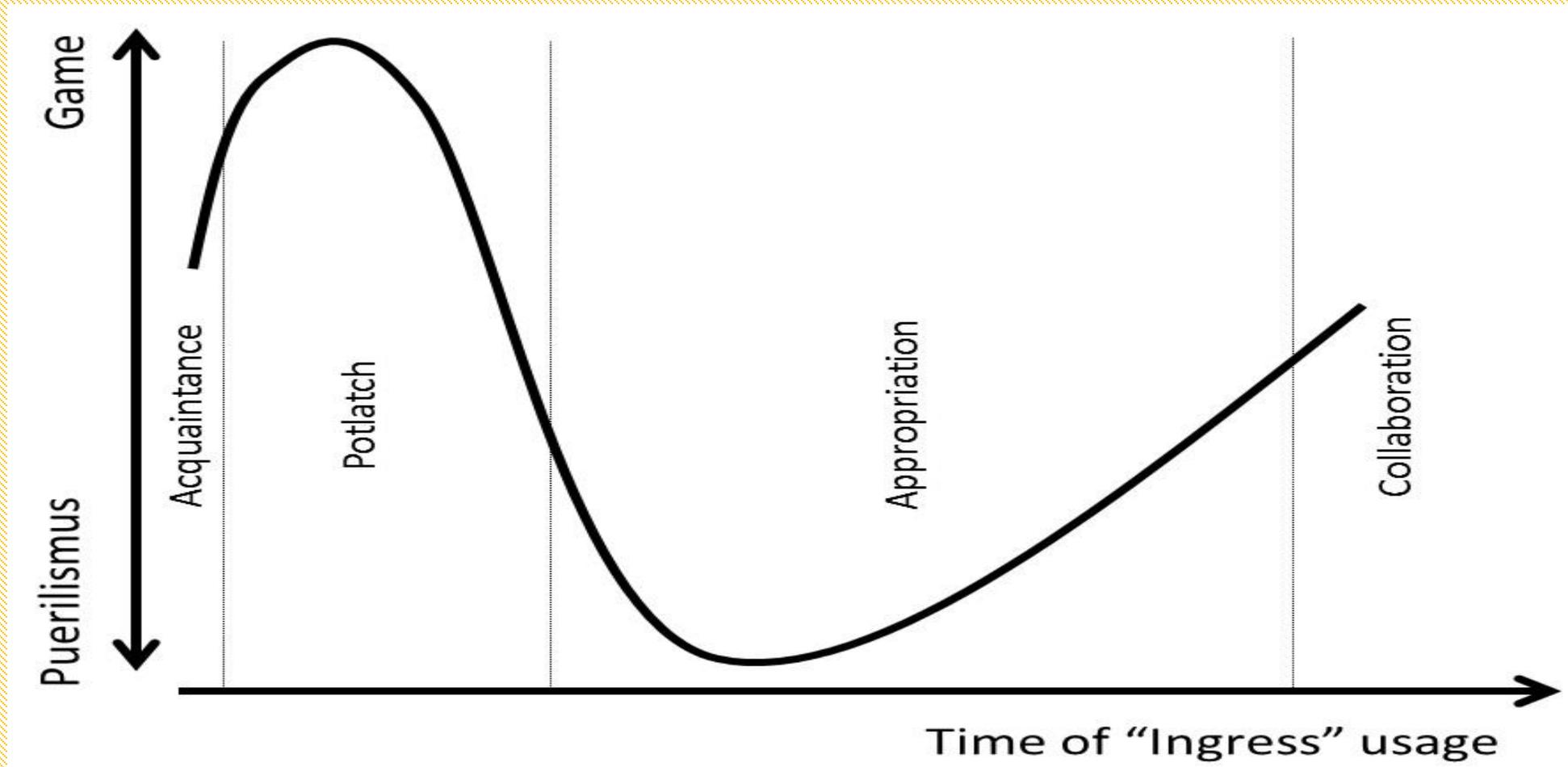
# INGRESS THE GAME

Mobile Games within

***forms of urban perception*** and  
***space usage and appropriation***

# INGRESS THE GAME

What qualities and mechanisms of everyday life are *acting out* within format of mobile games?



# INGRESS THE GAME

how players decide to join one of the teams?

53% of players choose a fraction because of its description, 31% - like the color, 18% of players decide to join local weaker force, 6% - to join global weaker force. **ABOUT 60-65%**.

to join the fraction of gaming friends (32%).

# INGRESS THE GAME

move more or play more?

59% of players prefer move more and play more,  
9% - move more and play less, 29% - move less and play more,  
3% - move less and play less.

for about 68% of players **moving is a preferable category.**

the significant number of players (29%) pretends to reach game goals with the least effort.

# INGRESS THE GAME

## Private possession – “Home” portals

70% say that they have a "home" portal.

“mining gaming artifacts” (46%), “**other agents know that this is my portal**” (39%), “I am constantly distracted by the portal” (35%).

About 13% of players force other players from the same fraction to install artefacts. 10% of players don't let players from another fraction perform game manipulations.

This case of breaking game format is supported with facts **that 36% of respondents experience situations of non-game pressure**, particularly **8% of players face with threats of physical violence.**

# INGRESS THE GAME

Actualizing sleeping urban forces – Local Chats and Communities

**87%** are members of local district chats (or communities) in Telegram (Google+).

The membership in such chats (communities) is not occasional and requires real efforts of players. So, **52%** - playing around the district area and meeting other players there. **41%** - playing together with other local players, and **24%** create these chats (communities) with their own hand.

# INGRESS THE GAME

## Situation of an occasional encounter

In case of encounter with a player from the same faction:  
21% ignore alien presence and 74% start communication;

in case of encounter with a player from another faction:  
42% ignore, 52% start to communicate.

# INGRESS THE GAME

## Distrust and atmosphere of suspiciousness

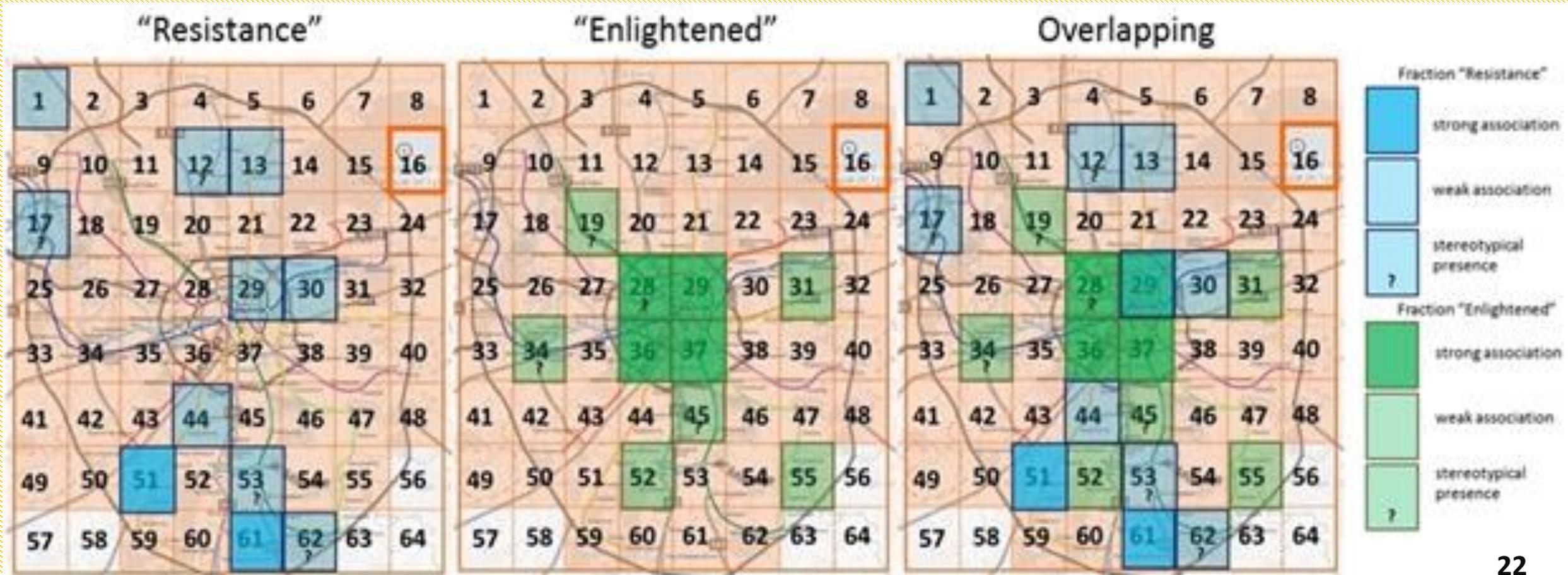
the average level (median) of trust to agents from another fraction **is equal to “-1” (“Rather not trust”)**.

**Players concern that such level of trust is partly justified.** The majority of respondents finds difficult to assess it positively or negatively (median and mean equals “0”), but the lower quartile is equal to “0” too and the upper quartile is equal to “1” (Rather justified then not”).

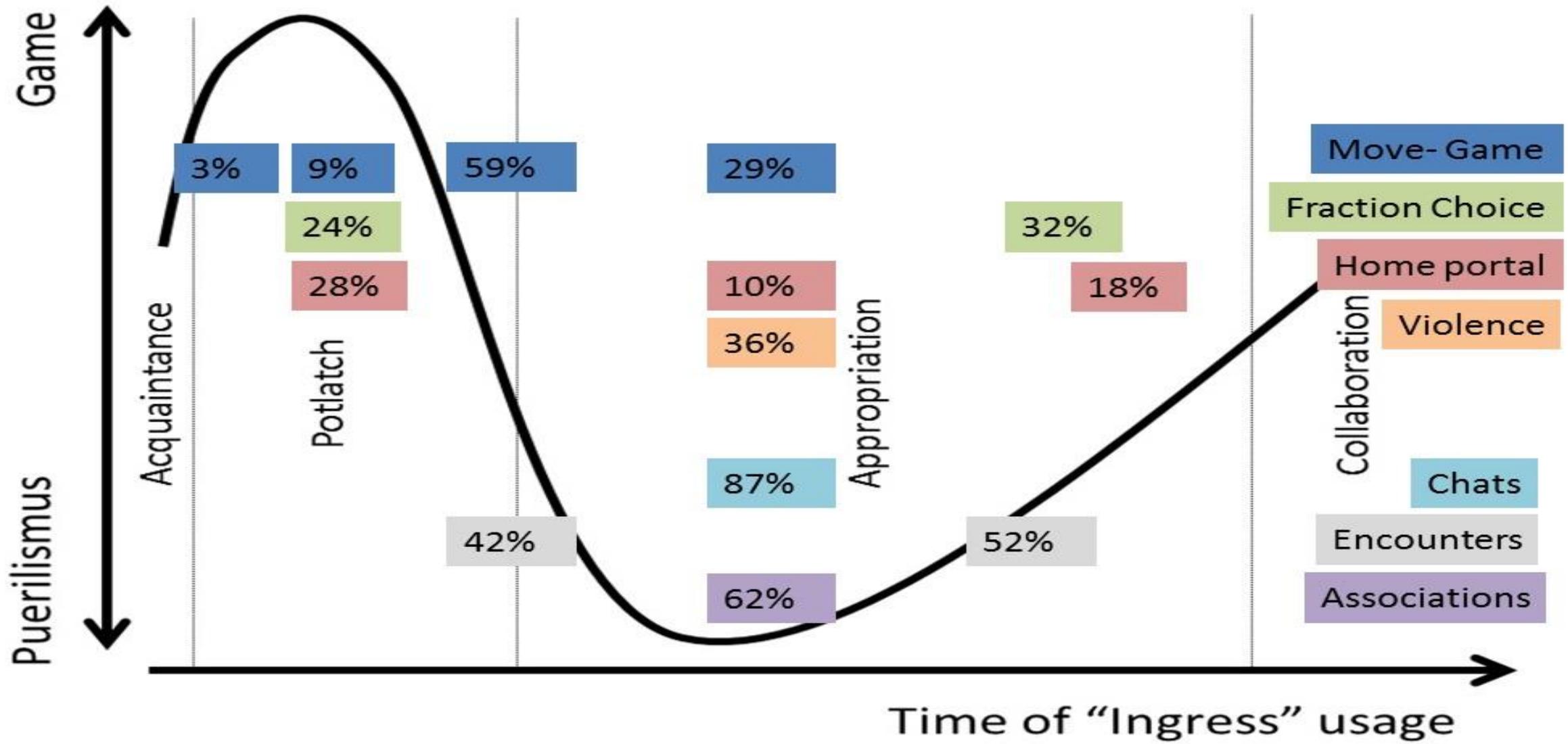
# INGRESS THE GAME

## imaginary borders

62% of agents have such kind of associations



# INGRESS THE GAME



# INGRESS THE GAME

## Potlatch vs Puerilism. The other scenario of game format

Performative logic to overcome previous achievements

Field art



1



2

# TO CONCLUDE

## THE “**LOCAL BLOGS**” PROJECT

encouraging the attention to saturated with details of urban environment

the plan of blogs organizers about local communities activation failed

## THE MOBILE APPLICATION “**INGRESS THE GAME**”

players walk a lot in the city, but do not detect it very material perception of the city as a distance walked by foot

the foolproof gameplay as a sufficient base for elemental statements

***New media products are rather a stimulators of urban reality than simulators of it***

**THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION!**

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