Being Central and Productive?
Evidence from Slovenian Visual Artists in the 19th and 20th Century

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Abstract

Slovenian art history has received very little (if any) attention from the viewpoint of network theory although there were several examples of artists co-working or working in groups, collectives or even loosely organized clusters (groups from the impressionist Sava in 1904 to postmodern Irwin in 1984). This may be interpreted as a way to acquire better positions in the national and international art circles and on the art market. In our article we use web-based dataset of Slovenska biografija (operated by the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts), which contains data on numerous notable persons throughout Slovenian history to analyze the centrality of individual artistic figures and movements throughout Slovenian art history. We also study the influence of network centrality on cultural production controlling for endogeneity following the instrumental variable approach, proposed in the literature while using a new instrumental variable to solve the problem. Finally, we present results which show that women visual artists used their network positions more intensively than men and provide some first explanations for this observed relationship. In conclusion, we provide some reflections on the importance of these findings for further research work in the area.

Keywords: Slovenian art history, social network analysis, network centrality, artist productivity, instrumental variables, women visual artists