
Ba for Knowledge Creation or Sharing Dynamic Context in Motion (place for knowledge creation)

29th May 2009

Noboru Konno

KIRO: Knowledge Innovation Research Organization

Tama Graduate School (IKLS)

Kyoto Institute of Technology (NEO: New Era Office Center)

The Rise of Knowledge-Based Models of Firms

- We are living a new model of firms/organizations—for innovation.

Traditional Models

- Firms restrain opportunism thus minimize trading cost --- closed system works.
- Firms utilize limited resource to execute strategies.
- Firms are designed to overcome our cognitive limits and bounded rationality--- hierarchy works.

Knowledge-Based Models

- Network of knowledge of individuals and organizations are converted to values.
- Knowledge are created by interactions of individuals and organizations.
- Firms are designed to maximize collaboration, interactions--- autonomy.

Two Aspects of Knowledge

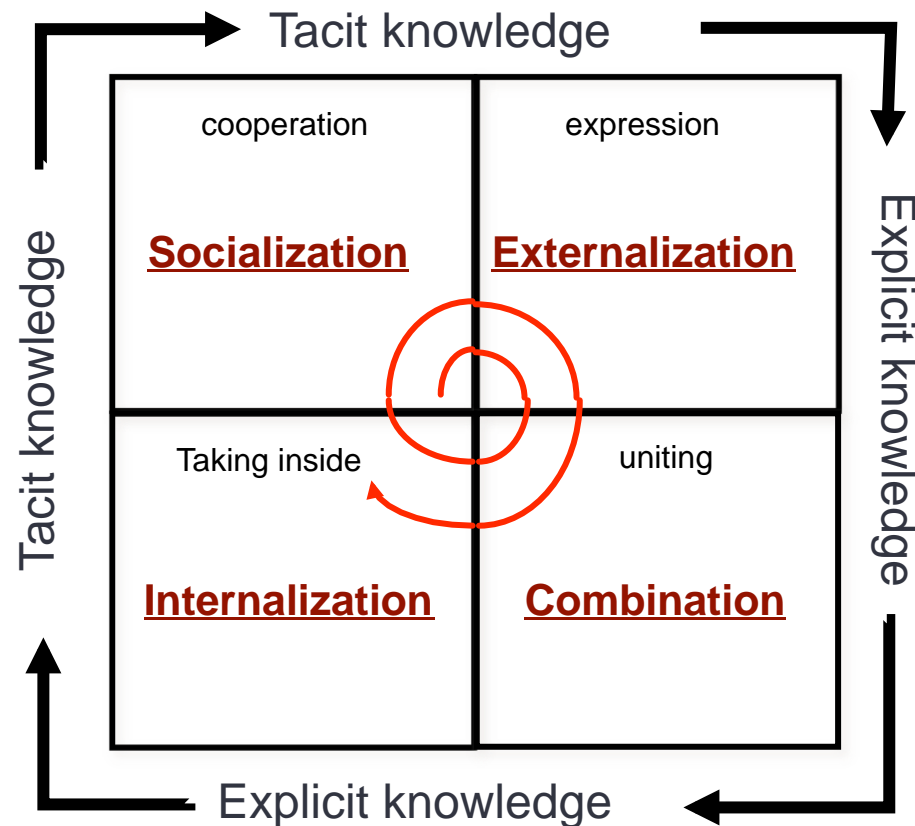
- The essence of innovation is organizational knowledge creation.
- Knowledge creation is the top agenda for firms.
- There are two sides of knowledge: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge.

Tacit Knowledge	Explicit Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-linguistic, difficult to verbalize• Personal and subjective• Body senses and experience• Cultural skill/custom• Analogue• Present knowledge• Dependent on time and the place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge made into language• Social and objective• Mental ,brain and logic• Code/designed• Digital• Past knowledge• Possible to move and to transfer

(Nonaka 1991)

Knowledge Creation

- Knowledge creation is continuous cycle of conversion of both tacit and explicit knowledge. The tacit dimension is the foundation of the process.



(Nonaka, Konno 1995)

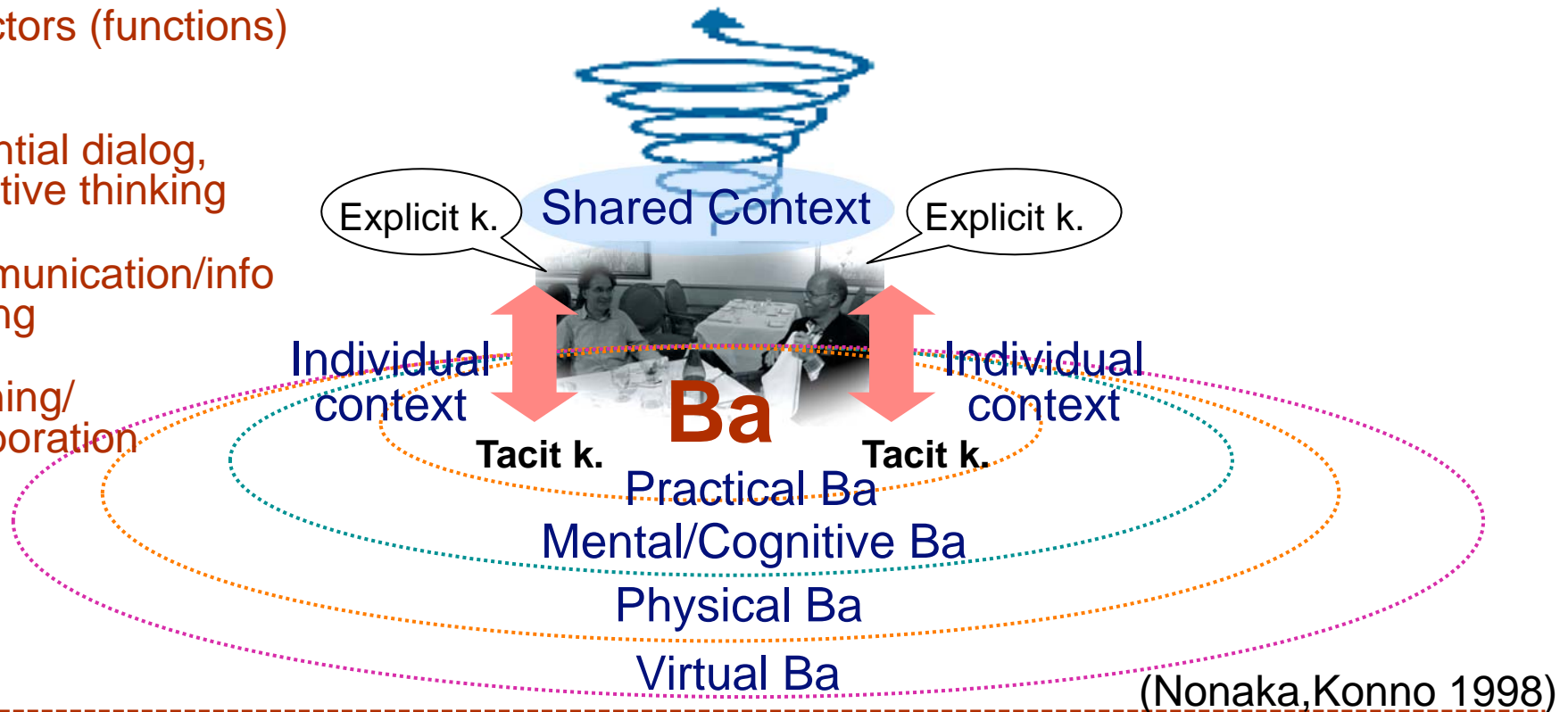
“Ba” as knowledge creation platform

- Tacit knowledge (physical, experience) is basis of knowledge, because it is directly connected to place/space/physical relationship.
- Sharing context (Ba) is origin of knowledge creation.

Ba= Shared context-in-motion, dynamic meaning space (topos)

Three Factors (functions)
of Ba:

1. Essential dialog,
reflective thinking
2. Communication/info
sharing
3. Learning/
collaboration



Significance of “Ba”

- “Ba” bridges the gap between information (sharing) and knowledge (sharing)
 - The creation and utilization of “Ba” in terms of both organizational (organizational structures, systems and culture) and IT systems attributes contribute to knowledge sharing and creation, *as knowledge is always contextual.*
- The value of a knowledge asset is not fixed. It depends heavily on the strategic orientation of the firm and the characteristics of “Ba” therein.
 - In other words, knowledge assets are *incomplete assets*. “Ba” is where knowledge become “visible”.

場

“Ba” for innovation

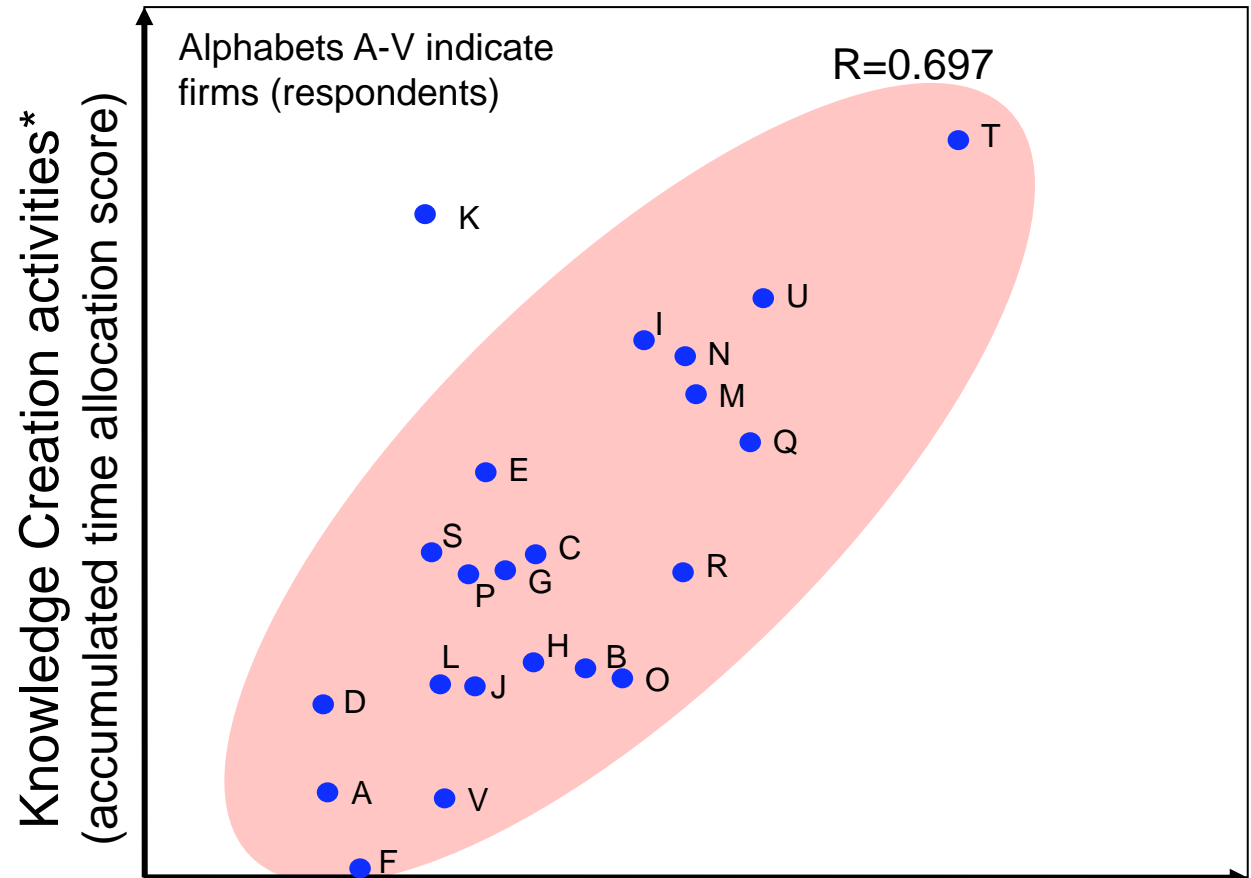
- “Ba” is originally Japanese concept, however, it is universal for knowledge creation at firms.
- When I arrived at Google, I discovered that the founders, Sergey (Brin) and Larry (Page), had a great appreciation for letting the artists work (and play), and for the emergent character of important innovations. They had established the kind of management style and culture at Google that nurtures artful exploration and innovation, and I’m doing my best to keep that alive.

Dr. Eric Schmidt
Chairman and CEO, Google

“Ba” and knowledge creation

- Face-to-face and “deep” tacit level interaction is most related to knowledge creation

Factors	Correlation (R)
Ba”(place) factor for face-to-face essential dialog, reflective thinking	0.697
Ba”(place) factor for communication with IT	0.186
Ba”(place) factor for physical/virtual learning	0.292



Period: YR2000-2002

21 Japanese firms (A-V)

N=3622

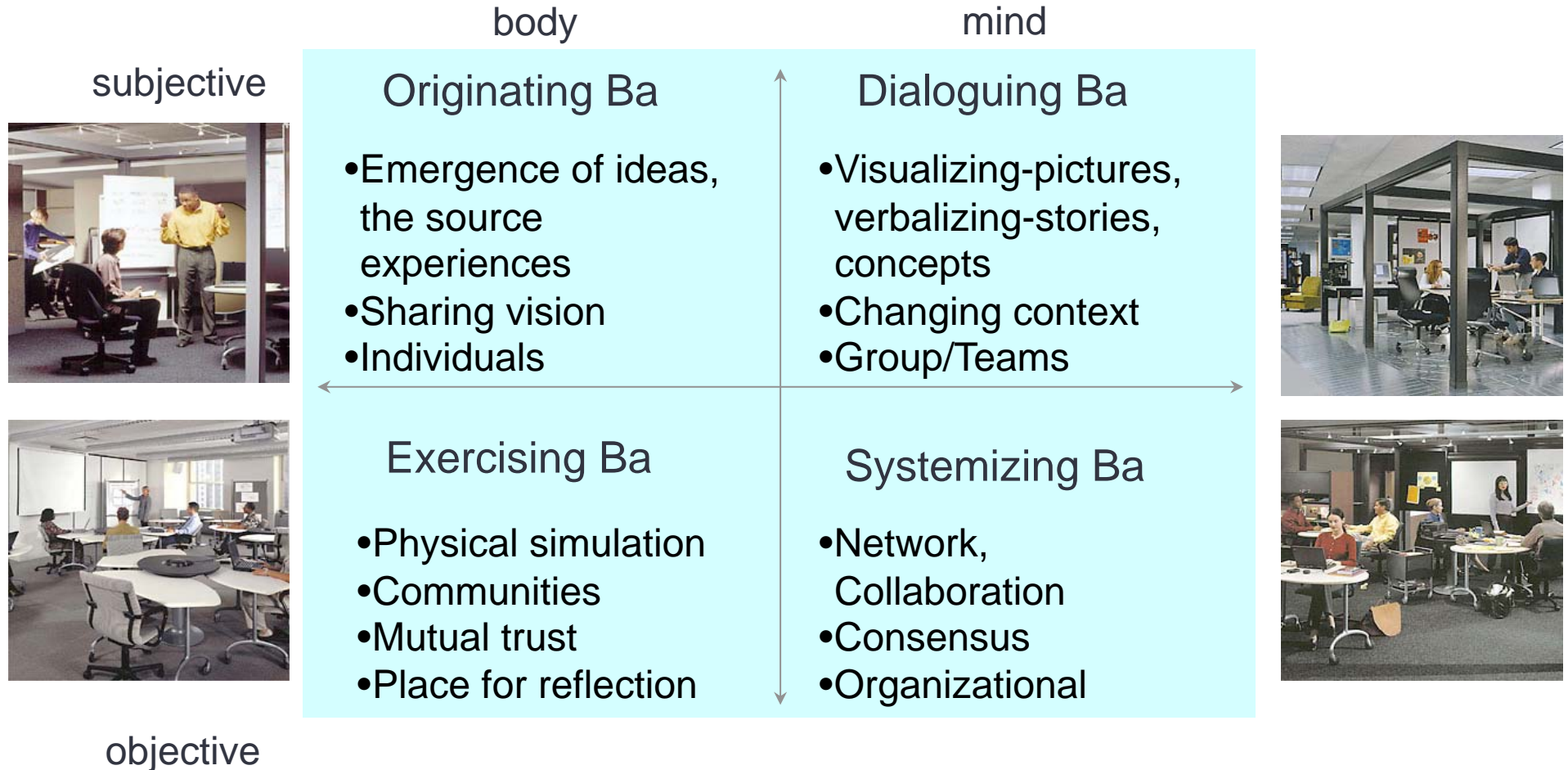
*: total score of time-Basis scale for knowledge creation processes

“Ba”(place) factor for essential dialog, reflective thinking (Factor score)

Research conducted by Knowledge Innovation Research Organization (KIRO)

Types of “Ba”

- The patterns of the knowledge creation would be different by the types of Ba.



(photos by Steelcase)

How to create Ba as Platform?

Social Designing—Creating “Ba” organizationally

- The quality of “Ba” or platform for knowledge creation relates to the firm’s social capital
- Hence designing social network is an important task for management and leadership
- There are ways to create “Ba” or social designing:
 - Case1: It is possible to utilize existing body of network such as SNS (Social Network Services) or blog network as means of interacting with the firm’s social capital
 - Case2: It is also possible by changing and managing physical workplace

Case 1 Social Designing by Using SNS

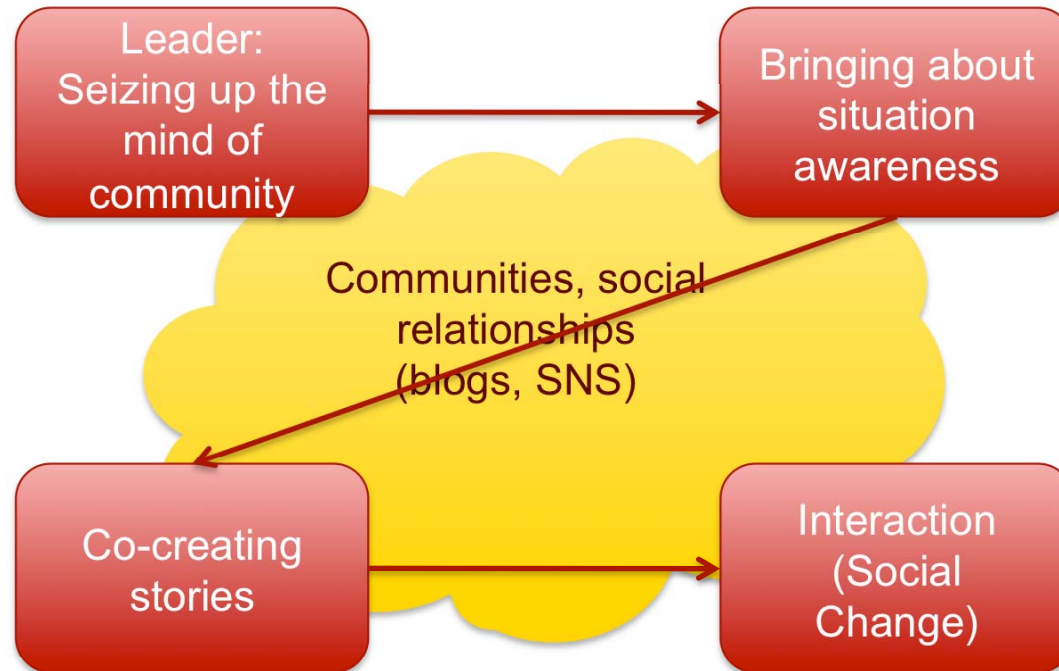
- The experiment has been made by us to show how data analysis tools can help the social designing process

- 1) Collect blog data in line with the theme (by googling “work way” “leadership” “organizational culture” “workplace” etc.)
- 2) Extract keywords (about 100) and categorize the blog data using them (by social mapping technology tool)
- 3) Read meanings with expert of the data in each category and interpret such meanings and extract factors behind such meanings
- 4) Set “drivers” such as “office landscape”, “interior design”, “culture”, “leadership” etc. for changing the relationships
- 5) Create a hypothetic model from the relationship between such factors and drivers
- 6) Examine which factor should be emphasized for each firm. Each firm should emphasize different drivers depending on what they value most (for example, efficiency, creativity, strategy and so on).

The above process is a part of the leaders’ “social design process”, by (1)seizing up the communities mind, (2)developing situation awareness and then (3)co-creating stories (for change), (4)initiating interactions. (Next Fig)

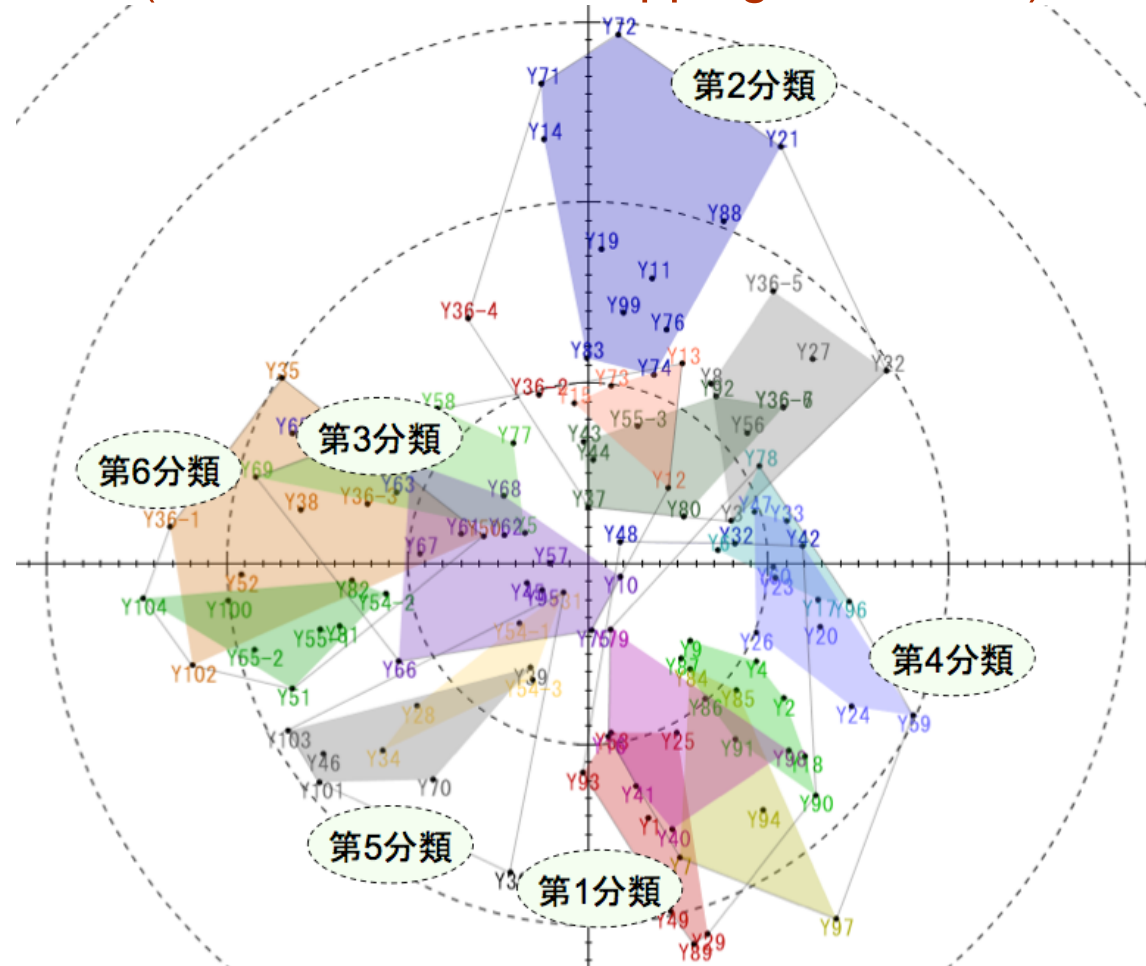
Case1(cont'd): “Social Designing” using SNS/blogs

- Capturing and seizing up organization’s (society’s) “mind” by using blog/SNS data and co-creating relationship



Case1(cont'd): Finding clusters of interest in the organization (society)

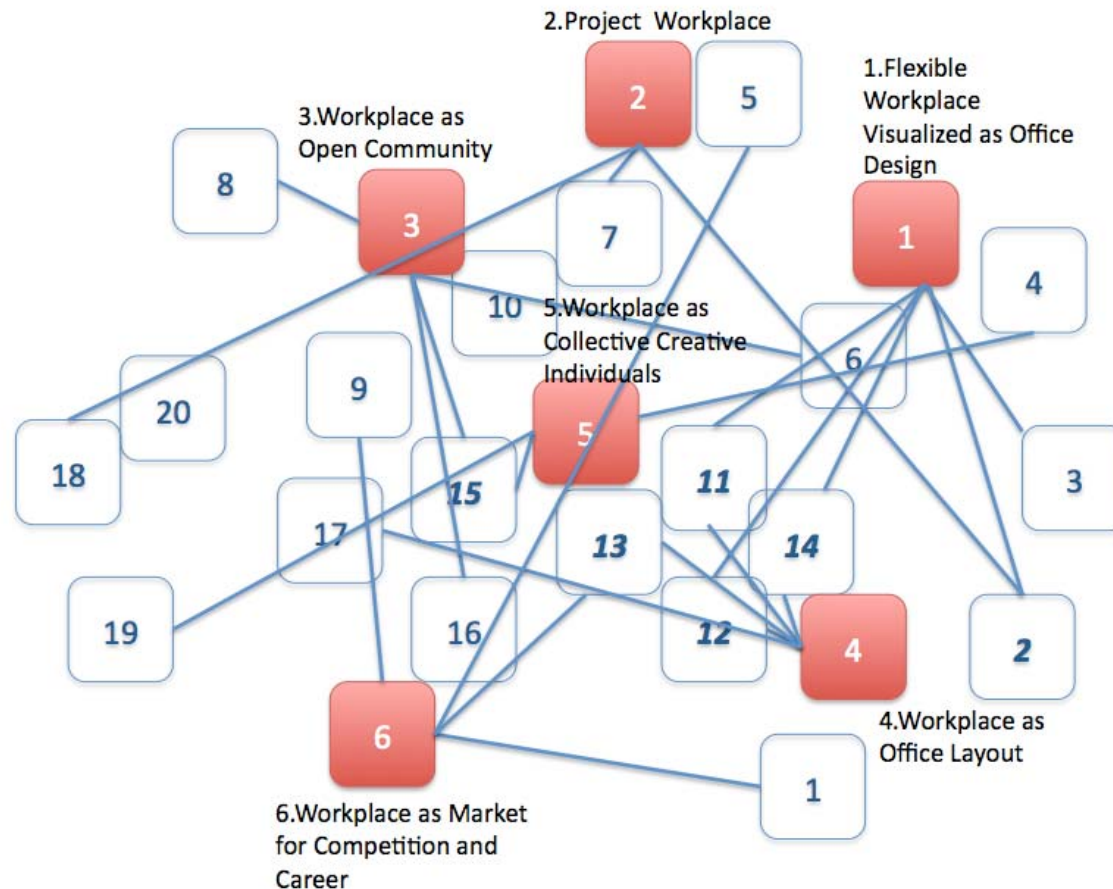
- Capturing and seizing up organization's (society's) "mind" by using blog/SNS data (the below shows mapping of clusters)



Data Analysis using Correspondence Analysis Technique

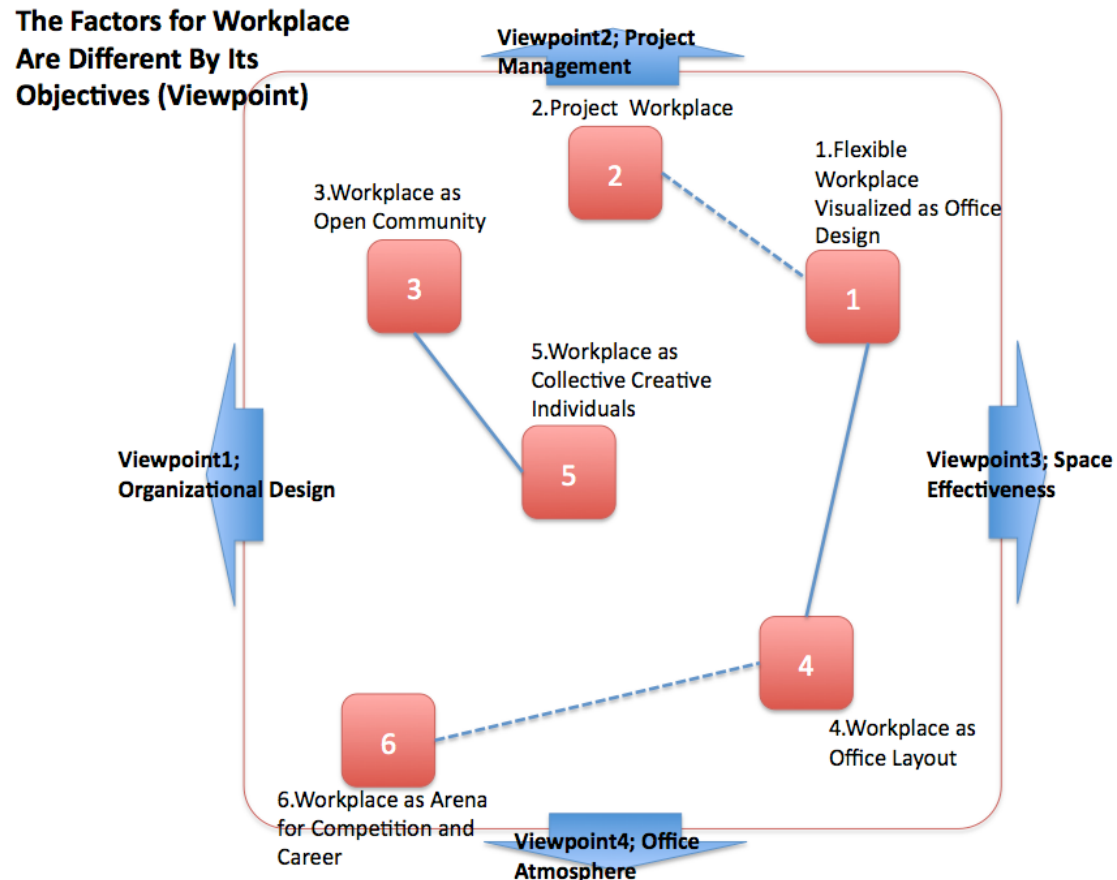
Case1(cont'd): Relationships of Factors and Drivers

- Setting the drivers of social designing (such as workplace, people, etc.) and find their relationship with clusters



Case1(cont'd): Workplace Drivers and Contexts

- Depending the context of the organization (as a society) and the strategy (or policy, viewpoints), the appropriate drivers (shown as 1.-6. below, as set of elements) may well be chosen for “social designing”



Case 2: Creating Dynamic Volume in Workplace

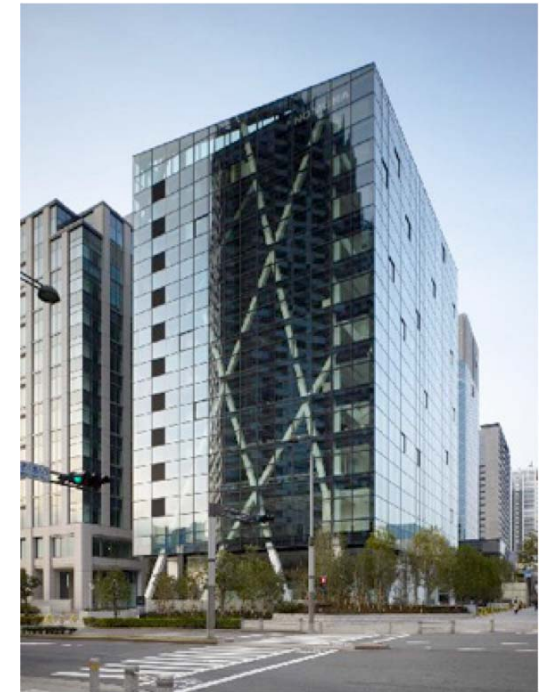
- One example of social designing by office (workplace) is HQ office of Nomura Kogeisha (professional design firm) where they challenged to create “vertically connected” work zones (by utilizing stairs) and high degree of interaction in common areas.



北面の空間構成。打ち合わせしながら仕事を進める組織文化を反映した（写真：雁光舎）

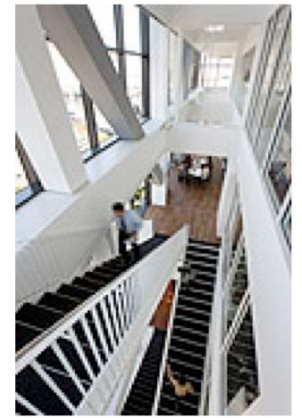
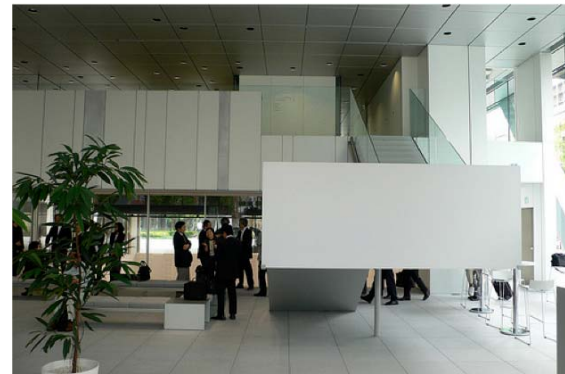


社内の制作物が展示されることも意識して、幅を広げたエレベーターホール廊下（写真：雁光舎）



Case 2 (cont'd):

- In order to design this building, the architect took the role of anthropologist and made a series of fieldwork to capture the organizations' societal characteristic and translate them into spaces, and succeeded to create the culture for creativity



Thank You

