



The Spatiality of Knowledge

Peter Meusburger



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Traditional approach

- **knowledge is universal, scientific truths are generated independent of any local context.**
- **knowledge can easily be distributed all over the world in a short space of time**
- **the *homo oeconomicus* has access to the knowledge he or she needs for rational decision making**
- **Inventions of telecommunication will diminish spatial disparities of knowledge**
- **spatial disparities of knowledge are short-time phenomena and only transitory**

Approach of Science Studies

- **scientific results are socially constructed,**
- **knowledge is situated in time and space,**
- **knowledge reflects social interests of those who propose it**
- **the generation and diffusion of knowledge is affected by the spatial context**
- **Knowledge is**
 - **rooted in people**
 - **represented in rules and structures of organizations**
 - **materialised in scientific instruments**
 - **spatial disparities of knowledge are a fundamental structural phenomenon of any society with a highly developed division of labour**

Conceptions of Space in Social Geography

- **space is most cases not regarded as an object, but**
 - **as result of social relations and interactions**
 - **as means of perception**
 - **as a means of discovering and displaying difference**
 - **as element of social communication**
 - **as a semantic concept of order in which the physical-material space acts as element of order and bears at the same time a semantic meaning**
 - **as a means of intervention that controls, manipulates or influences the activities of individuals and social systems**

Spatiality of Knowledge on the micro-scale

- **Different research institutions and laboratories**
 - offer different opportunities of learning
 - are confronted by different degrees of competition
 - focus on different research questions, theories and methodologies,
 - are differently equipped with resources and research infrastructure
 - are integrated in different international networks
 - recruit their research staff from different cultural areas and scientific backgrounds
 - employ scholars with different scientific biographies, experience and reputation

The speed at which new knowledge disseminates through space depends on

- the type of knowledge
- the skills in articulating or codifying knowledge
- the interest of the producer in sharing his knowledge
- the usefulness of the specific knowledge to power and its relevance to economic competition
- the reputation of the institution within which the new knowledge is produced
- the prior knowledge needed by the recipient to understand the contents of new information
- the availability of technology necessary for the reproduction and application of knowledge
- the inclination of the receiver to accept and use the knowledge

Knowledge ↔ Information

- **5 Types of Knowledge**

- knowledge that is kept secret as long as possible or necessary
- knowledge that is shared with others, but difficult to be expressed in language or signs
- knowledge that can only be understood and processed by recipients who have acquired the “prior knowledge” to read and understand the information
- knowledge that is understood, but not approved by a group of recipients for various reasons
- “every man’s knowledge” that is easy to articulate, easily to acquire, easy to understand and relatively conflict-free

Spatiality of Knowledge



places of
generating

places of
showing

places of
legitimizing

places of
receiving &
applying

Each step of producing, showing, legitimating, receiving and applying knowledge may generate new **spatial disparities of knowledge**

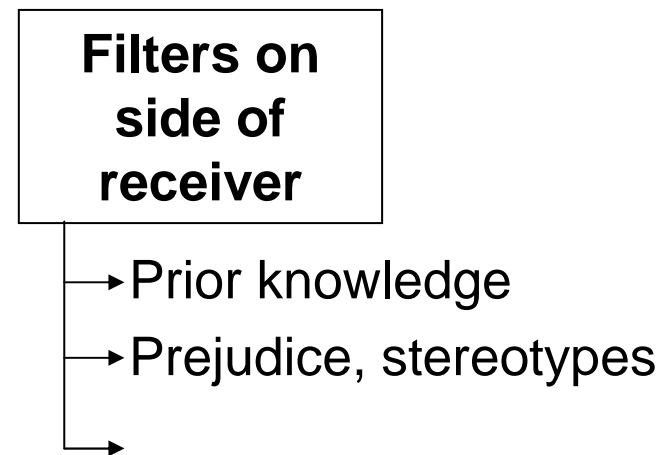
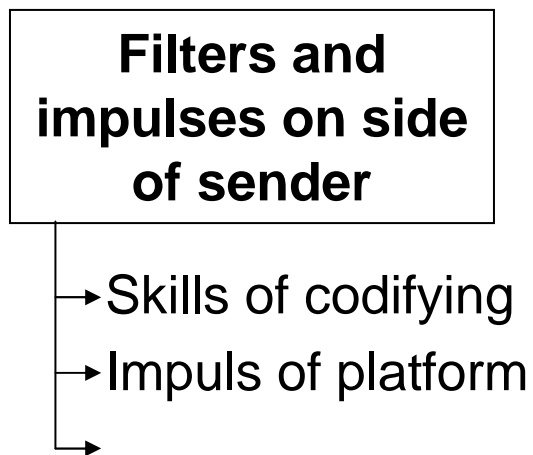
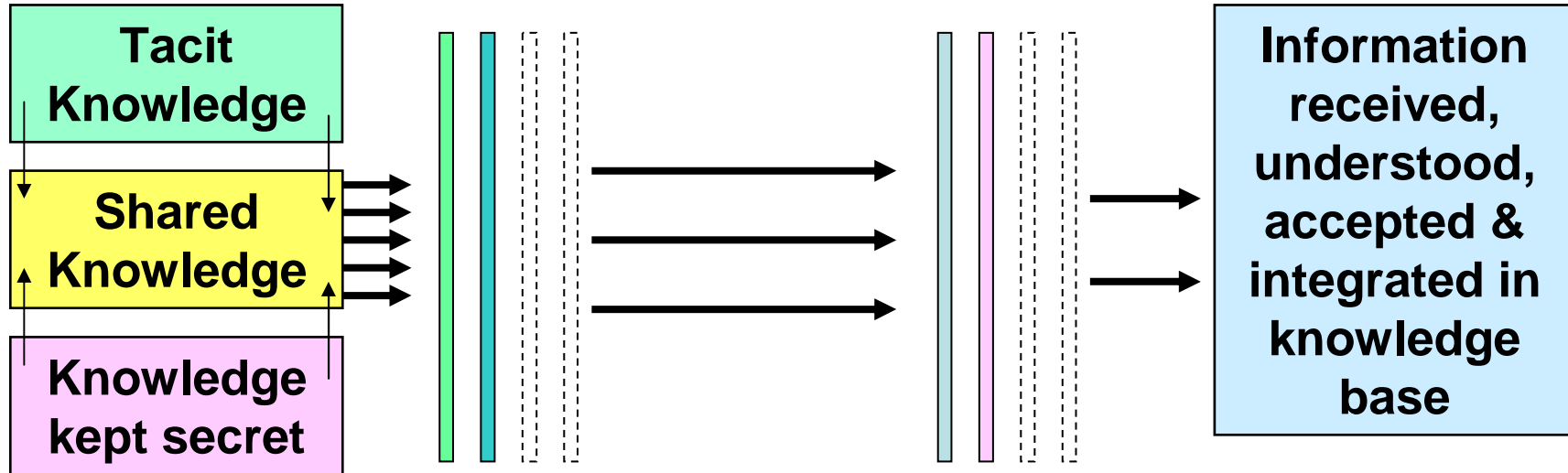
The varying speed and selectivity of knowledge dissemination generate continuously new (temporal) **spatial disparities of knowledge**

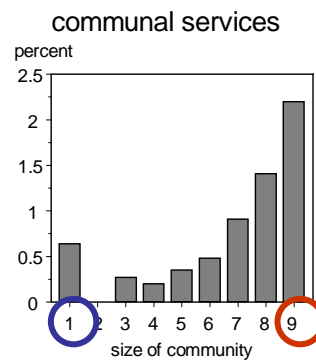
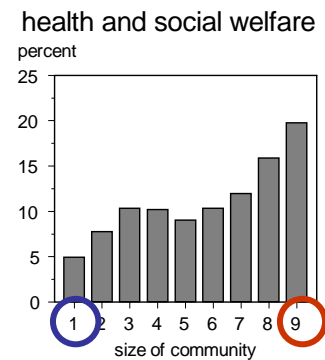
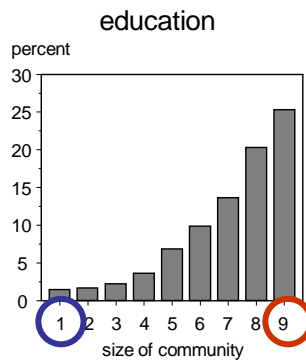
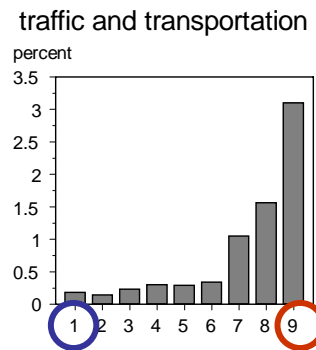
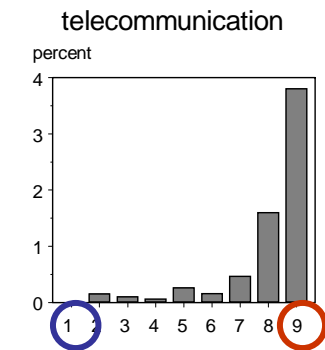
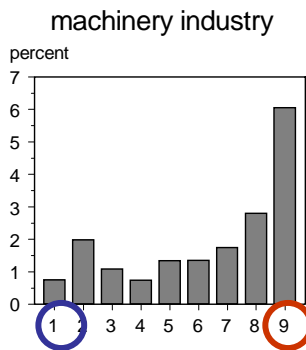
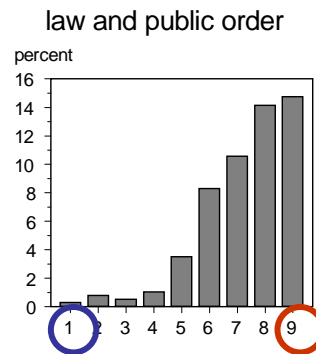
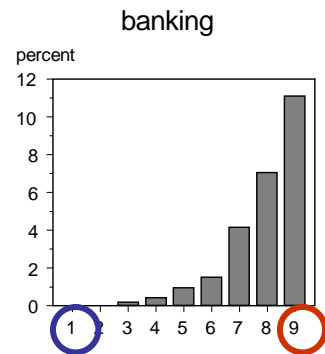
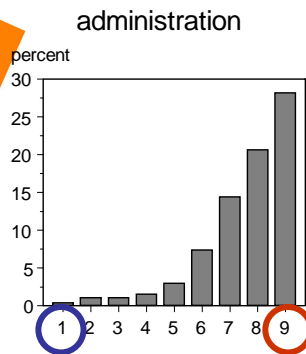
Steps of Communication Process

A

Channels of Transmission

B





Central-peripheral disparities in the distribution of jobs for university graduates in Hungary 1980

○ Centre
○ Periphery

size of community (inhabitants):

1= less than 501	4= 2.001-5.000	7= 20.001-100.000
2= 501-1.000	5= 5.001-10.000	8= 100.001-1 Mill.
3= 1.001-2.000	6= 10.001-20.000	9= more than 1 Mill. (Budapest)