

## **Relational Distance: Innovation as the Management of Time-Spatial Tensions between Divergent Practices**

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In my presentation I highlight the often neglected time-spatial patterns and dynamics of organizing innovation. Organization studies so far tended to underrate the constitutive functions of space and place for learning. Though economic geography is, of course, more space-sensitive, it still remains fixated with proximity and thus widely fails to grasp the essential role of distance for innovation. Moreover, due to its focus on patterns of permanent co-location, economic geography ignores some relevant time-spatial dynamics of organizing innovation. I address these problems by performing a twofold conceptual shift. First, I shift the attention from institutional structures to the actual organizational practices of knowledge creation. Second, I propose to start from the assumption that relational distance rather than physical proximity lies at the heart of organizing innovation. Using material collected in the course of an ethnographic case study of the development of a biosensor system, the presentation addresses the relational distance between scientific practices of knowledge creation and practices of entrepreneurial knowledge appropriation. It juxtaposes the respective practices along two dimensions: their divergent focal objects (epistemic object vs. product) and their patterns of trans-local knowledge circulation (accumulation of knowledge at one centre vs. distribution of knowledge along the value chain). Finally, it analyzes time-spatial tensions (conflicts of displacement and conflicts of knowledge distribution in space) that are constitutive for learning under conditions of relational distance.