

# TOWARDS A SPATIAL THEORY OF ORGANIZATIONS. Principles and practices of modern organizational design.

Frank Lekanne Deprez

May 25, 2016



Leadership • Entrepreneurship • Stewardship

info@nyenrode.nl +31 (0)346-291 291 www.nyenrode.nl



# 1. Why space?

- ❑ We have organized everything except space. It's the last fordable 'place' in the world of management and organizations, and it offers a world of opportunity.
- ❑ Space has largely been a neglected—and even ignored phenomenon—within organization theory and management practice.



## 2. Making sense of space

- Space only really makes sense in the presence of boundaries (Hernes, 2004).
- Organizations take up a lot of space and their boundaries often are under constant change.

### 3. Making sense of space part 2

- ❑ It's all about the mechanisms that govern what goes *inside* space.
- ❑ In the organizational landscape there are three kinds of space that need to be 'organized' into productive spaces:
  - ❑ outer ('physical' space: place and time)
  - ❑ connective ('virtual' space: digital)
  - ❑ inner ('mental' space: mental, cognitive)

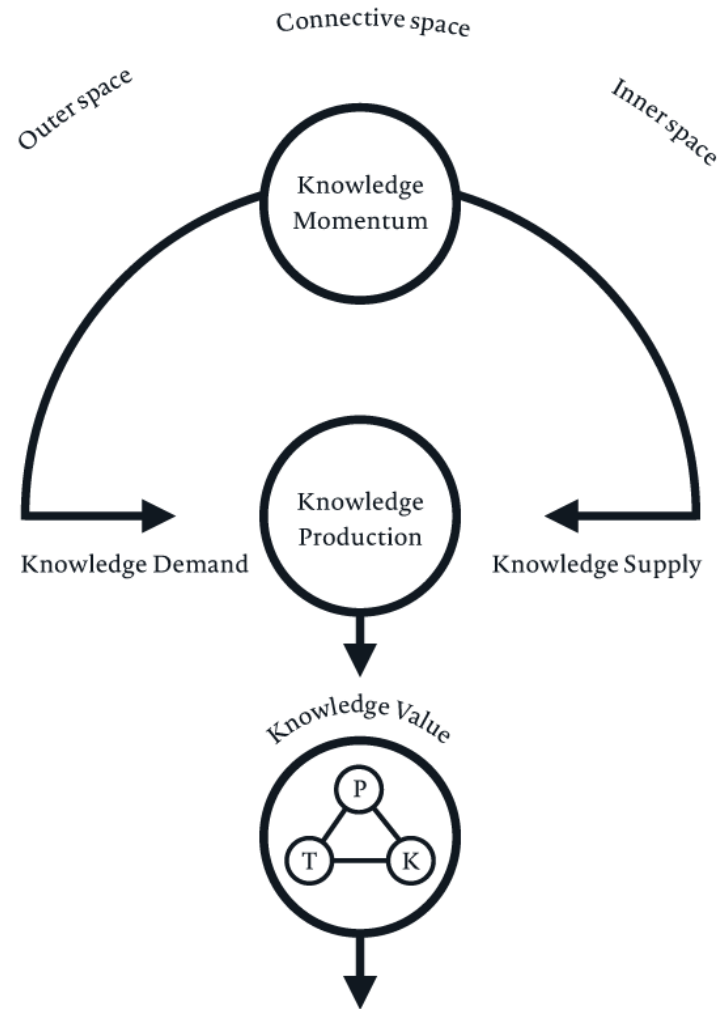
## 4. Why a spatial theory of organizations?

A spatial theory of organizations is adding a lense of space that allow *practitioners and researchers* to develop a new view on organizations.

## 5. Putting theory into practice

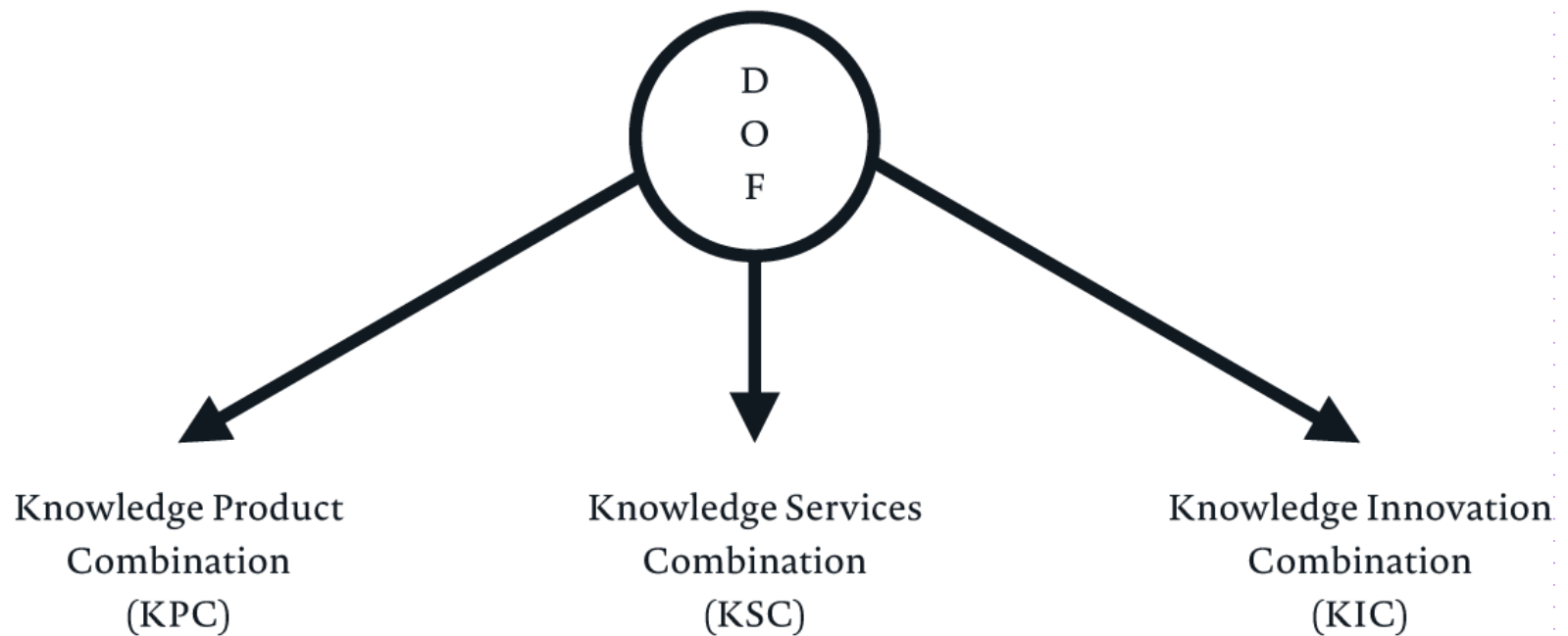
- ❑ The purpose of using the *design-based collaborative research method* is that it contributes simultaneously to theory and practice (knowledge stream and practice stream)
- ❑ During the period 2008 – 2011, the spatial theory has been put into practice by conducting a single-case study within a unit of Statistics Netherlands (CBS): Data Collection.

## 6. Applying a spatial theory of organizations



## 7. Designing spatial arrangements using a design-based collaborative management research methodology

Design-based collaborative management research methodology





## 8. Conclusions

- ❑ *Conclusion 1:* Both a spatial theory of organizations and the process of spatial organization design are still in their early stages of development.
- ❑ *Conclusion 2:* The spatial design of Data Collection organization is an example of an 'extreme single-case' pilot study and as such it has become a source for both advancing the spatial theory of organizations and the practice of designing spatial organizations.
- ❑ *Conclusion 3:* Different spatial organizational arrangements create specific moments of value.

## 8. Conclusions (continued)

- ❑ *Conclusion 4:* Spatial organization design increasingly focuses researchers and practitioners on theory-driven, emergent design efforts where organizations are formed—not structured—and are temporary in nature.
- ❑ *Conclusion 5:* An insider–researcher potentially creates unique longitudinal research results.