

# **BEYOND PROXIMITIES**

## **THE SOCIO-SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF KNOWLEDGE CREATION**

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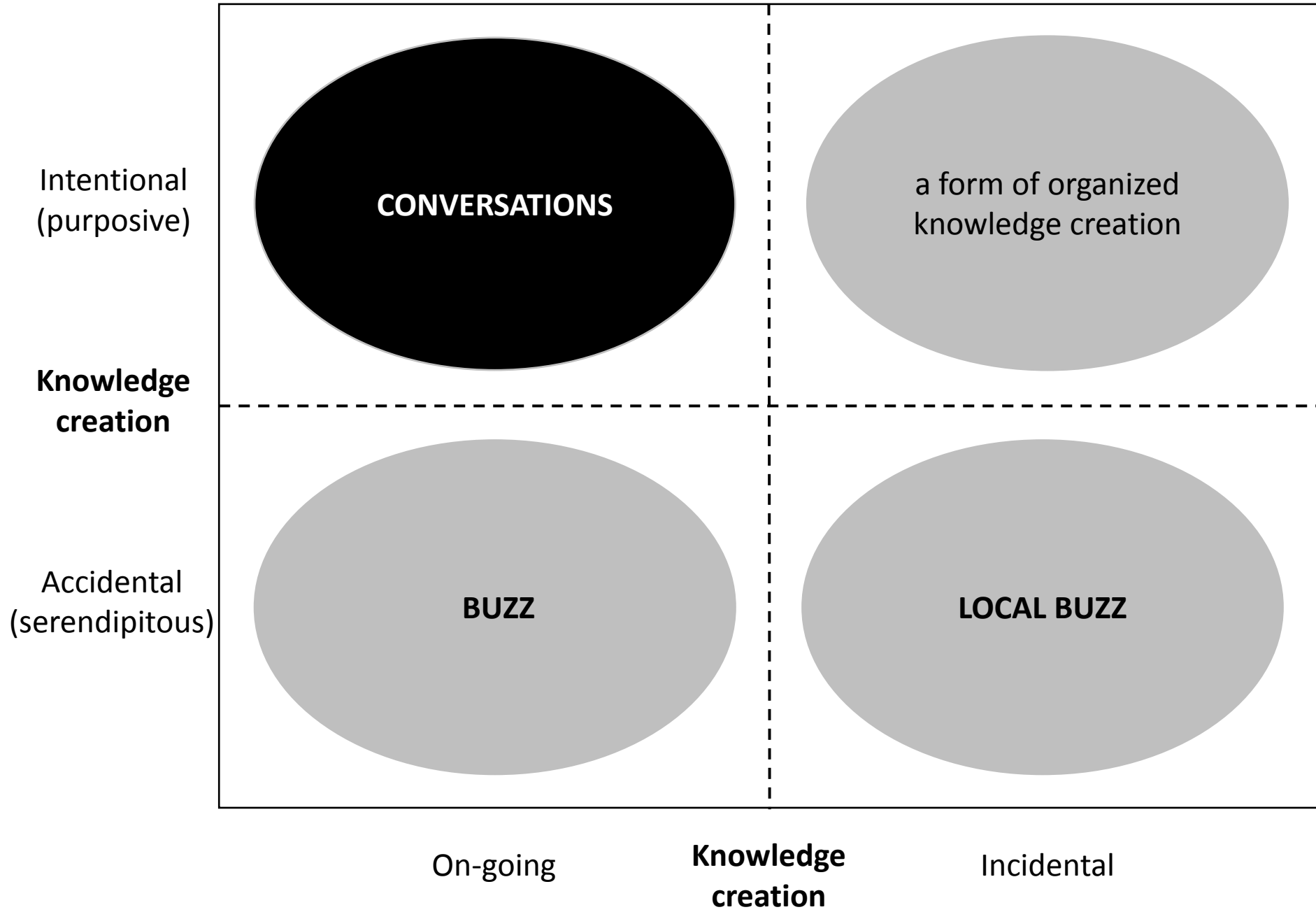
**RSA Winter Conference, London 27-28 November 2014**

# Aim and Outline

- Aim
  - Beyond spatial fetishism of TIMs
  - Beyond simplistic death of distance of proximities approach
  - By understanding knowledge creation
- Outline
  - Geography of knowledge creation: background
  - Conversations
  - Geography of knowledge creation: my take
  - Geographical dynamics and conversations
  - Conclusion and implications

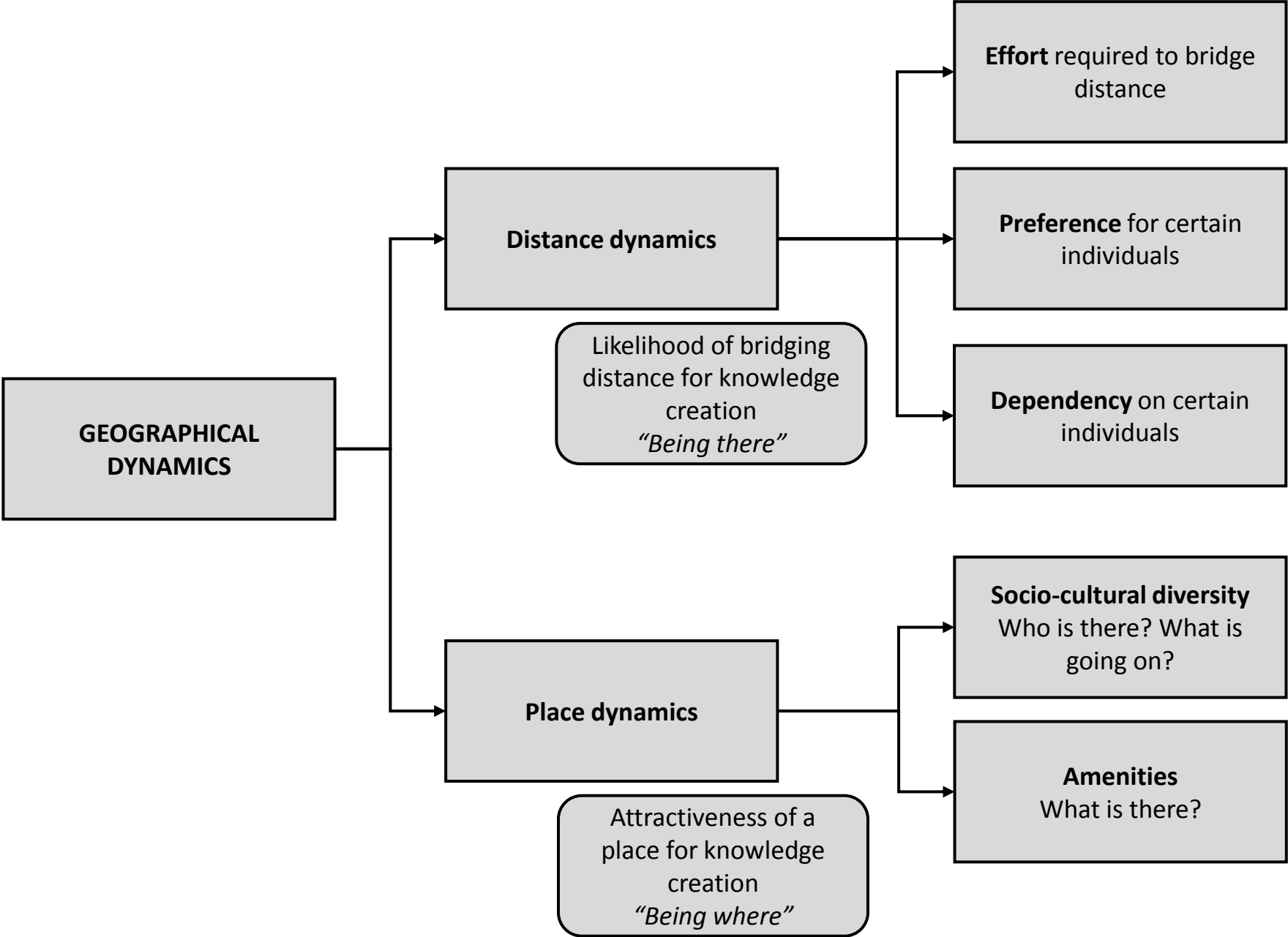
# Geography of knowledge creation

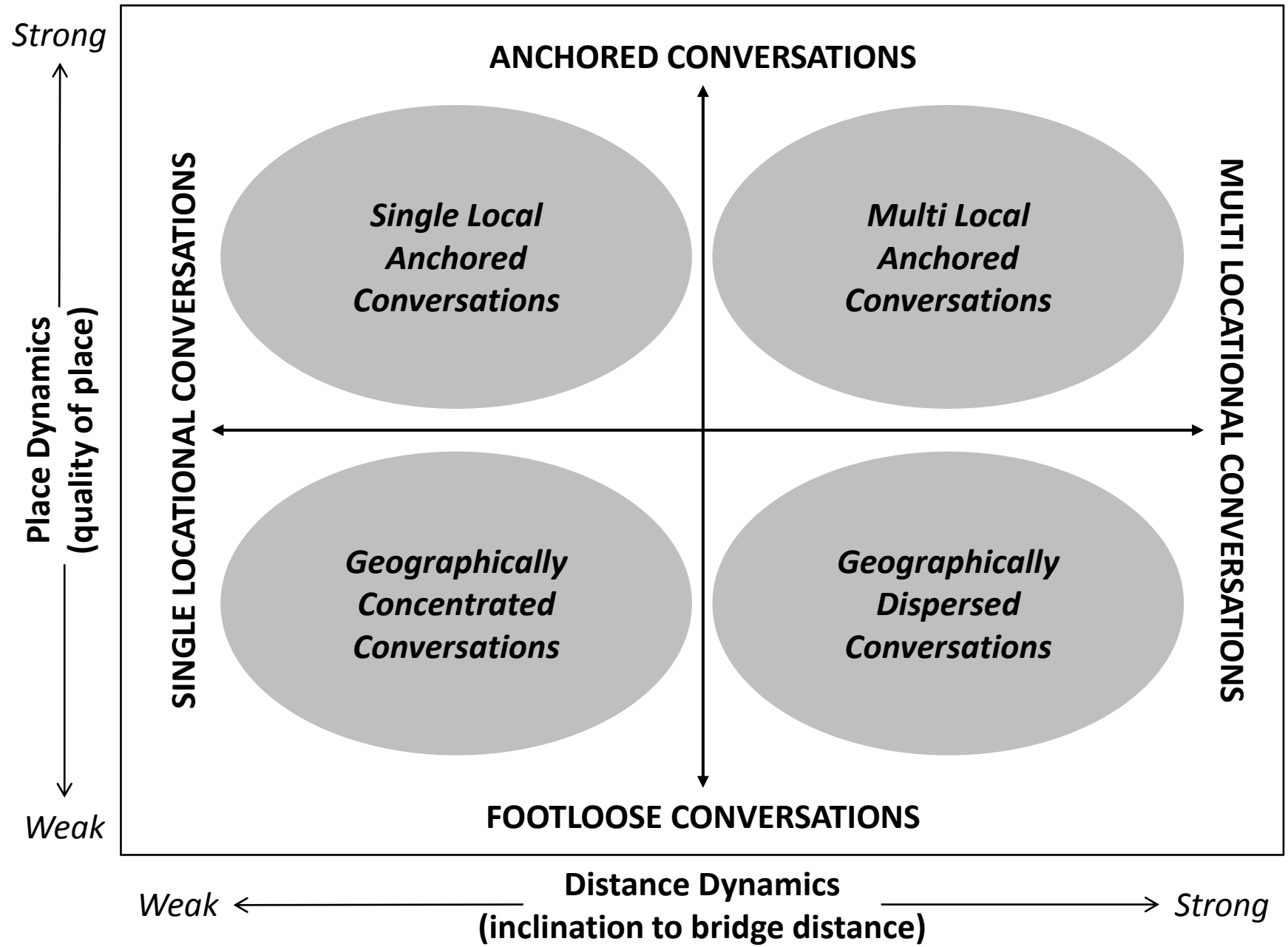
- Two problematic views
  - Territorial Innovation Models
  - Proximities approach
- Knowledge creation and innovation
  - Knowledge creation is individual interaction
  - Firm innovation is connected to firm resources
  - Often conflated
- Challenge
  - Connecting social space to physical place



# Geography of Knowledge Creation

- Connecting social space to physical place
- Knowledge creation does not need proximity
  - But, continued importance of face-to-face
  - 'Being there' matters
  - *Why do people bridge distance for knowledge creation?*
- More knowledge creation in some places than in others
  - Places differ from one another
  - 'Being where' matters
  - *What makes places attractive for knowledge creation?*





# Conclusion and implications

- Conclusion
  - Wider range of geographical configurations
  - Being there and being where matter differently for different conversations
- Implications: regional innovation
  - Regional innovation is about access to conversations
  - Causal mechanism connected to conversations, not 'milieu'
  - Generic emphasis on milieu in regional innovation policy is wrong



# Typologies

- Multi local anchored conversations
  - E.g. genetics of aging, composite materials and engineering
  - Global reach but dependent on expensive research facilities in a limited number of places
- Single local anchored conversations
  - E.g. aircraft design and manufacturing
  - Involves many different specialists but happens in very few places
- Geographically dispersed conversations
  - E.g. IT and financial services, consumer psychology and marketing
  - Wider global importance but do not evolve around local amenities or spatially sticky investments
- Geographically concentrated conversations
  - E.g. customer loyalty card and local business
  - Evolve around local interests, issues and do not depend on place quality; not very sophisticated knowledge
- Conclusion
  - Multi local and geographically dispersed may be most common
  - Distance dynamics may be more important than place dynamics
  - Key: typologies suggest a wider range of geographical configurations than TIM literature and proximities approach allow for

# Summary and implications

- Summary
  - Dynamic explanation of the connection between social space (conversations) and physical place
  - Combines the TIM notion that place matters with the proximities approach' understanding that there is nothing intrinsically territorial about knowledge creation
  - Being there and being where matter differently for different conversations
- Implications: understanding regional innovation
  - Regional innovation a function of the number of local and non-local conversations that local firms can access
  - Metropolitan regions: social space and physical place are strongly connected
  - Causal mechanism connected to conversations, not milieu
  - Improving local milieu may not matter much for LFRs
- Regional innovation policy
  - Generic emphasis on improving local milieu is wrong
  - Encourage access to local and non-local conversations