

# **Proximity relations at the heart of territorial development processes**

## **From spatial conflicts and temporary geographical proximity to territorial governance**

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**Workshop**  
**Regional development**  
**and proximity relations**  
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**PROXIMITY**

# Introduction

- The term “proximity” has for a long time been scarcely used in Regional Science (distance, location, transports...)
- Proximity Analyses have nowadays become a part of the toolbox of regional scientists
- Main contributions: innovation processes, cooperation during production processes
- What is their contribution to regional/territorial development processes?
- How do they contribute to the understanding of development dynamics, and to the organization of the governance of local actions?
- What is bringing to the fore by the analysis?

# Plan of the presentation

- Introduction
- Regional or territorial development?
- The grammar of proximity
- Proximity and regional development: the production side
- Proximity and regional development: the planning side
- Conclusions

# From regional to territorial development?

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# Regional and territorial development

- « territorial » development tend to replace « local development »?
- **Local development:** usually refers to a portion of territory or space
- **Regional development:** two meanings in the literature  
1) An institutional setting (Burgundy Region); 2) In Economic terms, all the items linked with “spatial” dimensions (synonym of space)
- **Territorial development:** refers to a territory (combination of a given space and the organization by a population), and often to a construction between local actors

# Regional and territorial development

- Balanced and unbalanced approaches: standard approaches and innovation/evolution
- Progressive introduction of factors such as : well-being, human capital, innovations, sustainability...
- Idea of **increase** or **progress**
- Transformations and **dynamics** of processes; economic and institutional changes; changes in customs, lifestyles and in people's perceptions

# Regional and territorial development

- Major reference to Schumpeter (1934):
  - **dynamic process of departure** from the routine of exchanges and of homothetic growth;
  - implementation of new rules and new modes of functioning,
  - shifts from more linear phases of growth
  - **innovation** at the basis of regional development
- The emerging question of **territorial governance**: Who takes the main decisions in terms of territorial development?
  - multiple actors and stakeholders involved in the process of decision
  - both at the local and the global levels

# The grammar of Proximity

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# Geographical Proximity

- Binary («far from» / «close to»)
- **Relative** (to transport infrastructures and costs, to social representations, to financial constraints...)
- **Social product**, which can be considered as a given constraint at a period  $t$
- The fact that two firms are located in proximity of each other may or may not be a source of interaction: they may remain indifferent to each other or they may choose to interact

# GP: potentialities

- GP has **high potential** in terms of organisation of production and of economic and social exchanges (always emphasized in the literature)
- But being close to other actors is not sufficient to interact efficiently with them
- Other dimensions are important :
  - the organisation of actors into networks
  - the implementation of concerted or common actions that promote local development

# Organized Proximity

- Organized Proximity rests on two main logics, which do not necessarily contradict each other :
  - **logic of belonging**: refers to the fact that two or several actors belong to the same relationship graph, or even to the same network of relations
  - **logic of similarity**: corresponds to a mental adherence to common categories (representations, expectations, common projects, same cultural, religious (etc.) values, Social norms...)

# Organized Proximity

- non geographical by essence, transcend boundaries
- the opportunity of interaction between its members offered by an organisation (firm, community, network, institution...)
- a potential (which can be activated, but not always « favourable »)
- example of epistemic communities (work at distance)

# Proximity and regional development: the production side

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# Clusters and permanent Geographical Proximity

# Clusters and local systems of production

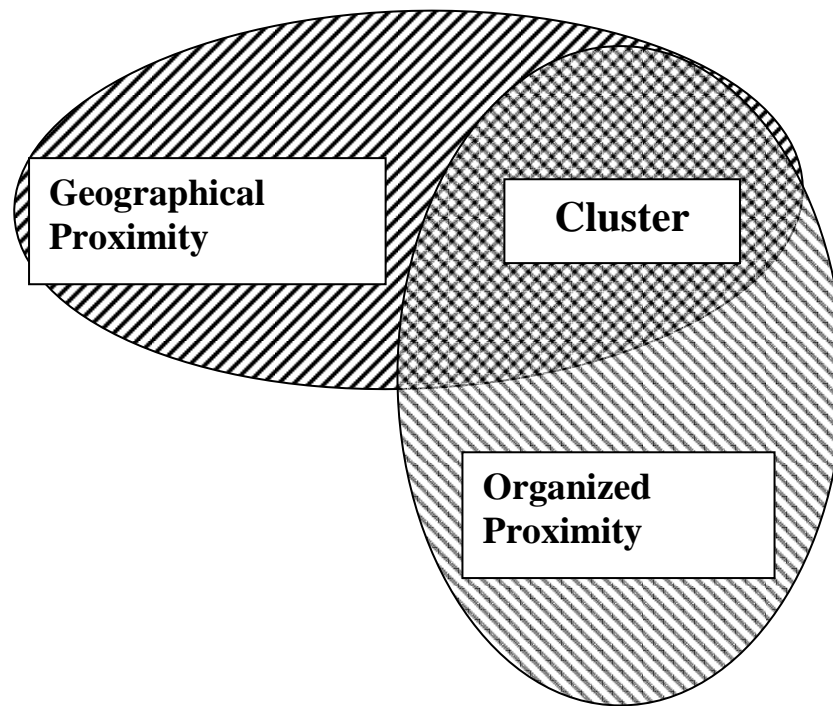
- Clusters are now at the heart of regional or territorial development
  - Major role in the concentration of productive and innovative activities
  - Pervasive effects within local systems and abroad
  - Policies in favor of concentration in all the developed countries (and in developing countries as well )

# Clusters and local systems of production

- Poles of competitiveness, districts, technopoles, milieus...
- Polarization of human activities
- Tools and governance devices at the local stage, with induced effects
- Based on strong local interactions
- Major role played by local institutions in the setting and the performances of these clusters



The simultaneous activation of both types of proximities gives rise to localized coordination situations



In a **cluster** (that « works ») one can find both geographical and organized proximity relations

# Clusters and local systems of production

	Organized Proximity	
Geographical Proximity	<b>OP + GP</b> <b>=</b> <b>CLUSTERS</b>	Geographical Proximity
	Organized Proximity	

# Interactions within clusters

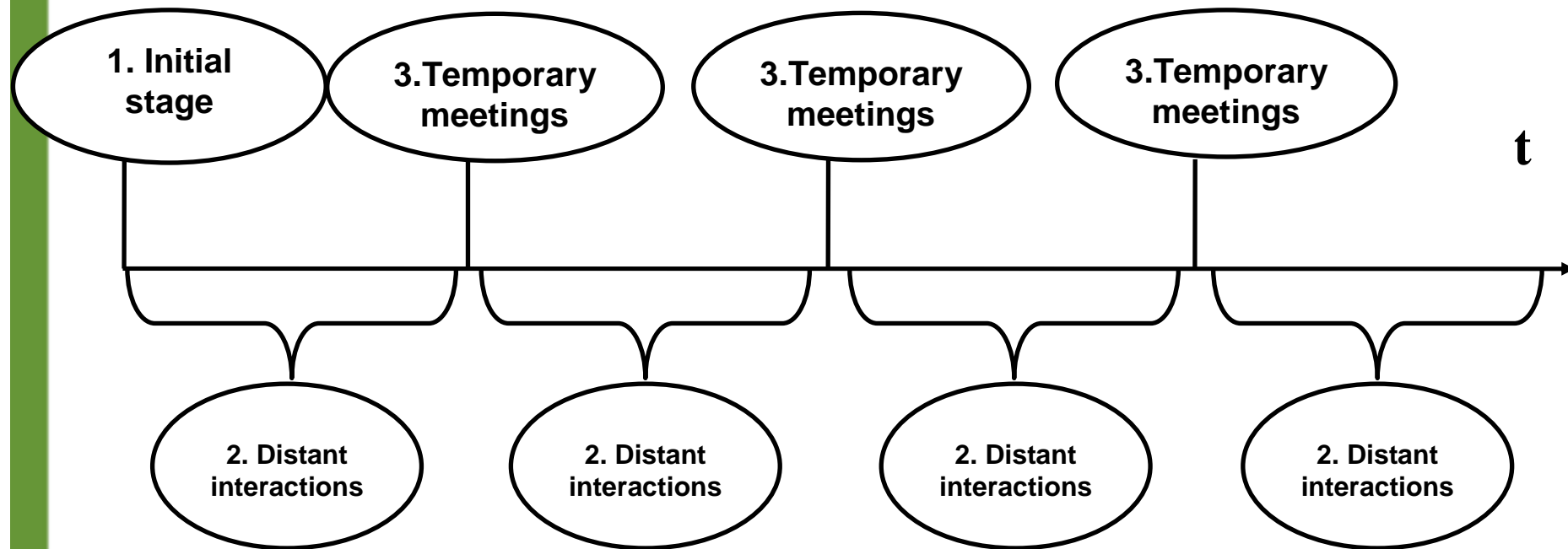
- Transmission of knowledge eased by **Geographical Proximity** (f to f relations, tacit knowledge)
- Social interactions between local actors (cooperation, trust, joint projects) **Organized proximity**
  - Large Firms
  - Subcontractors
  - Start-ups...**Joint projects**
- Role of institutions: help in building local networks and cooperation relations between local firms **Organized Proximity**
  - ease interactions between local economic actors
  - organize meetings between the local actors
  - reinforce learning mechanisms between local firms and institutions

# Interactions within clusters

- Permanent Geographical Proximity must be activated by Organized Proximity in order to create development effects
- 1) By means of interactions between local actors (logic of belonging)
  - repetition of face to face relations improving trust and cooperative behaviors
  - circulation of information within local production/innovation network and social networks
- 2) By means of institutions (logic of similarity)
  - promoting clusters policies
  - easing and promoting relations between local actors
  - reinforcing local mechanisms

# Temporary Geographical Proximity and its role in distant collaborative production processes

# The distant collaborative production or innovation process



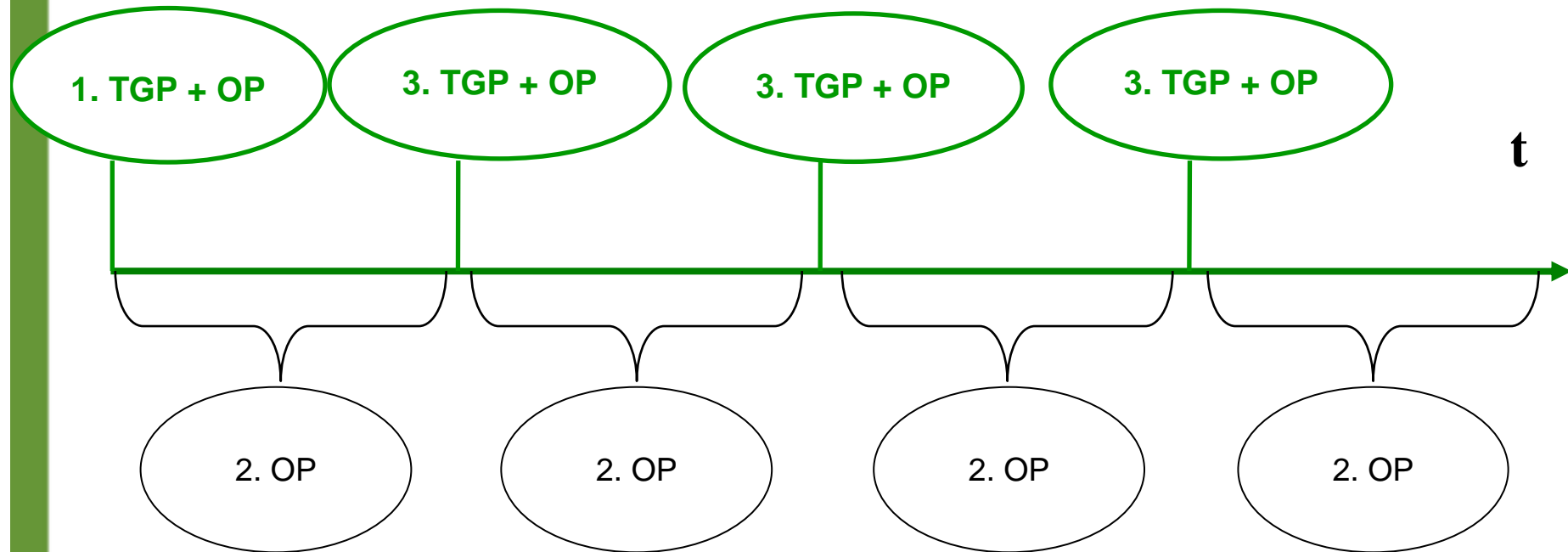
Key role of interactions of various types during collaborative innovation processes:

- distant interactions (through ICT)
- meetings

# Temporary Geographical proximity

- ***Temporary Geographical proximity (TGP):***  
*corresponds to the possibility of satisfying needs for face-to-face contact between actors, by travelling to different locations. This travelling generates opportunities for moments of geographical proximity, which vary in duration, but which are always limited in time (Torre-Rallet 2005, Torre 2008)*

# TGP plays a more or less crucial role depending on the stages in the innovation process



OP : Organized Proximity; TGP: Temporary Geographical Proximity

1. TGP Necessary at the first stage: in order to build co-operation and trust relationships
3. TGP Combined with temporary face to face meetings



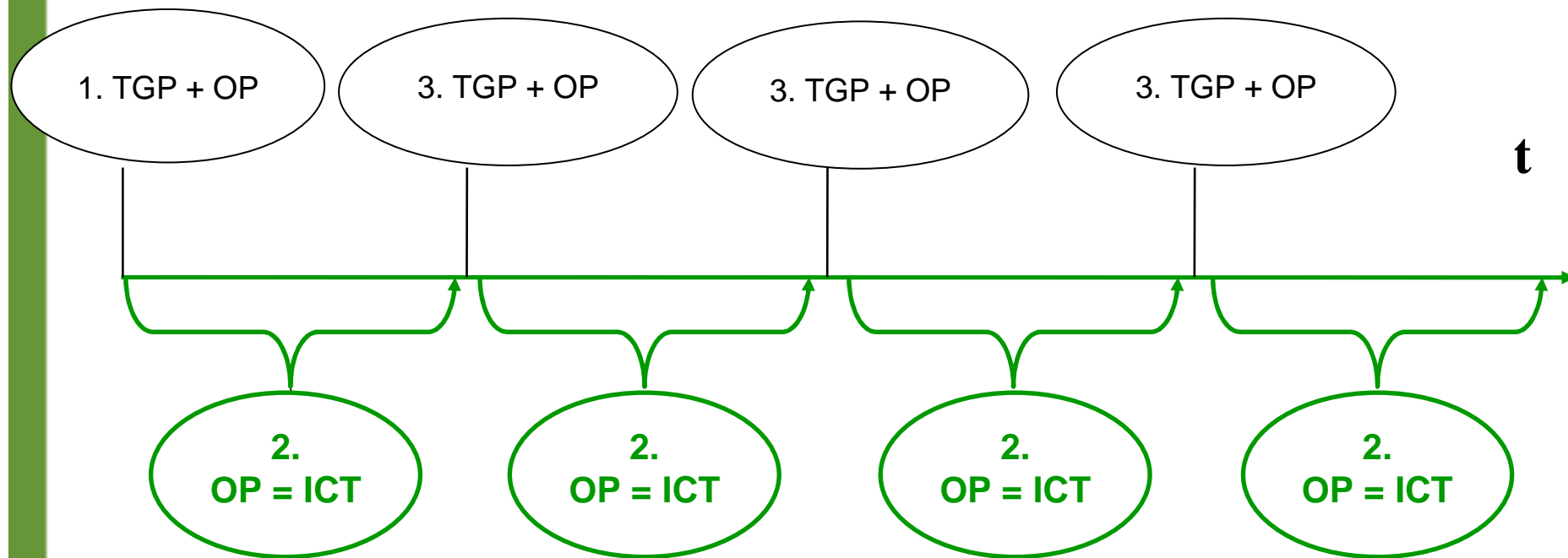
# Trust and TGP

- Trust is necessary along the production process, in order to establish and to maintain good relations between the co-operators
  - **The initial stage:** necessity to build trust relations by means of repeated and long face to face interactions
  - Trust during **long distance co-operation:** it helps communicating and eases the contacts. It repairs the small tensions
- Trust is at the basis of Organized Proximity at a distance

# Conflicts and TGP

- Conflicts during the collaborative process are an expression of the obstacles to co-operation
- Conflicts arise during the production or innovation process for three main reasons
  - the distribution of the gains and losses of the collaboration (property rights in the case of technology transfer)
  - the organization of labour
  - Interpersonal disagreements
- Necessity of face to face meetings to resolve the main conflicts (TGP helps to build and repair Organized Proximity)

# ICTs allow co-ordination during periods of work at distance



OP : Organized Proximity; TGP: Temporary Geographical Proximity

ICT help to exchange between co-members of joint projects (Organized proximity at a distance)

# The role of ICT in collaborative projects

- Possibility of distant exchanges during work periods
  - Telephone, internet, terminals...
- Possibility of work and exchanges during travel periods
  - ICTs are accelerators of mobility by new forms of co-presence

**ICTs and TGP are complementary coordination tools: both help in building and maintaining Organised Proximity**

# Proximity and regional development: the production side

## Conclusions

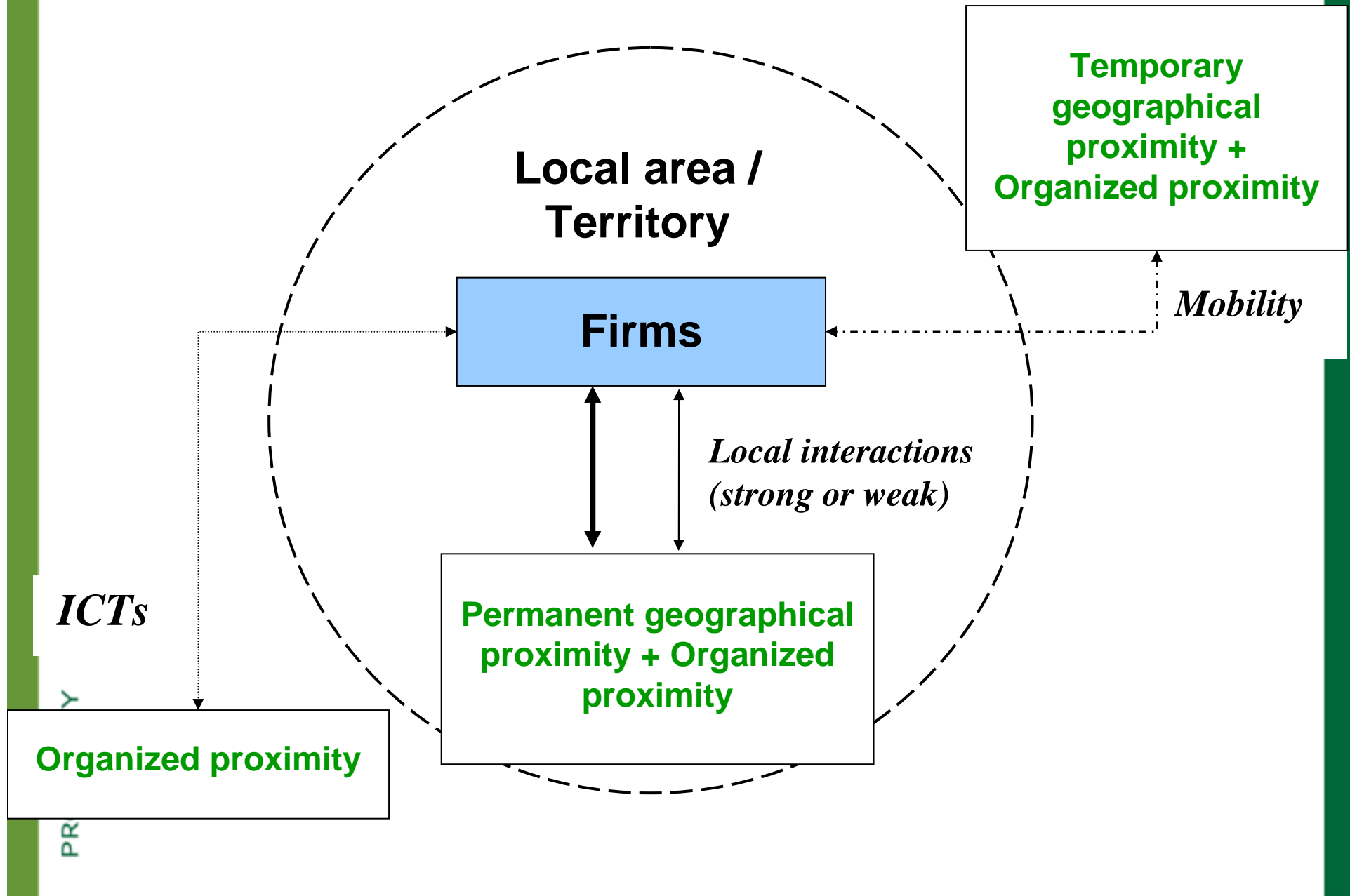
# Conclusions

- The process of coordination between innovative partners located in the **same area** is based upon the combination of both geographical and organised proximities
- The process of coordination between geographically **distant partners** of production, research or development projects is mainly based on organised proximity (non spatial)
- Non spatial proximity combines with different forms of geographical proximity relations at various times and in various places
  - Permanent geographical proximity (clusters...)
  - **Temporary geographical proximity (distant collaboration)**

# Conclusions

- **Organized proximity** helps in building trust and cooperative relations
  - at the local level
  - at a distance
- **Permanent Geographical proximity** is a key factor in the setting and maintaining of clusters
- **Temporary GP** helps in building (trust) and repairing (conflicts) distant cooperative relations. It permits to jointly maintain:
  - internal local links
  - global links
- **They all contribute to the process of territorial development**

**Global**





# Proximity and regional development: the planning side

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# Territorial and multi-level governance at the heart of development processes

# Territorial governance

## the engine of territorial development

- The crucial point: **how to act together** in the territories, for an objective of **territorial development** (population is “in charge “ of the territory... and plan to go ahead) (Pierre, 2000, 2002)
- **Projects and agreements** between local stakeholders (public or local authorities, firms, inhabitants, public bodies, associations...)
- **Multi-level governance**: local and global actors (laws, regulations, decisions, global policies

# Territorial governance

- **Laws** (national level), **Regulations and rules** (national or international level), **Public policies** (national or decentralised), **Planning documents** (urbanism, local), **Zoning** (spatial or environment, local)
- **The action of Local groups of actors**
  - Regrouping of producers
  - Networks of innovators, of technology transfer
  - Poles and clusters
  - Local unions of producers (local foods or labels) or planning associations (water, ...)
  - Associations...

# Territorial governance : types of involvement to debates or decisions processes

- **Co-operation (concertation)**  
Joint process of collection of elements for a solution
- **Negotiation**  
Joint decision building process
- **Dialogue**  
Horizontal interactions between actors
- **Consultation**  
To collect actors opinions, without any guarantee about their consideration
- **Information**  
To inform a group of persons about the intentions or the decisions
- **Communication**  
To diffuse a message and to obtain the support of the population to a proposition



# Proximities

- Role of **Organized proximity** in negotiation and cooperative behaviors
- Involvement of local actors based on the joint mobilization of **Geographical and Organized proximity**

# Land use Conflicts as an expression of the ongoing process of territorial development

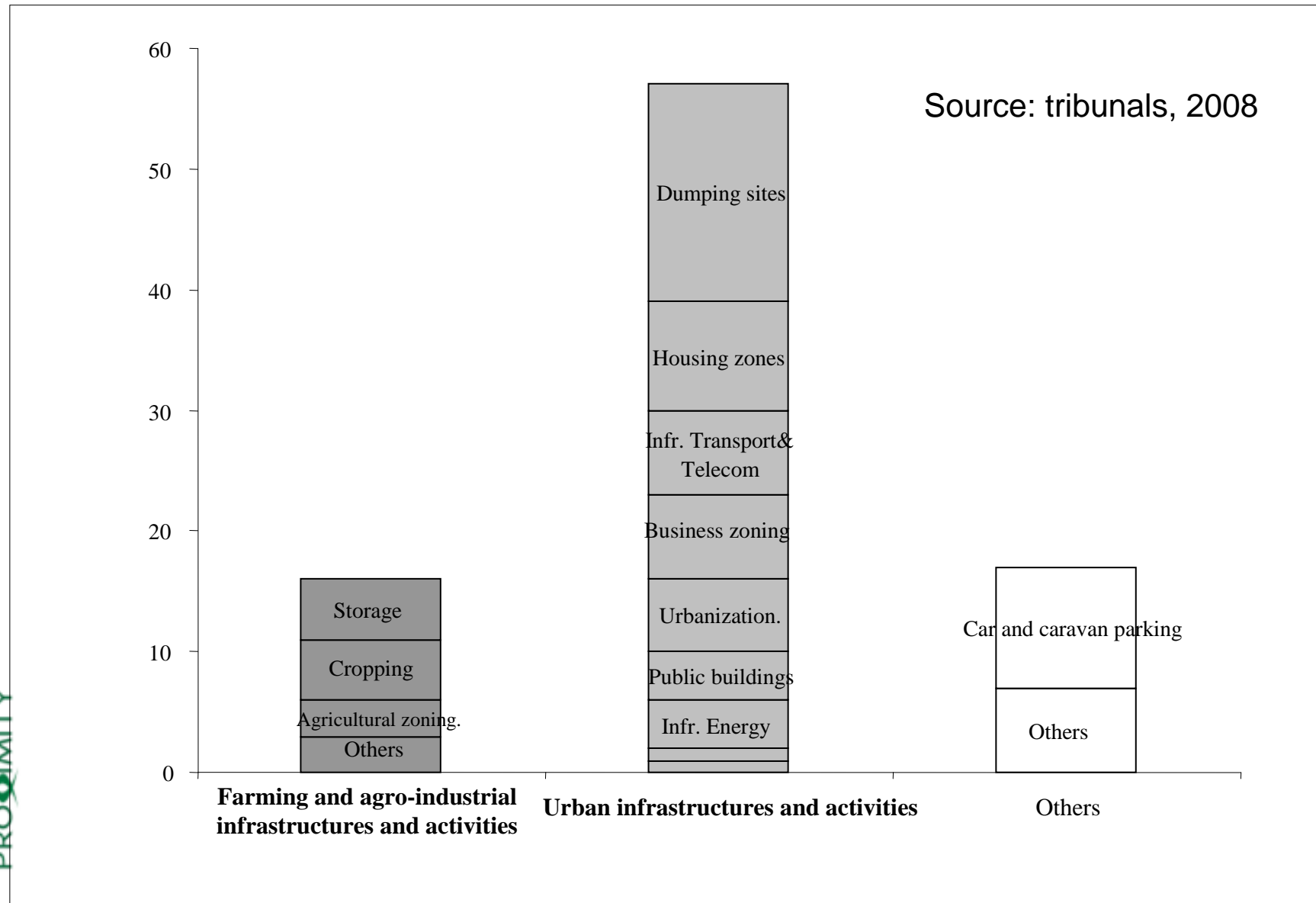
# Conflicts and engagement

Separation between tensions and conflicts

- **Tensions**: opposition between actors and uses, without commitment (very common)
- **Conflicts**: based upon the commitment of one or several actors in opposition
- **Commitment/engagement**: linked with credible threat (tribunals, medias, publicization, confrontation, various signals)

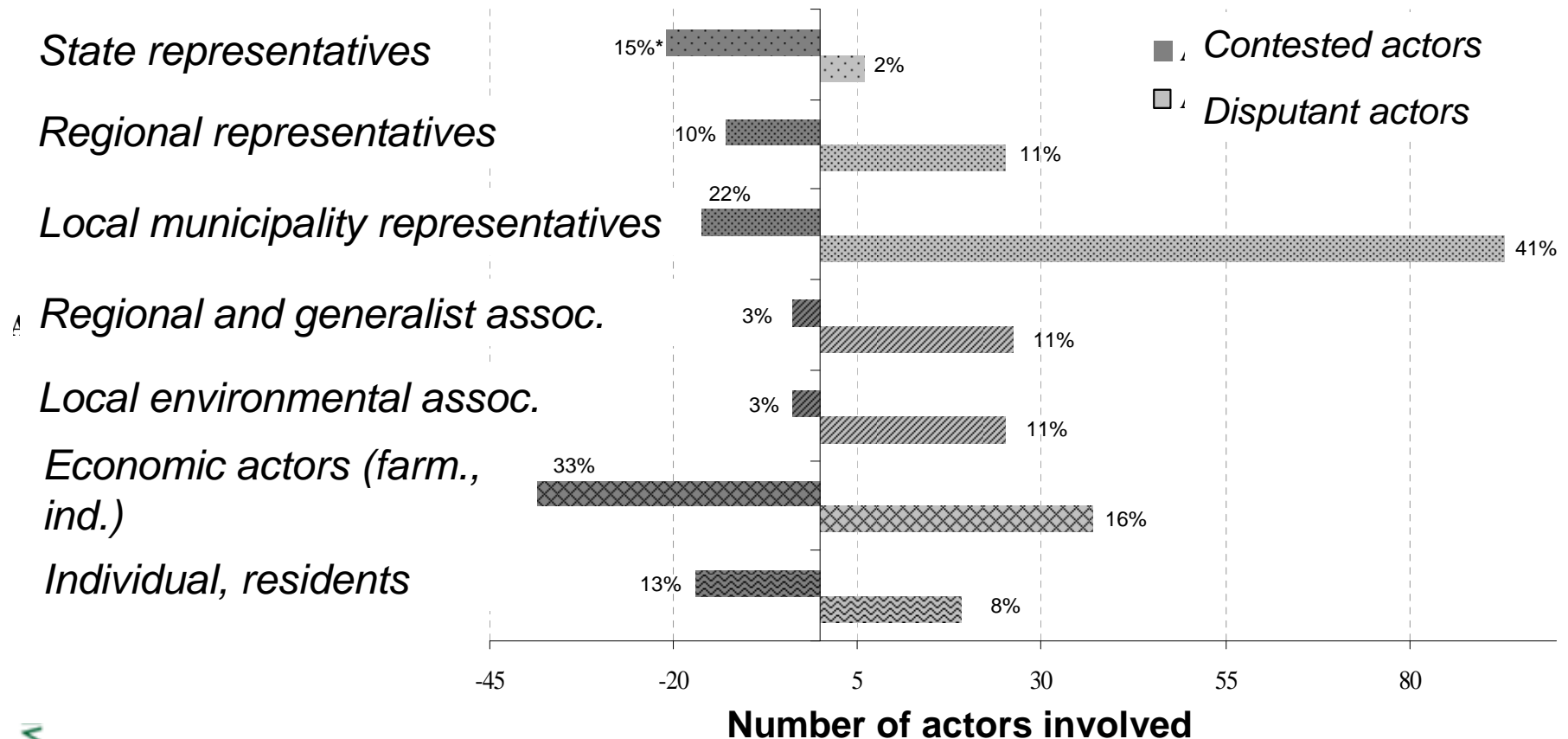


# Infrastructures and Activities: main sources of l.u. conflicts in the Paris Region



# Groups of actors in conflict (Paris)

Les acteurs en opposition (source : Le Parisien 2003-2005)



# Major oppositions between actors

Objects of conflicts	Protesting Actors	Contested Actors
<b>Land management</b> <b>Infrastructures</b> <b>Negative externalities (industry)</b>	<b>Associations</b> <b>Local states</b> <b>(municipalities)</b> Federal state	<b>Federal state</b> <b>Industrials</b> Local states Individuals
<b>Hunting, Water</b> <b>Negative externalities</b> <b>(agriculture)</b>	Associations Farmers	Industrials Farmers Individuals
<b>Protected zones</b> <b>Environment / Patrimony /</b> <b>landscapes</b>	<b>Industrials</b> Farmers	<b>Federal state</b> Associations

# Main geographical sources of opposition

- Three oppositions linked with forced Geographical proximity
  - Superposition of uses
    - Divergent uses or intentions of use within a single geographical area
  - Contiguities
    - Problems of boundaries, property rights...
  - Neighborhood
    - Problems of air or water pollution, landscapes

# Conflicts and public expression

- Land use conflicts provide an **opportunity of public expression** for various groups of actors, who are:
  - Unsatisfied about local decisions or projects
  - Overlooked within local governance structures
- These actors express the **divergence**
  - of their preferences with the choices made (often by public authorities)
  - with the choices in terms of territorial development paths
- Example: opposition to a public setting

# Conflicts as signals and voice

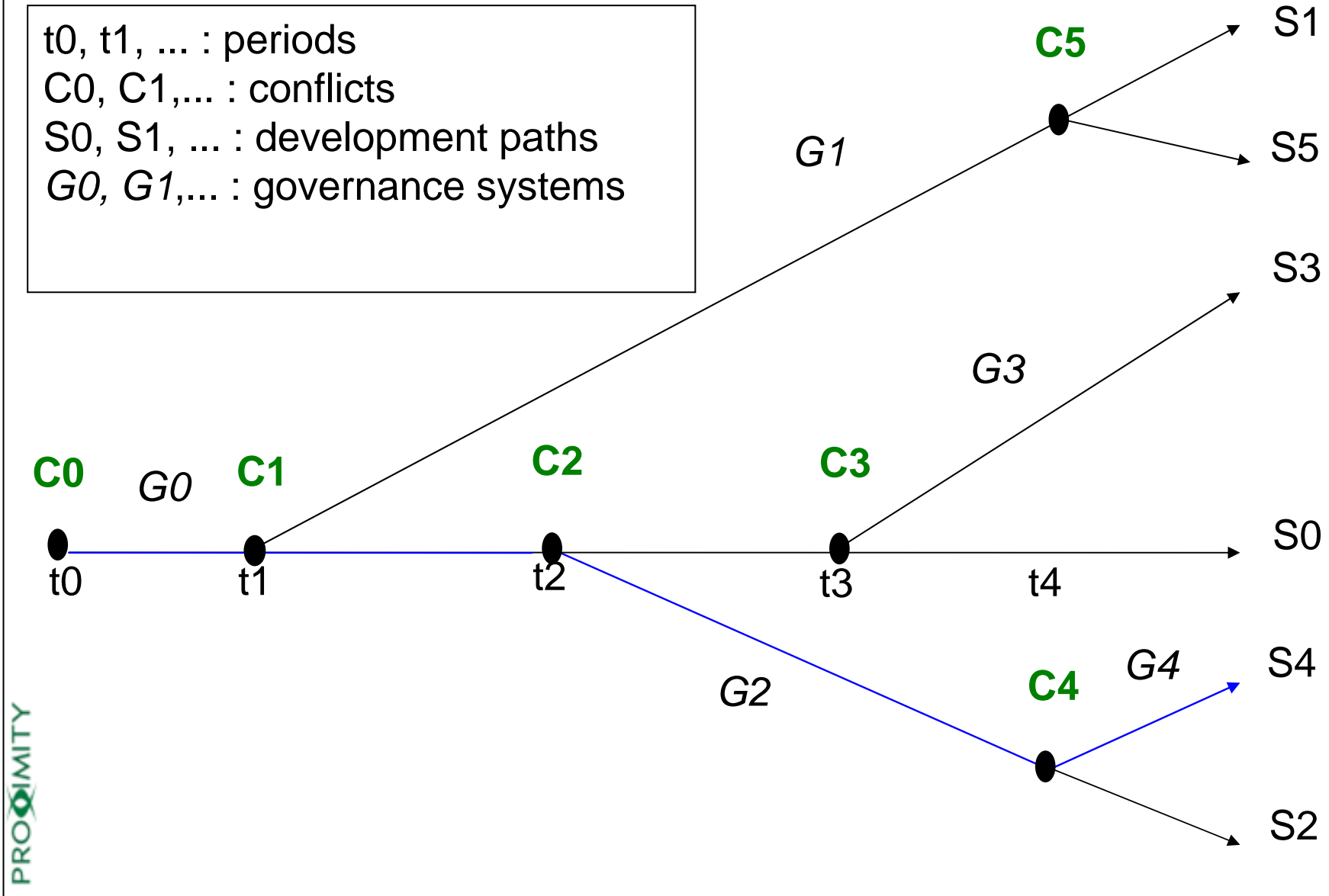
- Conflicts are good **signals**:
  - they are a way, for the individuals or the groups, to reveal their position
  - and to let it know to partners and opponents
- They provide with **an alternative** to:
  - Exit to the territory or the game
  - Loyalty (waiting for a democratic change)
- **Collective and individual Voice** (Hirschman), related to the causes of conflicts
  - private innovations: individual voice
  - public innovation: collective voice

# Are conflicts “something wrong”?

- They often are a **legitimate** way
  - to express oppositions to non desirable infrastructures (wastes, nuclear plants...) or products (GMO, pesticides...)
  - to impose the idea of new modes of production or new ways of living in front of dominant positions
  - to express other patterns of territorial development
- **Conflicts are linked with innovative behaviours:**
  - innovations lead to oppositions, which can transform into conflicts
  - small innovation: small conflicts
  - big innovation: big and long conflicts

# Conflicts as drivers of change?

$t_0, t_1, \dots$  : periods  
 $C_0, C_1, \dots$  : conflicts  
 $S_0, S_1, \dots$  : development paths  
 $G_0, G_1, \dots$  : governance systems





# Conflicts and Proximities

- **Geographical Proximity** (imposed)
  - at the origin of land use conflicts: contiguity, superposition, neighborhood
- **Organized Proximity** (mainly positive role)
  - regulation of land use conflicts: negotiation, cooperation, producing rules
  - logic of belonging:
    - relationships between the members of networks (enables the actors to initiate discussions about the rules that must be produced and about the technical modalities of the solutions)
  - logic of similarity:
    - reference to common values (possibility for the local actors to share experiences and projections so that they can co-operate in common projects)

# Proximity and regional development: the planning side

## Conclusions

# Territorial Governance and Proximities

- **Geographical Proximity** is often imposed
  - congestion effects, pollutions...
  - contiguity, superposition, neighborhood
  - leads to oppositions and conflicts
- **Geographical Proximity** helps in
  - decisions by local actors (but not only)
  - negotiations, collaborations... at the local level
- **Organized Proximity** helps in
  - building rules (be there local or imported from abroad)
  - building cooperative networks (trust) and their common projects
  - building networks of opponents and their common projects
  - setting the role of institutions (local or global)

# Conclusions

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# Conclusions

- The proximity approach brings information about:
  - the **organization** of local actors
  - the exchange of information and knowledge (local and global)
  - the building of common projects
  - **the process of decision in terms of territorial development** (local, global, both)
  - the obstacles to the main decision processes
  - the competition between rival conceptions of territorial development
  - **the dynamics of urban and rural territories**
  - the methods to get over obstacles to the development process

Thanks for attention!

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# Geographical Proximity

- Permanent GP
  - helps in the regrouping of local actors (Production)
  - permits face to face relations (Prod & Planning)
  - leads to land use conflicts (Plan)
- Temporary GP
  - allows successful collaborative production processes (Prod)
  - opens the way to external relations to the clusters (allows to bring back information and knowledge) (Prod)
  - opens the way for tourism and temporary stays in the region (Plan)

# Organized Proximity

- Logic of belonging
  - repeated interactions between local actors (Prod & Plan)
  - organization of local clusters (Prod)
  - organization of local co-operative behaviors in territorial governance processes (Plan)
  - organization of opposition to development decisions (Plan)
- Logic of similarity
  - role of institutions (Prod & Plan)
  - building of joint projects (Prod & Plan)



# Conflicts and changes

- Conflicts are **indicators of changes**
  - Social changes, technical changes, economic evolutions
  - They are often linked with **innovation**; issued from and give rise to (new forms of governance, new technologies, new group of actors...)
- Changes provoke **resistances**, which can conduct to **conflicts** :
  - Important changes often lead to long and big conflicts (social and spatial extensions of the conflict)

# Conflicts as components of the process of public decision

- Each public decision is faced with a **reaction** of the population: it can lead to **conflicts**
- **Sen's idea** of the correction of democracy failures and of imperfect public decisions
- Conflicts are part of a process of **trials and errors**
- Each conflict reveals the limits of the public decision
- Conflicts are part of the **territorial governance** process
- After each conflict, the public decision-makers can change the decisions
- It opens the way to **new development paths**