SSH & The City

From measuring societal impact to mapping social engagement

Rationale

- Increasing demand on the *return on investment* of research
- Extended mispractices on the use of bibliometric indicators
- Limitations on indicators for certain fields

- Scientific *excellence* (or whatever that is) is no longer sufficient
- Need for identifying research societally relevant
- There is a universalistic notion of impact.

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Rationale

Evaluation schemes address…

1. Natural & Exact Sciences
2. Global Communities – "INTERNATIONALIZATION"
3. Scientific Impact

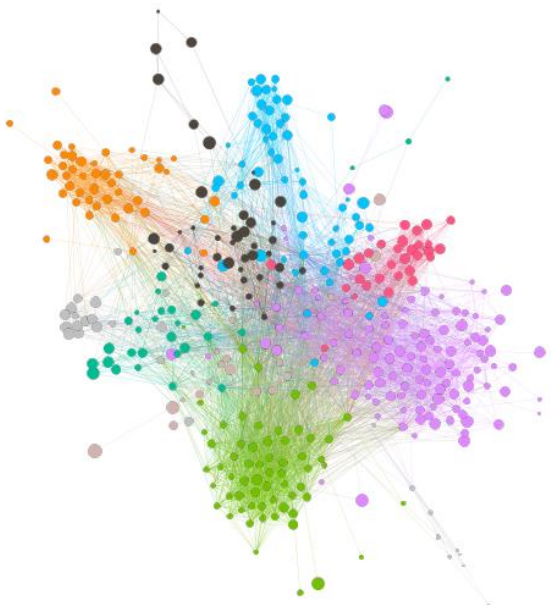
Rationale

Evaluation schemes neglect…

1. Social Sciences & Humanities
2. Local Communities
3. Societal Impact – Except socioeconomic and with limitations

Rationale

- Social capital of researchers reflects their potential of social engagement
- Social media as a proxy for tracing social interactions of researchers with non-academics



Neglected spaces in research evaluation

1. The university-city synergy

2. SSH and their audiences

3. Capturing societal impact

University-city synergy

- Most literature from *innovation studies*

University-industry relation

- Triple Helix
- Regional innovation systems
- Localized Knowledge Spillovers

Creative industries

- Emergence and development of industry
- Again socioeconomic perspective
- Includes SSH

Urban planning

- Concept of *anchor* institutions
- Bidirectional synergies
- *Ad hoc* methodologies

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University-industry relation

Creative industries

Urban planning

Partial and problematic indicators to assess non-socioeconomic impact at the local level

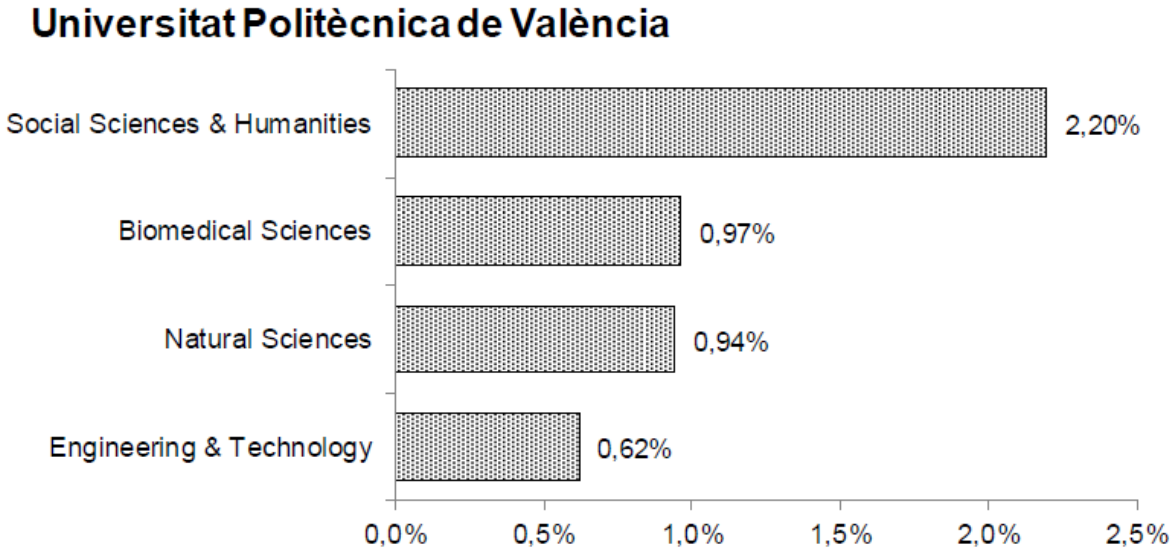
Localized Knowledge Spillovers

Includes SSH

***Ad hoc* methodologies**

SSH and their audiences

- Publication and citation patterns do not adapt to bibliometric standards
- Blurred lines between societal and scientific contributions
- More influenced by local developments than other fields



SSH and their audiences

Nederhof, 2006

1. Global scientific communities

Standardised and controlled communication patterns

2. Local experts

Either scholars or non-academic experts

3. The general public

Heterogeneous group and communication outlets

Capturing societal impact

Scientific/Scholarly impact

- Knowledge growth
- Publication outlets
- Research networks

Societal Impact

- Cultural
- Social
- Socioeconomic and technological

Capturing societal impact

Scientific/Scholarly impact

IMPACT	Knowledge growth	Publication outlets	Research networks
OUTPUT	Papers, books, reports, cases…		Workshops, co-authorship…
ACTIVITY	Increase and organise stock of knowedge		Build and convene networks

Capturing societal impact

IMPACT	**Societal Impact**		
	Cultural	Social	Socioeconomic and technological
OUTPUT	Archives, museums, events, performances…	Policy changes, environmental benefits…	Patents, spin offs…
ACTIVITY	Build and convene networks, supply of human capital	Problem solving	Support entrepreneuralism

Capturing societal impact

- Societal impact is a complex and multidimensional concept
  Not just one type of societal impact

- Societal impact does not follow a linear model
  Same factors and actors do not always lead to same impacts

- The attribution model does not apply
  There is no direct link between research outcome and societal impact

From societal impact to social engagement

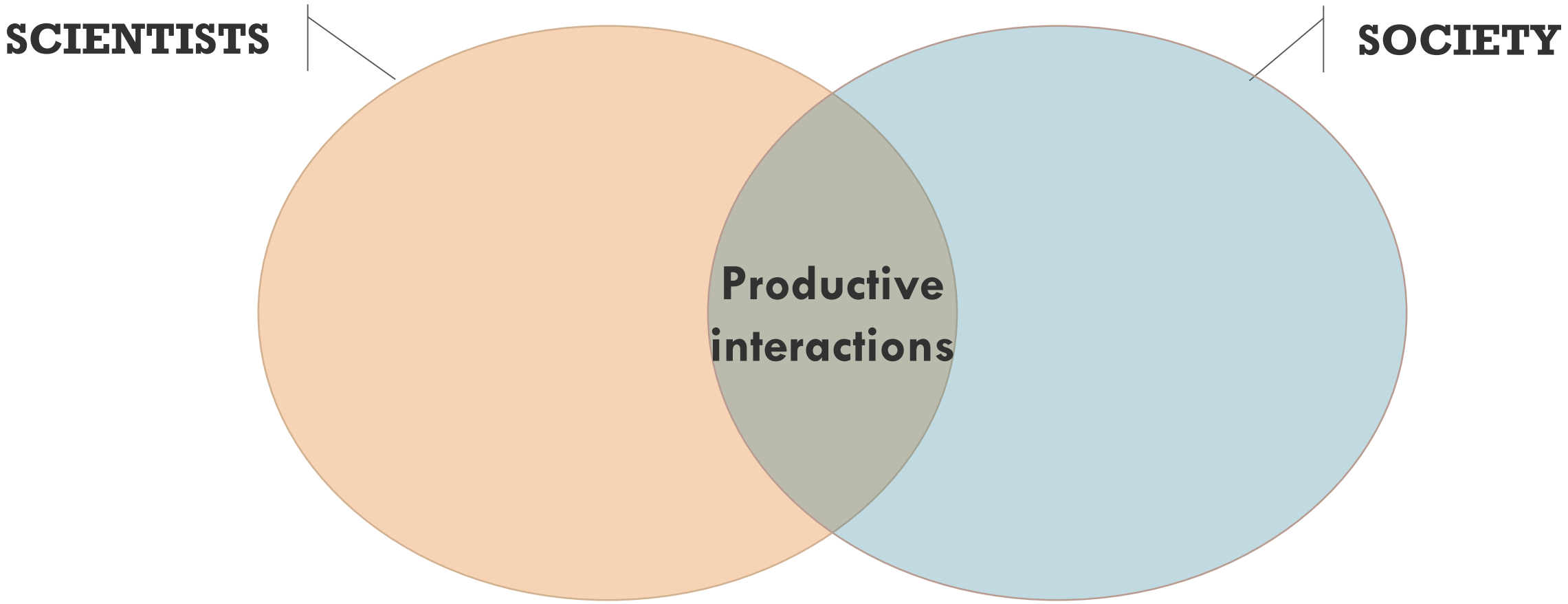
*"The introduction of **knowledge about the process into assessment procedures** will also help us to understand how (potential) social impact is being achieved."*

Spaapen & Drooge, 2011

Researchers' context as a proxy of engagement potential

Social networks of scientists as proxy for social outreach

From societal impact to social engagement



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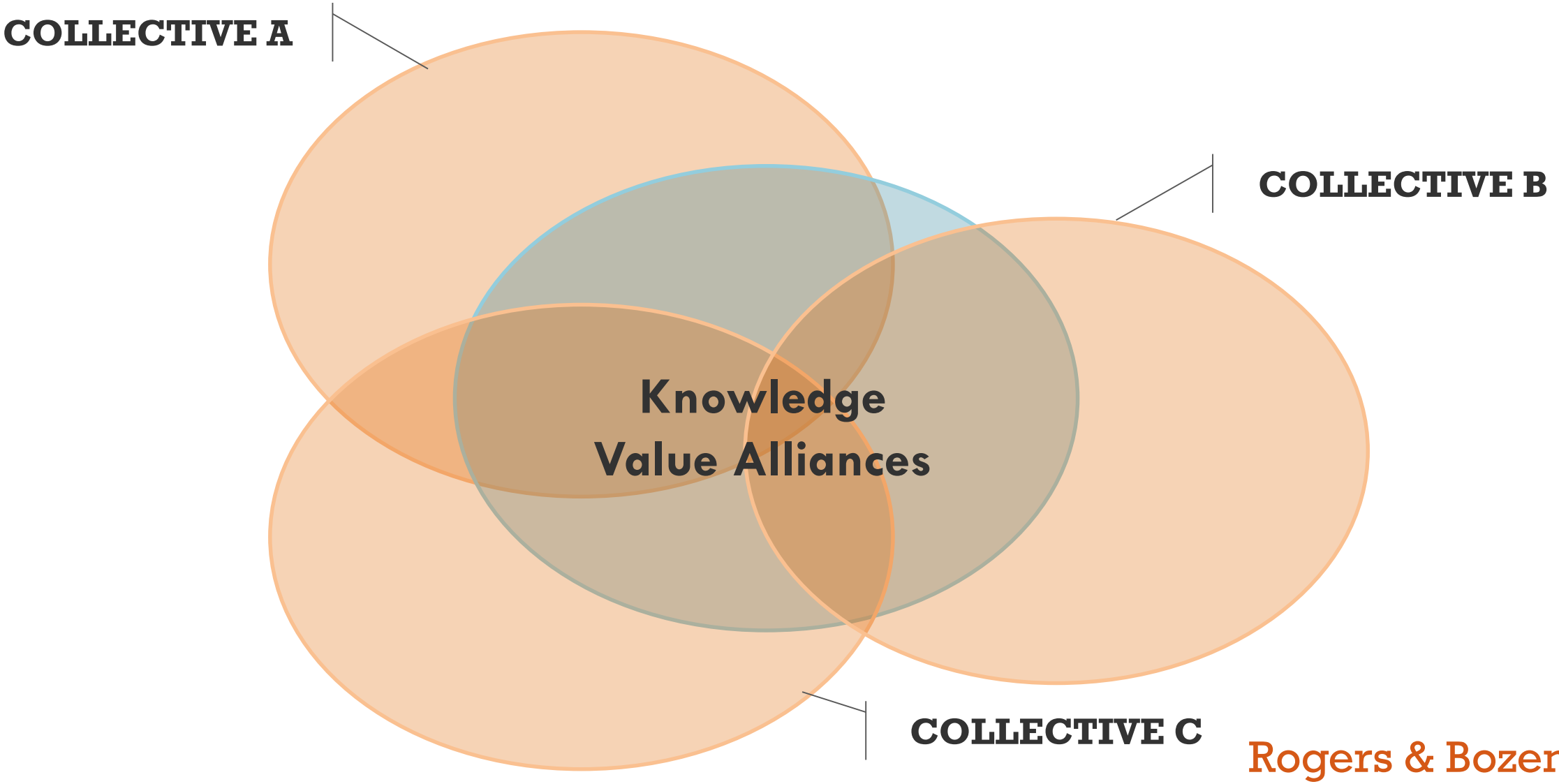
From societal impact to social engagement

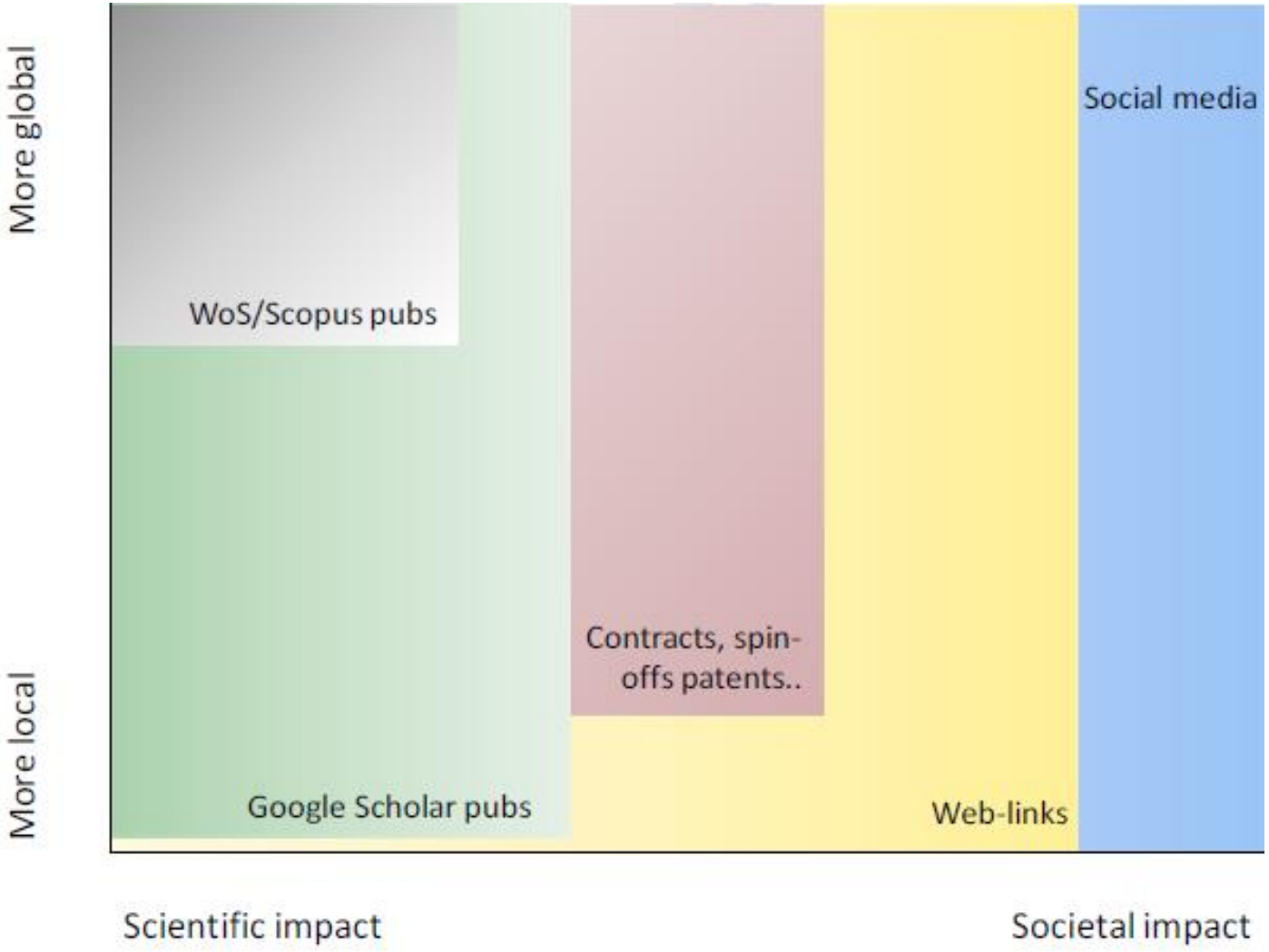


Rogers & Bozeman, 2001

From societal impact to social engagement

	SOCIETAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT MAPPING
Process	Linear	Networked
Level of analysis	Individual	Group
Reach of impact	Emphasis on global impact	Global + local impacts
Interactions	Economic and institutional	'Hidden' informal interactions
Type of impact	Mainly socioeconomic + technological	Also social and cultural

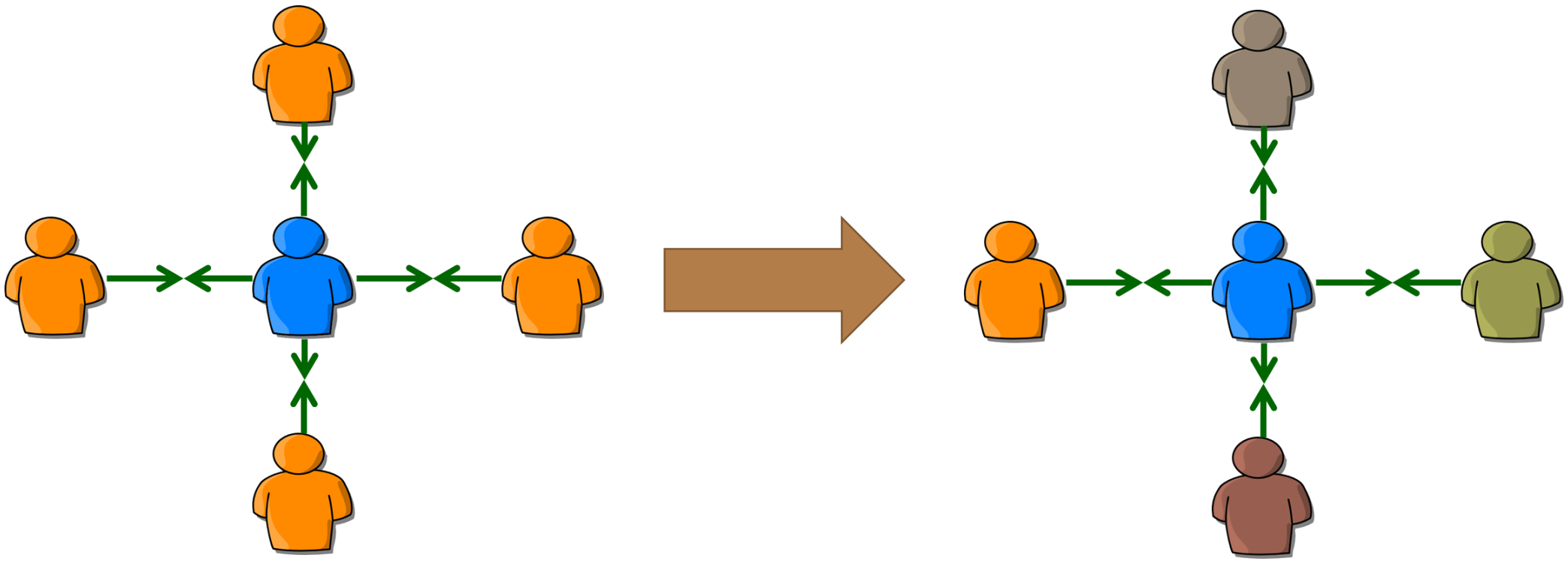
The potential of social media



- Indicators are based on traces of activity
- Each data source captures different spheres of outreach
- Altmetrics fail as they adapt the citation model to social media

Social spheres of interest of researchers

(Based on Twitter)



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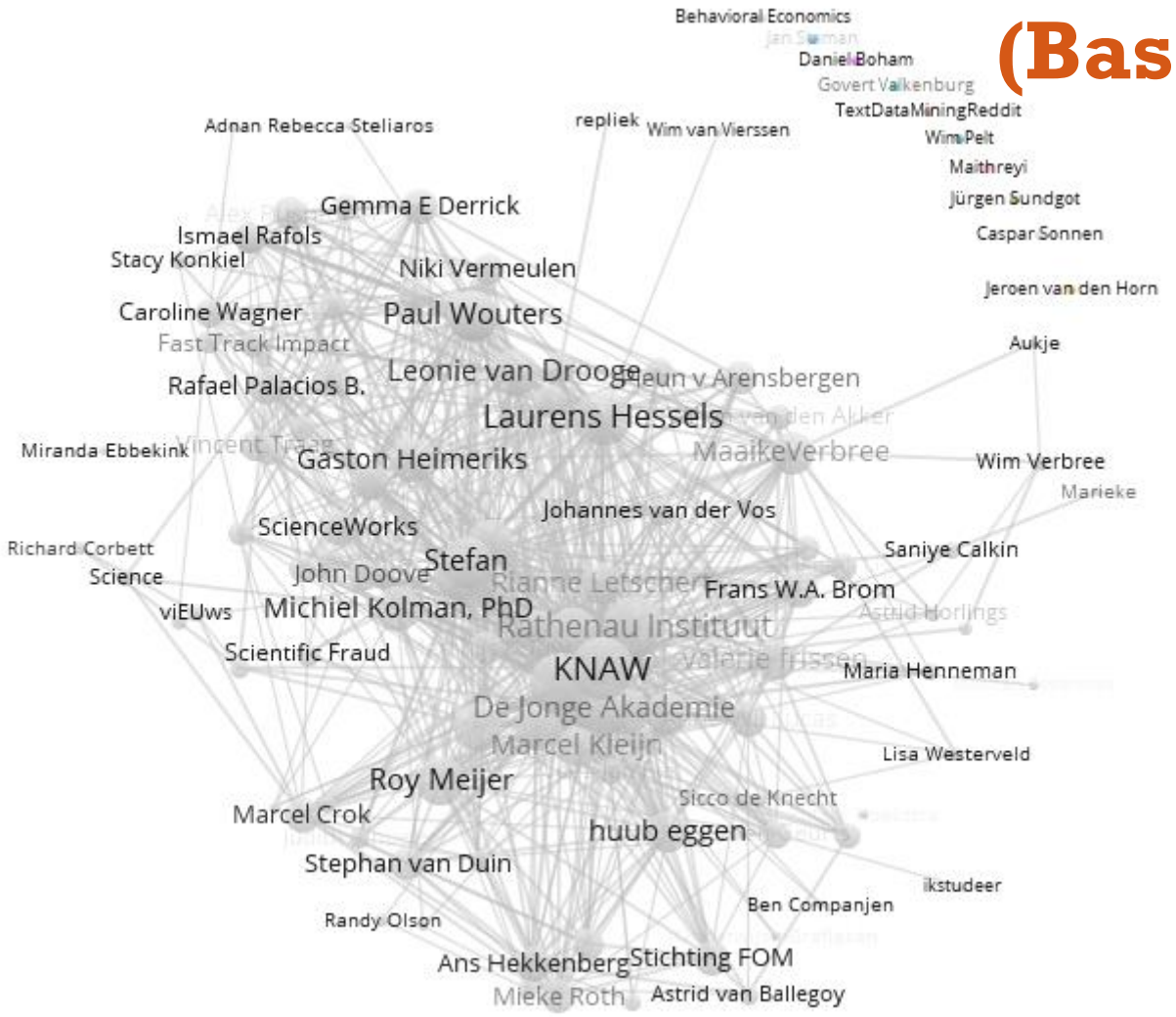

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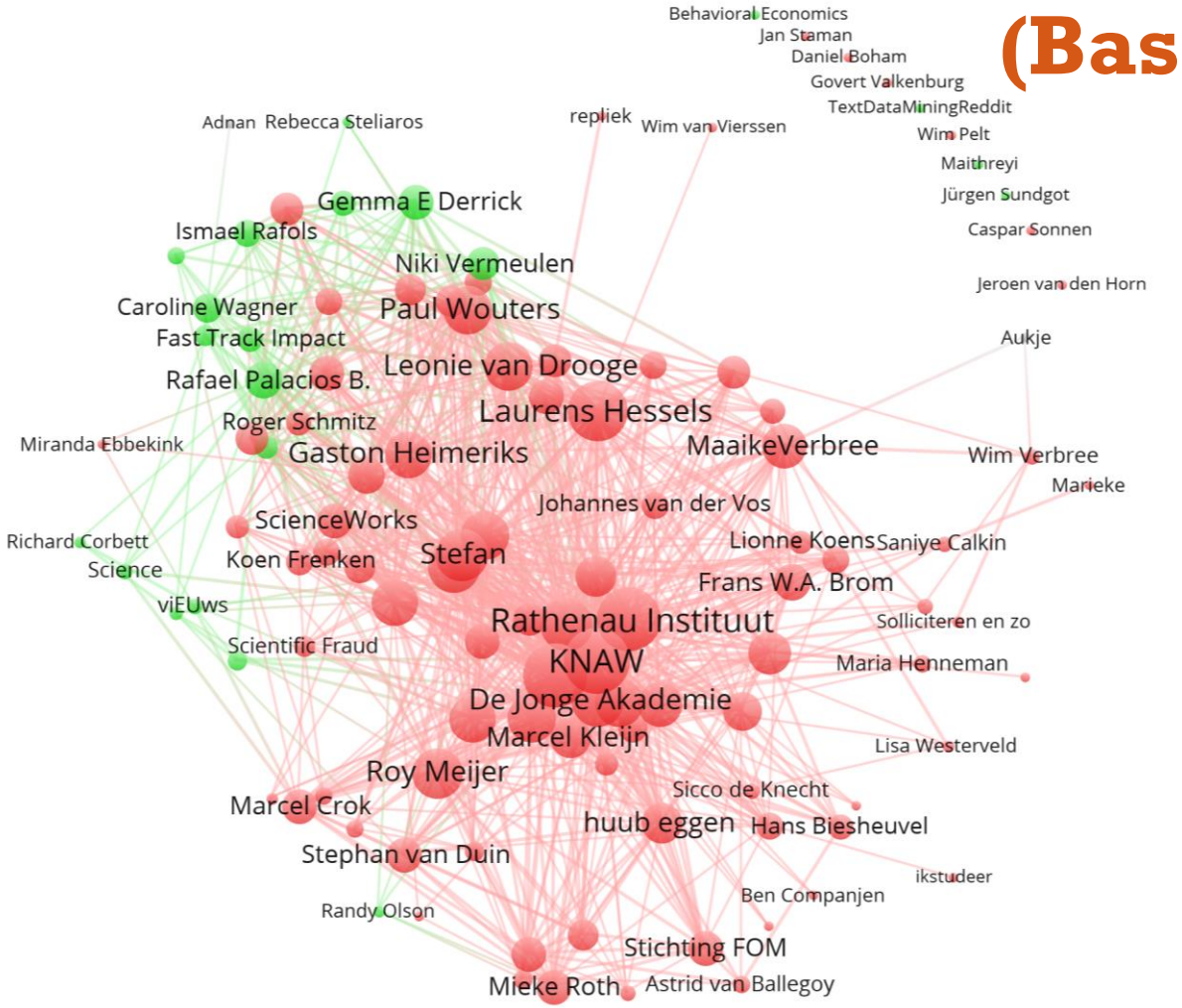

Global

Local

Geographical distance

Social spheres of interest of researchers

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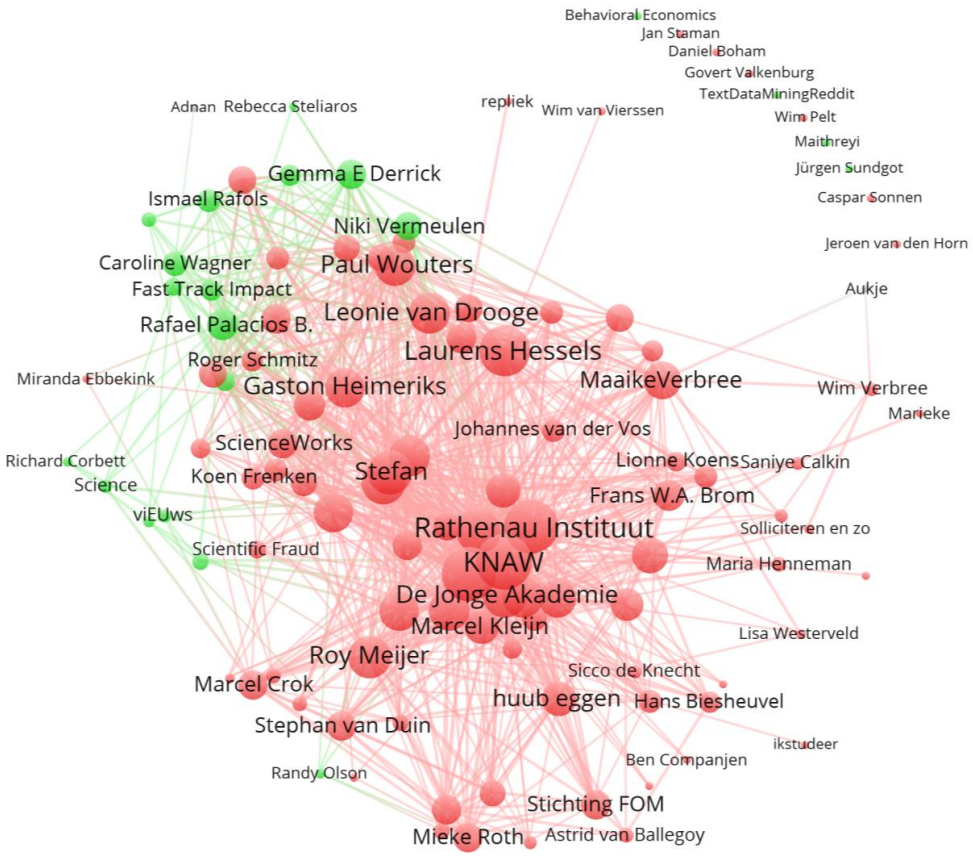

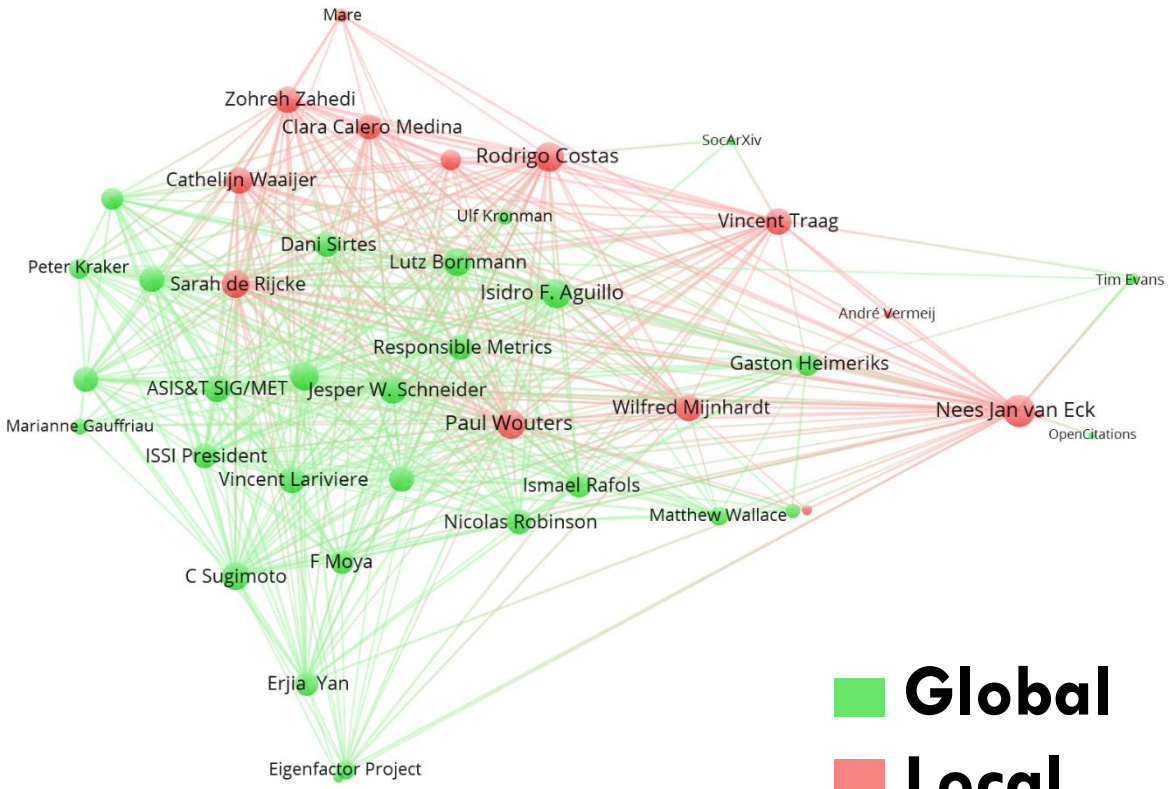

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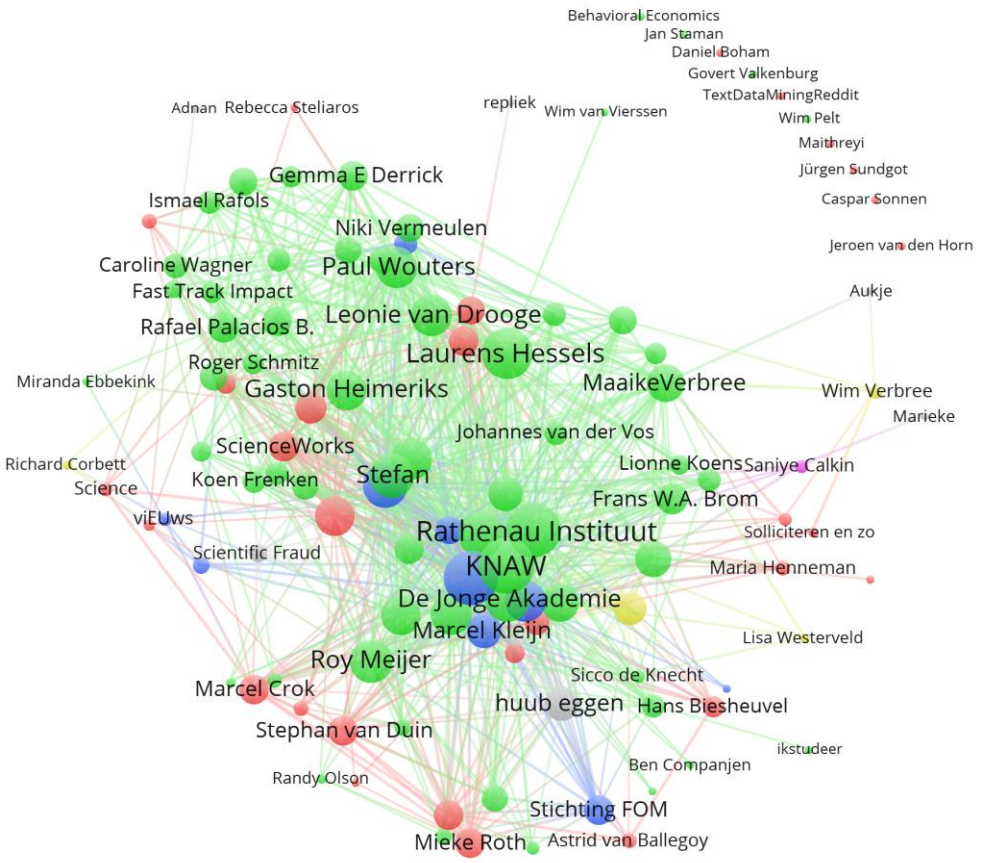

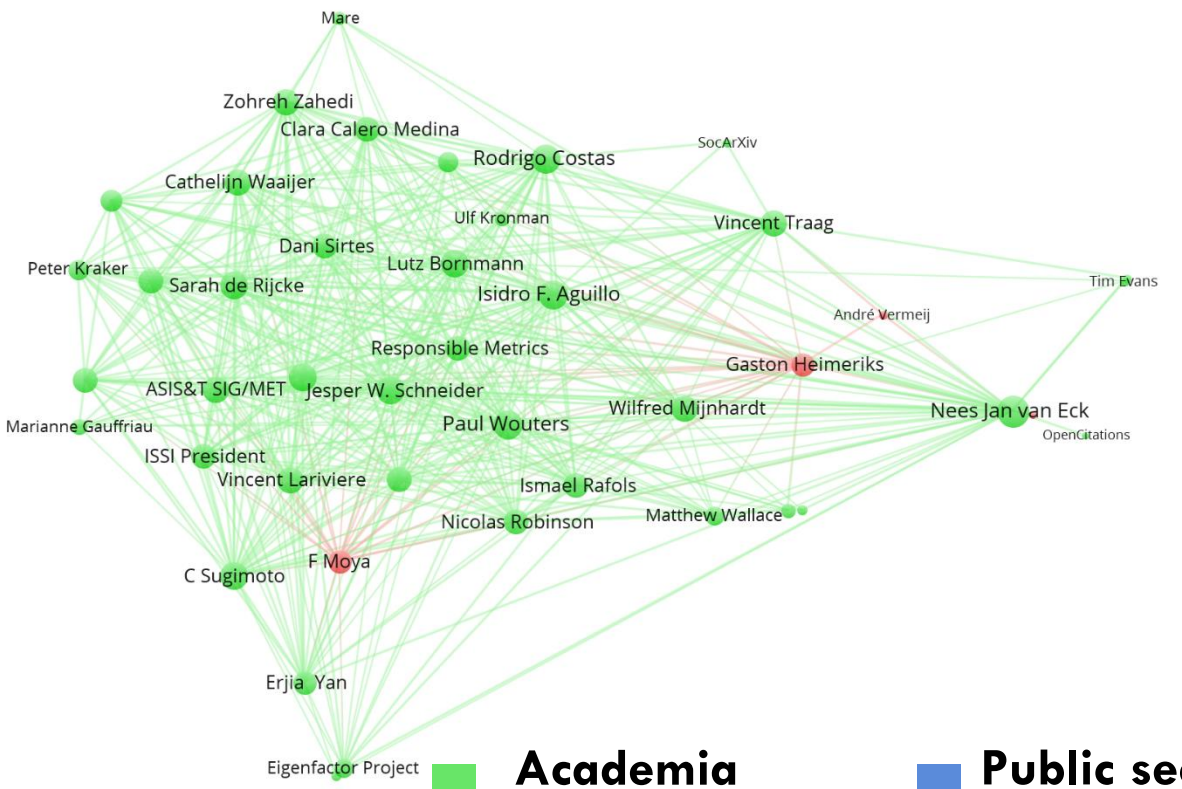

Institutional affiliation

- Academia
- Private sector
- Politicians
- Public sector
- NGO
- Unknown

Limitations

- **Where does social engagement take place?**
  Finding the appropriate traces

- **There are many data restrictions and limitations using social media**
  Characterising users
  Levels of aggregation

Next steps

- **Different sources for identifying traces of social activity of researchers**

- **Understand relation with research profile of researchers**

- **Analyses at the department/centre level**

Different roles played by different actors

Discussion

- **Turning from 'performative' assessment to 'strategic' assessment**

  Usefulness as a policy tool?

- **Mapping as a first step/complement to qualitative approaches**

  Indicators vs. Visualisations

- **Before assessing impact we should learn which impact we should expect**

  Profiles and roles of researchers

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