

Migration and Clustering of Prominent Western Philosophers: Broad Historical Patterns and Explanations

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Abstract. This article examines the 146 most important Western Philosophers in the last 2,250 years, as identified by Murray (2003), in terms of their birth location and labour migrations. It also looks at detailed patterns of migration and the tendencies for eminent philosophers to cluster in certain cities for the three most important epochs for Western philosophers, namely Ancient Greece, the Scholastic period and the Post-Scientific period. The historical information under examination has been compiled using two online sources: the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (SEP) and the *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (IEP). The data also shows a marked level of labour-related migration in all epochs – a remarkable fact when the high costs associated with migration in earlier centuries is taken into account. The data also show a high level of clustering in certain cities in all three periods, with explanations for such clustering proffered in the concluding section.

Keywords: western philosophy, geographic concentration, labor mobility, migration

1 Introduction

A number of articles in this journal have reported on the results from the compilation of new data on the historical migration and clustering of prominent creative workers, including visual artists (O'Hagan and Kelly, 2005, and O'Hagan and Hellmanzik (2008)), and classical music composers (O'Hagan and Borowiecki). The current paper attempts to build on this work by examining the birth location, migration and clustering patterns of 146 of the most important Western philosophers over two millennia. The sample for this study is smaller than for these papers and covers a much longer time period but nonetheless some clear conclusions can be posited (see Simonton, 1991, for a paper using a similar sample size in relation to composers).

Collins (2003) in his majestic tome, *The Sociology of Philosophies, a Global Theory of Intellectual Change*, covered in great detail the whole spectrum both time wise and in terms of an extensive coverage of non-Western philosophers. He also very much emphasized the network effect operating among philosophers as evidenced by the following.

The history of philosophy is to a considerable extent the history of groups. Nothing abstract is meant here—nothing but groups of friends, discussion partners, close-knit circles that often have the characteristics of social movements. Take the upsurge of German Idealism, from Kant to Hegel and Schopenhauer. The first thing to strike us should be the dates: all the major works are between 1781 (Kant's Critique of Pure Reason) and 1819 (Schopenhauer's World as Will and Representation)—38 years, the approximate length of a generation. There is a social core: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, who once lived together in the same house. Fichte takes the early lead,

inspiring the others on a visit while they are young students at Tübingen in the 1790s, then turning Jena into a center for the philosophical movement to which a stream of the soon-to-be-eminent congregate; then on to Dresden in the heady years 1799–1800 to live with the Romantic circle of the Schlegel brothers (p. 3)

Collins ranked philosophers according to how many pages of discussion they receive in various histories of philosophy and then divided them into dominant, major, secondary, and minor figures. No evidence is provided, though, on how precisely this was done. For Greece it is interesting that he had 8 dominant, 20 major, 68 secondary and 237 minor. He later uses a slightly different classification when dealing with the ‘significant’ figures in world history, which he estimates at between 135 to 500 philosophers. He also highlights and maps the personal connections between the significant philosophers but again the evidence for this is not made explicit.

The purpose of this paper is to shed a little more light on the hugely extensive work of Collins in three ways. First we have collected detailed data on 146 prominent or significant philosophers in terms of birth location and life-time migration. Second we seek to examine the extent to which these philosophers worked in clusters, accompanied in most cases according to Collins by a large number of less important philosophers. Third we seek to explain briefly why they may have clustered, again a topic addressed in a general way by Collins.

There have also been more ‘micro’ studies of clusters of creative workers, such as by Farrell (2001), and Oberlin and Gieryn (2015). The former examined thirteen creative clusters, covering visual artists, to literary artists to inventors of film, the aim being to establish common patterns in collaboration and friendship dynamics. The latter also examined in some detail three clusters of visual artists and provides perhaps the best

explanation for where such clusters occur.

Section 2 will address some methodological issues that arise in the collection and analysis of the data. Section 3 provides a summary of the key results regarding birth location and migration for the entire period. Section 4 takes a more detailed look at three major epochs in terms of migration and clustering: Ancient Greece (601BC to 300BC); the Scholastic period (1001 to 1300); and the Post Scientific Revolution period (1610 to 1900). Section 5 posits some speculative explanations for the observed trends and concludes the paper.

2 Description of Core Data and Definitions

The first task was to select the philosophers to be the focus of the migration and clustering patterns and for this we turned to Murray (2003). He identifies the most prominent people in different fields of human endeavour, including philosophy, born between the years 600 BC and 1950AD. He ranks the leading figures in each discipline, but for this study all that is needed is the basic unranked list of the top Western philosophers. He also covers Chinese and Indian philosophers but these are not the focus of our work. The great advantage of Murray is that there is a very clear and thorough exposition of how his top 155 Western philosophers were chosen and indeed it is likely that most of these would appear also in Collin's list of significant philosophers.

Murray used twelve different reference works and encyclopaedia to compile his list of philosophers. Referenced in at least one of the sources were 885 philosophers, a list which was reduced to 473 who were referenced in two of the sources, one of which was a non-encyclopaedic source. This list of 473 was in turn reduced to 155 who were mentioned in at least half of the 12 sources. The methodology that produced this final list was tested

rigorously by Murray and provides a final list that has a very high Cronbach reliability score of 0.96.¹

The primary sources on the lives of prominent philosophers are the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (SEP) and the *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (IEP). Both of these resources are written by recognized scholars and provide a great deal of detail on the working lives of the philosophers and, furthermore, have the significant benefit of being available online. However, neither resource is comprehensive leading to two noteworthy issues. First, there are nine philosophers, amongst the 155, about which little or nothing is known about their lives, bar their philosophical work. For this reason the dataset had to be reduced to 146 eminent philosophers. Second, not every philosopher on whom there is information has sufficient information included in the SEP and/or in the IEP. In these, albeit rare, circumstances a third source was used.²

For contemporary philosophers, 1950 was the year adopted as the cut-off point by Murray (2003), with no philosophers born after this year included. Thus, from here on the twentieth century refers only to philosophers born in the first half of the twentieth century.³

The categorization of the philosophers' birthplaces is made into twelve geographic areas. France, Italy, Spain and America are left as stand-alone countries due to either there being a large number of prominent philosophers located within that country or because there was no suitable categorical alternative. The rest of the regional locations have been grouped into categories due to the historical boundaries between these areas being unclear and as there is a shared culture and/or language. These grouped areas are as follows: The Germanic countries are defined as Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The Greek countries are defined as Greece, Cyprus and Phoenicia. The North African countries are defined as Turkey, Egypt,

¹ See Murray (2003) for a detailed description of how Cronbach reliability scores are tallied.

² The Catholic Encyclopedia - <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>

³ A.J. Ayer, born 1910, is the latest-born philosopher included on the list.

Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Algeria. The UK is defined as England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

The Lowlands are defined as Belgium and the Netherlands. Scandinavia is defined to be Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Eastern Europe is defined as Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The final category is the Rest of the World, which here primarily refers to the Middle East.

In order to allow for ease of comparison across the literature, the definitions used for long-term and short-term labour migration are the same as those used by O'Hagan and Borowiecki (2010). That is, long-term labour migration captures those philosophers who migrated from their birthplace to a different location to live and work for a period of three years or longer. These migrations can take the form of an internal movement (i.e. within their country of origin) or an external movement (i.e. a movement abroad). In the cases where a philosopher undertook more than one long-term movement, internal or external, the location in which the philosopher spent the longest part of his or her working life is the one recorded.

Short-term migration is defined as a movement to a new location for a period that is longer than three months but shorter than three years. Furthermore, only work-related movements are considered. These include both philosophical studies (for example, attending university) and temporary work positions (for example, temporary lecturing positions).

As pointed out by O'Hagan and Borowiecki (2010) a number of other minor issues, such as defining which suburban locations should be included in a metropolitan area crop up. Again, in order to maintain a level of consistency across the work, the solutions adopted here to these issues are the same as those applied by O'Hagan and Borowiecki (2010).

Having noted the above caveats, the data on the movement of the 146 philosophers over their working lives were then constructed and the results of this data analysis now follow.

3 Birth Location and Overall Migration Findings

Region and Century of Birth

In terms of birth location, six geographic regions dominate the history of western philosophy. In order of their prominence, it is the UK with 18 per cent of eminent philosophers born there, followed by the Germanic countries on 16 per cent, France on 16 per cent, the Greek countries on 14 per cent, the North African countries on 12 per cent and Italy on 8 per cent, the six accounting therefore for 84 per cent of the total.⁴ The fact that the United States is not one of the top six may surprise modern readers. However, the data cut-off point most likely accounts for this infrequency, as the US was only rising to prominence through the twentieth century.

Looking at the variation in the number of philosophers over time yields some interesting observations (See Figure 1). There is a growth in the number born in the Ancient world, peaking at twelve in the fifth century BC, and then falling off as the Golden Age of Greek philosophy draws to a close in the third century BC. There are spikes again in the first century BC and, marking the highpoints of Roman and Roman-Greek philosophy. The final highpoint of the Ancient world was the fourth century AD, a century which saw the births of four eminent philosophers.

After the collapse of the Roman Empire and the subsequent Dark Ages this figure was not surpassed until the Middle Ages, in the eleventh century, when seven philosophers were born. This rebirth of philosophy in the Scholastic age lasted three centuries, until the 14th century when the numbers born fell off again. The next flourishing marked the beginning of modern philosophy; in the 16th century eight eminent philosophers were born, including René

⁴ All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Descartes, the so-called ‘father of modern philosophy’. From here the number of philosophers born rose steadily. Fourteen were born in the 17th century, the first century to surpass the *absolute* high-point of Greek philosophy in the 5th century BC. Eighteen were born in the 18th century and twenty-six in the 19th century; more were born in this century than in the entire first millennium.

Arising from this three major periods in Western philosophy can be identified: namely Ancient Greece, the Scholastic period and the Post Scientific Revolution period. It is in relation to these that the later discussion of migration patterns will relate.

Figure 1

Distribution of philosophers' births over time

Internal and External Migration by Century

Looking at the overall patterns of migration (Table 1), we can broadly conclude that philosophers tended to migrate more in the modern era than in previous periods, but no increasing trend can be discerned since the 15th century. Table 1 provides data on the total number of prominent philosophers by century, in terms of birth, internal migration and external migration. It can be seen that there is no clear pattern in terms of the proportion (‘relative’ measure in table) of philosophers migrating over the centuries, although in the period since the 15th century there was sustained large-scale migration. This increased level of migration in the modern age may be largely due to the lower costs of transportation and the availability of greater road links. Surprisingly, this increase wasn’t driven by more

external migration, which did not increase proportionally and even fell in the 17th and 18th centuries, but by far greater levels of internal migration. Improved services and job opportunities within countries may account for this trend; while philosophers may have had to travel to cities to find work they did not necessarily have to migrate to a different country to do so. The most striking story though from Table 1 is the very high proportion of philosopher who migrated, even in some of the earlier centuries. Over the period as a whole, 69 per cent of western philosophers spent the longest period of their working lives away from their place of birth: 40 per cent moved internally and 29 per cent externally.

When work location (arising from migration), rather than place of birth, is used, the overall picture changes significantly. France becomes the main location, with 20 per cent of the total residing there for work reasons. This is followed by the UK at 16 per cent, the Greek countries also with 16 per cent, the Germanic countries with 15 per cent, Italy 14 per cent and the North African countries 10 per cent: bringing these six countries/regions to 88 per cent of the total (84 per cent in terms of births).

Table 1

Table 1: Type of Movement

4 Migration Patterns in Three Major Epochs of Western Philosophy

The textbooks 'story' of Western philosophy mirrors very much the pattern of prominent philosophers by century identified above (see Russell (1996), Copleston (2003) and Kenny (1994)). Distinguished philosophy is first noted in the Mediterranean region around the 7th century BC. It then gradually concentrated in Ancient Greece over the 6th, 5th and 4th centuries BC and these centuries will be the focus of the first subsection to follow. Over the next eight centuries significant philosophical output recedes to a lower level, before finally

collapsing around the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century AD. It then reappears in the 9th and 10th centuries AD, with the resurgence of Ancient Greek philosophy emerging in Spain in the 11th century. This period lasted for three centuries and is referred to as the Scholastic period. In the 17th century a new surge in the prominence of Western philosophy emerges, with the Enlightenment of that century following the ‘Scientific Revolution’ of the 16th century. The peak centuries for Western philosophy followed, namely the 18th and 19th centuries. The 17th, 18th and 19th centuries then are the focus of our third epoch.

Ancient Greece Period

Table 2 sets out the migration patterns in this epoch. There were in total twenty-three prominent Western philosophers born in this period, fourteen in the Greek countries, five in the North African countries and four in Italy. The Greek countries then clearly dominated in this period.

Turning now to the migration patterns, almost half migrated on a long-term basis, with more than a quarter migrating externally. Table 2 also provides data on temporary migration, and shows that fourteen out of the twenty-three engaged in a short-term work-related migration. These are in some ways remarkable figures, given the difficulty of travel in those times, and bearing in mind that short-term migration is defined as being in another location for more than three months for work-related reasons. The migration of the philosophers born in North Africa is particularly striking, with three of the five migrating on a permanent basis to outside the region.

Tables 2 and 3 here.

Table 2: Extent of Mobility for Prominent Philosophers (b. 600BC - 301BC)

Table 3: Long-term Movement Destinations for Prominent Philosophers (b. 600BC - 301BC)

Where did these philosopher move to? Table 3 provide the answer to this question. It shows the place of work of those who did not migrate, those who migrated internally, and those who migrated externally. The most striking finding from this table is the dominance of Athens in this epoch. Four of the philosophers from the Greek counties were born in Athens, with another four migrating on a permanent basis to Athens: this means that eight of the fourteen prominent philosophers born in the Greek countries had their work location in Athens. Moreover, three of the five prominent philosophers born in North Africa also migrated on a permanent basis to Athens, which means that almost half of all philosophers born in these three centuries had their work location there. This really is a quite extraordinary clustering of prominent philosophers, with of course probably tens of less known philosophers clustered around them in turn (Collins 2003).

Scholastic Period

This period as mentioned earlier covers the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. Tables 4 and 5 are very similar to Tables 2 and 3, except applied to a different epoch, namely the Scholastic period. It can be seen in Table 4 that in this period prominent Western philosophers were born in the UK and France (five in each), followed by Italy (three), Spain (two), the Germanic countries (one) and Rest of World (one, Iran). Italy is the only country therefore still prominent from the Ancient Greece period, with the rise of the other European countries noteworthy.

The level of migration is again remarkable. As can be seen in Table 4, sixteen of the nineteen prominent philosophers born in this period moved permanently from their place of birth, with seven moving internally and nine moving externally. Apart from moving

permanently seventeen of the nineteen also moved on a temporary basis (three months or more). Bear in mind again the centuries when this took place and the picture is remarkable.

Tables 4 and 5 here.

Table 4: Extent of Mobility for Prominent Philosophers (b. 1001AD - 1300AD)

Table 5: Long-term Movement Destinations for Prominent Philosophers (b. 1001AD - 1300AD)

Again in terms of where they moved, Table 5 shows that one city dominated in terms of clustering, namely Paris. One of the prominent philosophers was born there, two moved there from elsewhere in France, two from the UK, two from Germany and two from Italy. This means that nine of the nineteen prominent philosophers born in this period had their permanent work location in Paris, with eight of the nine migrating into Paris, six from outside France. As with Athens in the earlier period, this is a remarkable level of clustering, especially given the relatively huge difficulty of communicating and travelling in these centuries, over eight hundred years ago.

The only other city to experience in-migration was Oxford, with two moving from within the UK, but none born there or moving from abroad. The prominence of Paris was likely linked to the university system that had built up there in this period, a similar factor applying in Oxford.

Post Scientific Revolution Period

This period covers the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, in terms year of year of birth, and uses the same format as for the earlier epochs (see Tables 6 and 7). In these centuries a large number of prominent philosophers were born, namely fifty-eight. Twenty of these were born in the

Germanic countries, fifteen in the UK and ten in France: this means that these three countries accounted for seventy-eight per cent of the total. Thus with regard to countries a marked level of clustering in terms of birth location is evident.

Tables 6 and 7 here

Table 6: Extent of Mobility for Prominent Philosophers (b. 1601AD - 1900AD)

Table 7: Long-term Movement Destinations for Prominent Philosophers (b. 1601AD - 1900AD)

Turning now to migration patterns, Table 6 shows that forty-three of the fifty-eight prominent philosophers moved permanently from their place of birth, with in this period internal migration being the main factor: twenty-nine moved internally with fourteen moving externally. Besides long-term movement, fifty of the fifty-eight moved on a temporary basis for work purposes, a very high figure indeed. The greatest long-term migration applied to those born in the Germanic countries, with nineteen of the twenty born there moving on a permanent basis, nine moving externally.

Table 7 provides the evidence on where these prominent philosophers moved to on a permanent basis. A more varied story with regard to clustering is evident now. Paris retained a prominent position, with ten of the fifty-eight philosophers located there, but this was nothing like the dominance of the previous epoch looked at earlier. Four of the Paris-based philosophers were born there, four migrated from the rest of France and two migrated from the Germanic countries. Three prominent philosophers were born in London with three others migrating there from the rest of the UK. Berlin was also a major centre, with none born there but five migrating from the rest of the Germanic countries. The importance of the small university cities of Cambridge and Oxford is also evident. Four prominent

philosophers were located in each, with none born there but three migrating from the rest of the UK and one from the Germanic countries in both cases. The other noteworthy pattern relates to Vienna and Boston, reflecting the beginnings of the Vienna school and the ascent of Harvard University with regard to philosophy.

As these centuries cover so many prominent philosophers it might be worthwhile examining each individual century briefly in turn. As seen in Figure 1, a total of fourteen prominent philosophers were born in the *17th century*: five in France, four in the UK, two in the Low Countries, and one each in Italy, the Germanic countries and Eastern Europe. France and the UK dominate the period that marks the start of modern philosophy.

The only city that experienced clustering in this period was Paris. Two philosophers were born there, while one other French philosopher migrated internally to the city. For much of the modern age Paris was a centre for cultural activity, in art, music and philosophy. While its importance as a work destination for philosophers would wane later on, its primary position in the *17th century* reflects both its new standing as the cultural centre of Europe in the modern age, and its place in medieval European philosophy, when it attracted such epoch-making philosophers as Thomas Aquinas and Peter Abelard.

There were eighteen prominent philosophers born in the *18th century*: eight were born in the Germanic countries, four in France, four in the UK and two in Eastern Europe. We see the rise of the Germanic countries region in this period, a dominance which persisted throughout the rest of the modern age. Of the eighteen philosophers born in this period three left their country of birth on a long-term basis to live and work in a different country. Ten more philosophers moved internally within their country of birth, while five did not move for a substantial length of time from their place of birth. Every one of the eight philosophers born in the Germanic countries migrated either internally or externally.

Looking now at where the philosophers tended to cluster, two cities immediately stand out: Berlin and Paris. All four of the French philosophers were either born in Paris or migrated there, as did two Germanic philosophers. Berlin was the migration destination favoured by philosophers born in the Germanic countries: four of the eight migrated there.

The role of universities in the professional lives of philosophers is an important factor in terms of migration. Philosophers may hold professorships or teaching posts in a university, decreasing their need and inclination to migrate. Indeed, 64 of the 147 philosophers in our dataset worked for a university at some point in their lives, with most of those 64 working in the modern era. These university jobs tend to be long-lasting or permanent. All five of the philosophers born in this period who did not move from their place of birth were born in cities with major universities: Paris, London, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Königsberg.

A total of 26 prominent philosophers were born in the *19th century*: eleven in the Germanic Countries, seven in the UK, four in the US, and one each in France, Spain, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Again we see the dominance of the Germanic countries and the UK, although France has fallen off in this period significantly. The US, which was absent from previous lists, suddenly has a very meaningful presence in this period, and perhaps represents the broader social and cultural awakening of America around this time.

Looking at migration, a total of seven philosophers migrated outside of their country of birth, while a further fourteen migrated long-term internally. Only five of the twenty-six did not migrate from their place of birth. This shows a marked increase in the level of migration by philosophers born in the 19th century compared with the previous century. As in the previous century philosophers born in Germanic countries were very mobile, with five migrating internally, five externally, and only one of the eleven not migrating at all.

No one city acted as a centre for clustering to the same extent as Paris or Berlin in the previous two centuries. However, there was a general shift during this period to England,

particularly the cities of London, Oxford and Cambridge, as a hub of philosophical activity. The Cambridge grouping is the most interesting cluster perhaps: it represents the ‘Trinity’ of philosophers at Trinity College, Cambridge. These are Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. This philosophical cluster in many ways set the stage for Anglophone philosophy up to the current day, and provides a well-studied example of a creative philosophical cluster.

5 Conclusion

The evidence presented in this paper very much supports the story set out in Collins (2003). He indicated for example that clustering/networks existed in ancient Greece, as can be seen in the following.

If we turn to ancient Greece, we find the history of philosophy can be recounted in terms of a series of interlinked groups: the Pythagorean brotherhood and its offshoots; Socrates’ circle, which spawned so many others; the acute debaters of the Megara school; Plato’s friends, who constituted the Academy; the breakaway faction that became Aristotle’s Peripatetic school; the restructuring of the network that crystallized with Epicurus and his friends (very tight bonds here), withdrawing into their Garden community, and their rivals, the Athenian Stoics, with their revisionist circles at Rhodes and Rome; the successive movements at Alexandria. (p. 57)

He later argues that:

The most notable philosophers are not organizational isolates but members of chains of teachers and students who are themselves known philosophers, and/or of circles of significant contemporary intellectuals. The most notable philosophers are likely to be students of other highly notable philosophers. In addition to this vertical organization of social networks across generations, creative intellectuals tend to belong to groups of intellectual peers, both circles of allies and sometimes also of rivals and debaters. (p. 65).

This confirms an important point, namely that while the number of prominent philosophers examined in this paper is perhaps small, each one though has an associated large network of less significant philosophers and scholars, thereby creating in itself a significant cluster of creative activity.

The data presented in this paper confirms in a quantitative way that clustering certainly did occur for philosophers in the periods examined, not just in Ancient Greece. Some may argue that this was known very well already from the work of Collins (2003) in particular. As mentioned earlier though, while this may be the case, this paper hopefully adds some clear new empirical general findings to lend support to the generally understood overall pattern of Western philosophy.

Two major questions of interest arise from these findings. First is why prominent creative workers clusters exist at all. Second is why they cluster in particular locations at certain times.⁵ We will address the first of these two questions. In relation to the latter question, it has already been mentioned that the presence of an important university department of philosophy was probably the key determinant.

⁵ Apart from the fact of the how and why of clustering, there remains the important issue of the evidence that clustering benefitted the creative output of philosophers, a task beyond the reach of this paper. Such a question though has been examined in several papers in relation to composers and visual artists (Borowiecki, 2013, Hellmanzik, 2010 and 2012, Kelly and O'Hagan, 2007) and the evidence so far is clear, namely that clustering does benefit significantly the creative process.

According to Collins there are huge advantages to the personal contact that results from the clustering of philosophers:

I suggest three processes, overlapping but analytically distinct, that operate through personal contacts. One is the passing of cultural capital, of ideas and the sense of what to do with them; another is the transfer of emotional energy, both from the exemplars of previous successes and from contemporaneous build-up in the cauldron of a group; the third involves the structural sense of intellectual possibilities, especially rivalrous ones. These processes operate in all types of personal contacts (p. 71)

Marshall (1890) in a similar vein over a century earlier argued that, ‘so great are the advantages which people following the same skilled trade get from near neighbourhood to one another, that they will stay in the location that they have chosen for a long time’ (Marshall, 1890, p.225).⁶ This he argues arises from three types of externality, one of which, synergies and spill-overs, are likely to apply to creative workers such as philosophers. These relate to the development of new ideas, which keep creative workers innovative and successful. This external economy arises when ‘the mysteries of the trade become no mysteries: but are as it was in the air....: if one man starts a new idea, it is taken up by the others and combined with suggestions of their own; and thus it becomes the source of further new ideas’ (Marshall, 1890, p. 225).

Rallet and Torre (1998) develop on this and emphasise the spill-overs that arise in relation to tacit knowledge. Because information and knowledge are what are mainly exchanged between agents involved in innovative activities, such as that of prominent

⁶ This is a theme taken up also by Krugman (1991), Porter (1990), and Rallet and Torre (1998).

philosophers, geographical proximity and hence location is important. While codified knowledge/information can be easily transferred nowadays via electronic and other means, although not in the past, the same does not apply to tacit knowledge. The latter is knowledge that cannot be easily transferred because it is not stated in an explicit form. To convey this type of knowledge, therefore, requires the sharing of a common work experience through face-to-face relations. The more tacit knowledge associated with an activity, the more important is permanent or semi-permanent physical proximity, and hence clustering. This in a sense is covered in the first of the processes outlined by Collins above.

Gertler (2003) developed this idea further, in a way that can be applied even more to philosophers, in terms of two distinct concepts. The first is that of awareness or consciousness. The tacit dimension of knowledge exists only in the background of our consciousness, thereby enabling us to focus our conscious attention on every day matters. The second idea he highlights pertains to communication difficulties through codified knowledge. The tacit component of knowledge, as Rallet and Torre (1998) noted also, defies codification and in some cases articulation in any direct way. Besides, there is a link between tacit knowledge and social context. It is argued that tacit knowledge can only be shared effectively between two or more people when they share a common social context, shared values, language and culture.

Porter (1990) stresses the importance of competition, in particular domestic rivalry, which arises from close geographic proximity between groups of competing individuals such as artists or philosophers or athletes. This rivalry, often very personal, creates visible pressures on all to improve, thereby increasing overall standards, and hence increasing the chances that they will be considered 'prominent'. This really is the 'emotional energy' and 'rivalrous' nature of relations outlined in the quote above from Collins (2003). Competition of a different sort is suggested also as a requirement by Vaubel (2005). 'Competition among

rulers tended to protect the cultural and economic elites and minorities (scientists, philosophers, artists, merchants, Jews, Protestants) against the suppression of novelty and dissent' (p. 278).

No wonder then as Collins states in the opening quote earlier in this article that 'the history of philosophy is to a considerable extent the history of groups'. The case for such group activity as demonstrated above is very strong, not just in relation to philosophers but also to many other types of creative workers.

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