

Public or Private Economies of Knowledge?

Turbulence in the Biological Sciences

Mark Harvey, Professor and Director, Centre for Research in Economic Sociology and Innovation, Department of Sociology, University of Essex and Andrew McMeekin, Professor of Innovation, University of Manchester and Sustainable Consumption Institute, UK

This book presents an analytical framework for understanding the shifting 'great divide' in capitalist economies of knowledge.

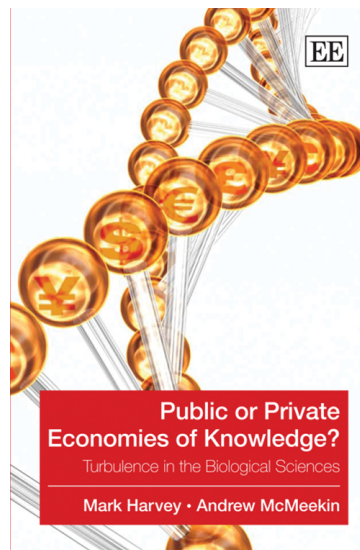
The authors develop a novel economic sociology of innovation, based on the 'instituted economic process' approach. By focusing on economies of knowledge, they seek to demonstrate that capitalism is multi-modal at its core, with interdependent growth of market and non-market modes of production, distribution, exchange and use.

'This book embraces a fundamental issue for the modern information economy, namely the creation, negotiation and institutionalization of private and public knowledge. The authors argue that as new biological knowledge develops, the actors must help create and negotiate the boundaries of what can be considered private and public knowledge. By using an Instituted Economic Process approach, the authors come to grips with these dynamics of the economics of knowledge. This approach therefore helps us analyze who is involved, who benefits, and why conflicts occur within an innovation-driven economy. The authors provide very interesting empirical material, as well, because they develop their analytical points, through well-written and thick descriptions of cases from biodata, bioinformatic, and a case of gene sequencing. Hence, this book makes interesting conceptual and empirical contributions, to our understanding of modern biological sciences in the economy.'

– Maureen McKelvey, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden

'It once was believed that scientific knowledge was public and technological knowledge was proprietary, and this was the way it should be. However, recent developments, particularly in biology, have unsettled this belief. This superb book examines what determines whether a body of knowledge is public or private. The consideration of the theoretical issues is thorough and thoughtful. The study of how things have played out in various fields of biology, and why, is smashing. What the authors have to say is important and fascinating, and makes for a great read.'

– Richard R. Nelson, Columbia University, US



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