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On the naming of innovation districts

Abstract

Name plays a fundamental role in defining and differentiating a company within a category. In this paper we identify how the leaders of 7 innovation districts (22@Barcelona, Ann Arbor Spark, EECi, Porto Digital, Ruta N – Medellín, SK-Skolkovo and TusPark) understand the construction of the names of their innovation districts. We take an inductive approach utilizing two types of data: exploring the innovation district directors' understanding through direct semi-structured interviews and analyzing secondary data consisting of website and brochures. We show how innovation district leaders use more than one classification name for their organization and that these names either tend towards a more strategic or institutional posture. We contribute by extending existing naming theory to include innovation districts, a complex organization composed by actors of the Triple Helix. We also contribute by providing managerial guidance to assist in understanding the importance of the role of their organization's name in long-term positioning.

Keywords: innovation districts; naming; branding; triple helix; complex organizations.

Els noms dels districtes d'innovació

Resum

El nom juga un paper fonamental en la definició i la diferenciació d'una empresa dins d'una categoria. En aquest document identifiquem com els líders dels 7 districtes d'innovació (22@Barcelona, Ann Arbor Spark, EECi, Porto Digital, Ruta N – Medellín, SK-Skolkovo i TusPark) entenen la construcció dels noms dels seus districtes d'innovació. Adoptem un enfocament inductiu que utilitza dos tipus de dades: d'una banda, explorar la comprensió dels directores de districte d'innovació a través d'entrevistes semiestructurades directes i, d'altra banda, analitzar les dades secundàries que consisteixen en pàgines web i fullets. Demostrem com els líders dels districtes d'innovació utilitzen més d'un nom de classificació per a la seva organització i que aquests noms tendeixen a una postura més estratègica o institucional. Contribuïm ampliant la teoria de nomenclatura existent per incloure districtes d'innovació, una organització complexa composta per actors de la Triple Hèlix. També proporcionem ajut per a entendre la importància del paper del nom de la seva organització en el posicionament a llarg termini.

Paraules clau: districtes d'innovació, nomenclatura, marca, triple hèlix, organitzacions complexes.

Los nombres de los distritos de innovación

Resumen

El nombre juega un papel fundamental en definir y diferenciar una empresa dentro de una categoría. En este trabajo identificamos cómo los líderes de 7 distritos de innovación (22@Barcelona, Ann Arbor Spark, EECi, Porto Digital, Ruta N-Medellín, SK-Skolkovo, y TusPark) entienden la construcción de los nombres de sus distritos de innovación. Adoptamos un enfoque inductivo que utiliza dos tipos de datos: por un lado, la comprensión de los directores de distrito de innovación a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas directas y, por otro lado, el análisis de datos secundarios de páginas web y folletos publicitarios. Demostramos cómo los líderes de los distritos de innovación utilizan más de un nombre para clasificar su organización, y que estos nombres tienden a una postura más estratégica o institucional. Contribuimos ampliando la teoría de nomenclatura existente, para incluir distritos de innovación, una organización compleja compuesta por actores de la Triple Hélix. También proporcionamos ayuda para entender la importancia del papel que juega el nombre del distrito en su organización y en el posicionamiento en el largo plazo.

Palabras clave: distritos de innovación; nomenclatura; marca; triple hélice; organizaciones complejas.

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Introduction

The name of an organization plays a key role for identifying and differentiating an organization from others (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin 2003; Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016). Beyond simply identifying the organization, it can indicate the organization's purpose, such as its specialization or value proposition (Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016). These names are usually decided through the consensus of company's owners or by the board of directors who have the same objectives for their organization. A key assumption behind these naming processes is that there is a clear understanding of the mission of the organization.

However, from the 1950's onwards, an increasing number of complex and collaborative organizations with derivative and hybrid missions, collectively known as areas of innovation (AOI), have been founded by entrepreneurial universities, governments, or industry to drive regional development (Lima et al. 2021). According to WAINOVA, an alliance between 24 AOI associations, there are close to 2000 AOIs, distributed in 76 different countries (WAINOVA 2021). AOIs are embedded in complex evolving relationships between government, academia, and industry known as the Triple Helix (Champenois and Etzkowitz 2018), as they have sought synergies for greater regional economic and innovative development. As each entity has differing missions which are synthesized into an AOI name, AOIs often exhibit a wide variety of descriptive names, such as science parks, technology parks, science and technology parks, technology and science parks, technopoles, innovation parks, and innovation districts.

There are only few studies that specifically consider how AOIs are named. In one study that does consider AOI names, Engel, Van Werven and Keizer (2020) investigated the naming



strategies used by entrepreneurs within AOIs to achieve resonance (the ability to connect with words, see Lockwood, Giorgi, and Glynn 2019) with their audience, identifying both cognitive naming and emotive naming as differing strategies. Others have focused on the variety of category labels that typify AOIs, rather than the naming processes themselves (Belenzon and Chatterji 2014; Chan, Park, and Patel 2018; Granqvist, Grodal, and Woolley 2013). Other studies have considered how science parks and incubators became good “brands” for spin-offs (Salvador 2011), showing that science parks are often recognized for projecting a positive image for their tenant companies. In probably the most closely related study, Yigitcanlar et al. (2016) investigated the role of planning and branding an AOI, evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies in knowledge and innovation environments. However, none of these studies consider a typology of names nor how AOI organizations themselves build legitimacy and distinctiveness. As such, the goal of this paper is to investigate: *how are areas of innovation named?*

To address this question, we extended Schmeltz and Kjeldsen’s (2016) model of corporate name classification to explore the motives behind their naming. We focused on a subset of AOIs known as innovation districts, which are organizations within a geographic area of a city that have been established to encourage social and economic development. They coordinate clusters of universities, anchor companies, startups and other innovation-driven organizations that share. Through an inductive approach, we investigated the understanding of 7 innovation district leaders of the name of their organizations. To do so, we used direct semi-structured interviews and analyzed secondary data longitudinally (when it was available). We found that innovation district leaders choose names that encompass more than one classification type, and that early in the life of the innovation district they use a tagline with the business name to



explain who they are. However, as the innovation district evolves, there is no clear evidence of the relationship between the entities that comprise the innovation district. Furthermore, we show that names vary towards either a strategic or institutional posture.

We contribute both academically and to practice. We extend theory, as this study is the first time that the model of Schmelz and Kjeldsen (2016) has been applied to this type of complex organization. Furthermore, we begin to uncover the relationship between AOI names and institutional and branding theories. We also provide empirical guidance by helping managers with a clear guidance to better understand what kind of direction can be taken both in the initial construction of the name, as well as in the case of wanting to modify it to keep up as their sector evolves. This should make it easier to tailor the best naming strategy for that hybrid organization.

We first review the theory background, presenting naming definitions, the classification name models of Schmelz and Kjeldsen, 2016, the context about the area of innovation and innovation districts. We then describe our methodology. The findings then follow where we present our results. We conclude with a discussion, limitations, and directions for future research.

Theory Background

Naming an organization

A brand is “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the products or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiates them from those of competitors” (Kotler and Armstrong 2014, 255). Corporate branding is a process that creates and maintains a company's image and its respective reputation, by shaping the communication processes with the stakeholders (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin 2003). Most identity and



corporate branding theory focus on the characteristics of the brand itself, such as ‘name, term, symbol, design’ or those aspects all together that could differ from another competitor (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin 2003; Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016; Kotler and Armstrong 2014). Place branding is the application of marketing strategies to differentiate a place in terms of economic, sociocultural, spatial, and political aspects. Those strategies seek to create emotional and psychological associations with a place. In addition, spatial cognition studies indicate that a positive image of a place is shaped by how much the area is known abroad (Yigitcanlar et al. 2016). This explains why leaders pay attention to investing time in a geographically specific brand.

Integral to a brand is the name used to describe the organization. Name plays a key role in creating strategic marketing advantage (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin 2003) by both identifying and differentiating the organization from others (Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016). Chiranjeev Kohli and Douglas W. Labahn (1995, 5) argue that name is important so that “brand managers realize that a carefully created and chosen name can bring inherent strength to the brand”. Name also has additional functions beyond solely identifying the company or brand, as it can indicate the type of organization, a particular specialization, a promise of experiences, etc. Names “crystallize reputation”, tie up “perceptions about a company and its products and activities”, and “evoke images, convey personality, and impart identity” (Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016, 311). Put differently, it is as the “prism through which each stakeholder perceives the company” (Muzellec 2006, 305).

There are three different types of names (Sokolova 2012): “trade names” are the creative name used on the brand to get the attention of the target; the “legal business name” is the name used for registration and that comes with the type of organization, often exhibiting showing words

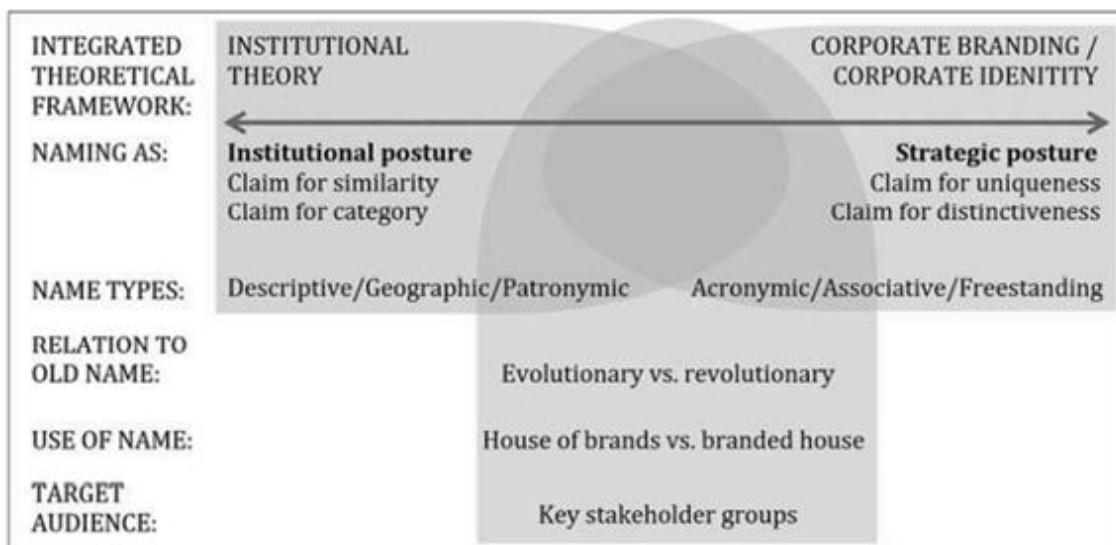


or legal phrases, such as Corp, LLC, etc.); and the “business name” is often the same as the trade or legal one, but without the legal words in the end. For this paper, we focus on the trade name, although occasionally mention the business name when it is used in a tagline.

An integrative framework of name changes

In seeking to understand how names are selected for organizations, Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003) analyzed a database of 166 companies that had been renamed, proposing a classification of names model in which companies classify their names in six different ways, within a spectrum, from the most descriptive to the most creative. Derived from Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003), Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016) propose a corporate brand name model that integrates characteristics from identity and corporate branding theory and institutional theory, and which presents different typologies distributed throughout a spectrum. Schmeltz and Kjeldsen’s (2016) model is presented in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1. Naming as strategic communication: outline of an integrative framework



Source: Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016).



Integral to this model are six specific types of names derived from Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003): *descriptive* names describe the product or service, and they are used by the agency to make the communication task easiest; *geographic* names usually present the name of a city, region, or folklore of some place; *patronymic* (person-based brand) names bear the name of owners, partners, or key individuals in the brand name; *acronym* names, historically used for corporate names, are the initials of concepts or the name of the company; *associative* (or suggestive) names are explicit or implicit associations with a set of corporate values; *freestanding* names could be standalone, abstract, or invented, and are more creative and have more possibilities to be registered as a brand (and often the word has no relation to the product or service it represents).

Figure 1 illustrates the link between institutional theory and corporate branding theory on naming. This theory introduces the notion of “posture” which shapes distinctiveness or similarity claims. Deriving from social psychology, this is driven by the insight that an individual's social behavior is motivated by two needs — assimilation and differentiation (Baumeister and Leary 1995). Assimilation reflects an individual's desire for inclusion and belonging in relation to other relevant ones (Brewer 1993) “because a sense of similarity validates a person's self-concept” (Baumeister and Leary 1995). In contrast, the need for differentiation, considers the desire to present a distinct and unique image in relation to other relevant ones (Lopez and Snyder 2002) supporting the sense of self-individualization and self-definition (Vignoles, Chryssochoou and Breakwel 2000).

In Figure 1, Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016) integrate institutional theory to show that names claiming similarity (being part of a category and seeking legitimacy) is an institutional posture. Alternatively, it could be indicative of an institutional posture in which the organization wants

to claim membership in a group of organizations in the same line of business. In these cases, the organization often has lower status since it may not yet be as well-known or legitimate in its category. Thus, low legitimacy organization generally tends towards the first three name classifications of Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003): descriptive, geographic, and patronymic. Thus, changing to a descriptive name for the business category could be a desire to be recognized as a member of that business category.

Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016) also integrate corporate identity and branding theory, showing that acronyms, associative and freestanding names are a more strategic posture because the organizations that use them already have higher status, and therefore more legitimacy, and hence seek uniqueness and differentiation. This model suggests that the name change can be as much a strategic posture, as the organization wants to differentiate itself from similar organizations or want to have a different line of business; in this case, choosing a freestanding name can be a way to differentiate itself from others.

To decide a name, it is vital to start thinking about the consumer's opinion, that is, the name should give some benefit and generate value for the audience (Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016). According to a more strategic approach, the name must be thought of in a purposeful way to achieve the organization's objective. Considering a more integrated approach, naming should consider internal and external stakeholders. Although there is no consensus among professionals specializing in branding on the ideal properties of a brand name, they generally follow the idea as the name must be unique or unusual, to the point of attracting the attention of external audiences (Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin 2003). On the other hand, according to institutional theory, descriptive or suggestive names about what the attributes of the product or



service are about are more likely to be remembered and appreciated (Chiranjeev and Rajneesh 2000), and the name must depict the corporation's personality or mission.

Areas of innovation

The world's first university research science park was created near Stanford University (USA) in 1951. According to Zhang (2005), by the end of the 1960s the number of science parks had grown to 21, eventually reaching 39 at the end of the 1970s. With the positive economic results of some science parks, such as Stanford Research Park and Triangle Park, and industrial clusters such as Silicon Valley and Route 128, in the United States, and the Cambridge Phenomenon, in the United Kingdom, during the 1970s, led to government initiatives with the objective of boosting the economies of developed and developing countries, to increase the number of planned industrial clusters, and recreating the dynamics of these parks (Zhang 2005). The real growth took place in the 1980s, reaching more than 270 science parks around the world. And by 2000, there were almost 900. Since then, according to WAINOVA (2021), an alliance of 24 science park associations there are within its network more than 2,000 distributed in 76 different countries. The International Association of Science Parks (IASP) eventually coined the collective term areas of innovation ("AOI"), understanding this definition as "places designed and curated to attract entrepreneurial-minded people, skilled talent, knowledge-intensive businesses and investments, by developing and combining a set of infrastructural, institutional, scientific, technological, educational and social assets, together with value added services, thus enhancing sustainable economic development and prosperity with and for the community".¹

¹ See Piqué, Miralles and Berbegal-Mirabent 2019 for a discussion of the rationale for AOIs.



AOIs are founded by entrepreneurial universities “as the source of new information and technology, the generative concept of knowledge-based economies”, governments “as the source of contractual ties that ensure secure interactions and exchanges” or industry “as a locus of production” (Lima et al. 2021, 1-2). Such organizations are hybrid in the sense that they emerge through the relationships between government, academia, and industry (Champenois and Etzkowitz 2018), and “the interaction in university-industry-government is the key to improving the conditions for innovation in a knowledge base society” (Etzkowitz 2003, 295). The interaction between these entities illustrates the transformation of roles and relationships in the university-industry-government triad, which are defined as spirals intertwined with different relationships to each other in classical innovation regimes and known as the “Triple Helix Model” (Etzkowitz 2003). In some instances, industry is the driving force, with the other two spirals acting as support structures (*laissez-faire* triple helix regime); in others, the government plays the main role, driving academia and industry (in a state regime). As noted by Etzkowitz (2003, 303) the “spirals are rarely the same, usually one serves as the driving force, the organizer of innovation around the others.”

Research focus

Taken together, extant research emphasizes the importance of the role of the name in the brand, as well as how a strong brand could be an important asset for a place. However, these studies have only considered names of organizations with a simple structure where the consensus on the choice of name is usually given by the company's owners or by the board of shareholders, who had the same purpose or objective. As such, we do not know much about how the names of organizations that are built with different institutional actors such as universities, government, and industry with evolving relationships typified by the Triple Helix Model. As



such, we adapt the Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016) model for more complex and collaborative structures which are composed of different entities that have different purposes. We seek to identify whether having multiple actors participating in the decision of the name can shape the choice of the name and whether a predominant type of actor can push towards a more strategic or institutional posture. In doing so, we can also identify the typology of names for these organizations and whether there is a tendency towards an institutional or strategic posture. Consequently, the goal of this paper is to investigate *how areas of innovation are named*.

Methodology

We investigate innovation districts. Katz and Wagner (2014, 1) define innovation districts as “geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators and accelerators. They are also physically compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired and offer mixed-use housing, office, and retail.” Innovation districts are appropriate empirical context as they vary by both levels of formal planning as well as history, in that they are an older form of AOI that has many examples around the world. Seven innovation districts from around the world were investigated: 22@Barcelona (Spain), Ann Arbor SPARK (USA), EECi (Thailand), Porto Digital (Brazil), Ruta N - Medellín (Colombia), Skolkovo (Russia), and TusPark (China). These districts were chosen because they are amongst the largest in each region. Table 1 presents the innovation district names, their respective countries, the profile of the interviewee, the year of the innovation district creation and the respective owner.



TABLE 1. Trade name of the Innovation District and its descriptive data

Name ID	Participant Number	Profile	Year	Country	Owners*
22@Barcelona	Interviewee 1	Director	2000	Spain	G
Ann Arbor SPARK	Interviewee 2	CEO	2005	USA	U + G + I
EECi	Interviewee 3	Director	2019	Thailand	G
Porto Digital	Interviewee 4	Director	2000	Brazil	G + I
Ruta N - Medellín	Interviewee 5	Director	2009	Colombia	G + I
Sk Technopark	Interviewee 6	Manager	2010	Russia	G
TusPark	Interviewee 7	Director	1994	China	U + I

Source: Own elaboration based on interviewees.

Notes: This table shows the trade name of the innovation districts (ID), the respective participant, their profile, the year the ID was created, country and who owns it.

*‘I’ denotes Industry, ‘G’ denotes government, and ‘U’ denotes university. This classification is derived from the Triple Helix concept.

We used an inductive approach as it is a systematic procedure for analyzing qualitative data.

Data analysis was guided by the research objectives (Thomas 2006). The research design was based on two types of data: (1) direct semi-structured interviews with seven innovation district managers, and (2) an interpretation of the secondary data collection (when it was available) as a website and brochures given by the participants.

The semi-structured interviews were initially undertaken by the first author in person during the IASP Nantes Congress 2019 and after by Skype or Teams. The average of each interview was 40 minutes, and they were recorded and transcribed. To facilitate the understanding, the language used was either English, Portuguese, or Spanish, according to the preference of the interviewee. For consistency, the Portuguese and Spanish transcripts were translated to English.

The semi-structured questionnaire was divided into four parts. The first part aimed to get to know the interviewees better, to know their role within the innovation district, and what their area of expertise is. The second part concerned the organization itself. The key idea was to know who the owner or shareholders were, what their goals were in building an innovation

district, what was the mission, vision, and objectives of the entity itself. The third part concerned the name of the innovation district. They were asked what the innovation district name was, if they were aware of why it was called that, if there was any previous or future change in the name, if they considered the name important and why, and finally what they believed the name meant to its stakeholders. A key question was to define the meaning of an innovation district. The final part of the questionnaire was related to the communication strategy. We asked if they believed their communication was clear and if their stakeholders understood what the innovation district was, how they communicated their activities/services, and what was the emphasis on digital communication. We also provided an opportunity for interviewees to add something that had not been discussed before. All interviews and secondary sources were imported into QDA Miner Lite software for subsequent analysis.

The analysis only considered the name within the logo on the website that was current at the time of the interview. This is important to mention because there are differences in the way these innovation districts present themselves, not only the name in the logo, but also when it is described as text. Some organizations presented their logos with different textual information, depending on the channel and audience, such as website, business card, brochures, social media, etc. Furthermore, if any of the innovation district interviewed changed their name, before or after this interview, the analysis was carried out based on the name that appears in the logo, presented on the website on the day of each interview (2019 and 2021).

The first analysis focused on identifying the perspective of each leader in the construction of their name, and to discover if there may be a trend according to the main organizational actor, leaning towards legitimacy or to distinctiveness. This first analysis supported the second analysis which was the application of the Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003) and Schmeltz



and Kjeldsen (2016) name classification models. This enabled us to understand where the name was within a spectrum from the most descriptive to the most creative. The first step was to analyze each textual information contained in the logo, classify it according to the spectrum of Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003) and to justify the classification. This classification was then triangulated with the interview data from each respondent from the first analysis. The findings were cross-checked with the latter two co-authors and other scholars to confirm the classification. The second step involved identifying the classification used, whether what relationships it has with a particular triple helix actor, and if the name has more strategic or institutional posture. The final step was to visualize these classifications in a graph, so a scale was created in which each type of name received a value, such as: -100 (for descriptive), -70 (for geographic), -30 (for patronymic), 30 (for acronym), 70 (for associative) and 100 (for standalone). This scale was constructed to investigate which strategy was followed, using the model of Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016).

Findings

Table 2 presents the results of innovation districts' leaders understanding of the respective names of their organizations, and shows the justification given by the leaders of the innovation districts regarding the importance of the name. Building on the posture approach of Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003) and Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016), they were classified on how they can generate identity of the place, help to create reputation, or provide curiosity, confirming what the theory says about the important role that the name plays in the positioning of a company.



As can be observed in Table 2, managers varied on their emphasis on identity, reputation, and curiosity. For instance, for 22@Barcelona's manager, the name was important because it represented identity as they felt it gave verbal tangibility to a project that is difficult to make tangible. Furthermore, because the name is complex (particularly with the number 22 in it), they felt it provided a strong reputation and evidence of a long-term vocation. For the Ann Arbor manager, the name was important because they believed was fundamental to the identity of the organization; they also believed that the word "SPARK" caught the attention of the audience, inspiring curiosity. For the EECi manager, the name was also important for identity because it reflected the mission and vision of the organization; they also felt the name led to curiosity as it sounded modern and innovative, catching people's attention. For the Porto Digital manager, the name generated identity due to its links with the related brand and territory; in doing so they believed it helped attracting investments both within and to the territory. The Porto Digital manager also felt that the name had an important reputational aspect, as it signaled to SMEs that there was more value to be located there. The manager of Ruta N – Medellín believed that the use of the name of the city Medellín helped reputationally, as Medellín has become a city known for business and innovation. They also believed that it led to curiosity because, although the name is sonorous, it does not explain exactly what it is, providing an opportunity to explain it and sell its benefits. For the SK Technopark manager, the name was fundamental to identity due to the brand relationships, where people have associate themselves with the location where they work and as their second home. And, finally, for the TusPark manager, the name meant identity as they believed it was the way that people identified the organization; this conviction that naming was important meant that they had invested significantly in the naming process.



TABLE 2. ID leaders' opinion about the importance of the name

Name	Identity	Reputation	Curiosity
22@Barcelona	"The name is important, because it gives a verbal tangibility to a project that was very complex (an urban project, an economic project, a social project and a project for the future)."	"They gave it the name to clearly encompass the vocation of a project for 20 or 25 years."	
Ann Arbor Spark	"I think the identity of the organization is Ann Arbor."		"I think that for a new brand you need to have something that you can use as sort of a branding hook."
EECI	"I think the name is very important as it needs to reflect the mission and vision of the AOL."		"Moreover, it needs to catch attention, and to sound modern and innovative."
Porto Digital	"The name is fundamental to why it carries the brand. And it is necessary to strengthen this brand and this identity. So, a territory needs to be recognized and it needs to be a factor that makes it feasible from the attraction of investments to the territory, as well as to the strengthening of those who are in the territory."	"Because as a small company, as a startup, saying that they are from Porto Digital today is different from saying that they are a startup from Recife. Porto Digital is a brand recognized by those in the sector. So, it adds value. At the same time, it strengthens its capacity to attract and be competitive, by attracting investments to the region." "The strength of this brand is fundamental when you want to create something new, and this identity will be a strategic differential for the growth and consolidation of any area of innovation."	
Ruta N - Medellín - Centro de Innovación y Negocios		"It is happening in a city like Medellín, which is becoming very well known for those issues. So, there is at least a lot of interest in Medellín and a lot of interest in route N. Therefore, the name is perfect."	"This type of name does not tell you exactly what it is and what it does, but you then explain, and everyone says "Wow!". In storytelling, you already deliver a lot of information, which is very inspiring. It is a very sonorous name that tells everyone the story behind it."
Sk Technopark	"The name is important because for us, it is the brand", because the people associate themselves with the place where they work. For them, it's like a second home. It is our identity."		
TusPark	"We spent a lot of money studying this project. If you want to do something big, or you want to be famous in the world, at the very beginning I believe you have to be very careful to study how people know you, how they will pronounce the name, how to use different characters..., all this is very important. We always advise our new companies to choose carefully the name of their company and sometimes we talk about the name of the products".		

Source: Own elaboration based on interviewees

Notes: Table 2 shows the understanding that the leaders of the innovation districts interviewed have of the importance of the respective names of their organizations.



Table 3 presents the naming typologies contained in the logo, on the day of analysis and interview excerpts that justify the classification selected for each district. As can be observed, all innovation districts used more than one naming classification. Many of the managers understood their names to be primarily geographic, with other classifications for emphasis. For instance, the manager at 22@Barcelona understood the name to be primarily geographic because it contains Barcelona in the name and that positions the city well, and freestanding, due to the code 22A come from a city code that identify the type of soil, that means “industrial zone”. As they wanted to make a technological and knowledge-based district, they switched from A to @, so it became 22@Barcelona. Similarly, the manager at Ann Arbor SPARK understood the name to be primarily geographic because the main thing for them was to be associated with Ann Arbor. This emphasized the association with the University of Michigan, making it easier for people to understand that Ann Arbor SPARK is an area of innovation. However, it also included a freestanding aspect because the word “Sparks”, which for the manager was claimed this was an early selection of an aspirational name. The manager at Ruta N – Medellín also understood the name to be primarily geographic because it is in Medellín, Colombia, today is becoming a very well-known city. However, it also had a freestanding aspect because the word ‘Ruta’ (route in English) has a meaning of road, path, and the “n”, in the way it was used, means an exponent within a power, saying that this route is elevated to the power of “n” times. The manager at SK – Technopark understood the name to be primarily geographic because it is its location. However, it also had a patronymic classification because there is a connection with the parent company SK Skolkovo Foundation. This “SK” could also be considered freestanding, because if the person is not from there, it is not easy to do a direct association with the letters SK as a place called Skolkovo.



TABLE 3. Name typology of the innovation districts

Descriptive	Geographic	Patronymic	Acronymic	Associative	Freestanding
@22 Barcelona					
	<p>“Geographic because you place the city well.”</p>				<p>“Because 22@ came from the city codes that identify the soil type. The economic zone that existed before 22@ was an industrial zone and was called 22A. The name was born from an almost spontaneous exercise in creativity in which García Bragado, the architect of the time, proposed to say: 'since we are in 22A, we are going to be 22@'. Therefore, we went from an industrial land code to a based on the knowledge industry.”</p>
Ann Arbor SPARK					
	<p>“What is more important to us is the association with Ann Arbor than with SPARK. Therefore, in America, not necessarily globally, Ann Arbor is known as a community because of its association with the University of Michigan, a renowned athletic university, and our teams are on our national TV all the time. People in the United States know the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. So, our brand is closely linked to Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan and that allows people to think Ann Arbor Spark is an area of innovation within this area.”</p>				<p>“Sparks doesn't mean anything. They already had the notion of what they were going to do to spark this area of innovation. So, they chose the name Spark, which now in the world in the marketplace that we're in, people associate Ann Arbor SPARK with an area of innovation. They make that connection, but in the beginning, it was an aspirational selection of a name. There was a tagline at the beginning 'Ann Arbor SPARK in Area of innovation' in the Ann Arbor Region.”</p>



EECi					
		<p>“We want to be the Innovation Hub of the EEC. So, we wanted to use EEC. If you search in Google, EEC tile is the flagship project of the Thai government. So, they promote the EEC everywhere, when the Prime Minister goes to other countries. They also mention EEC, so EEC is a very well-known term. Then, we use EEC and we add the “I” to highlight the innovation in the EEC.”</p>	<p>“EECi brand highlights the acronym to which the Eastern Economic Corridor of Innovation refers.”</p>		
Porto Digital					
				<p>“The word “Porto” came up with the choice of the area. The city of Recife was born from the port of Recife. And the port of Recife, including the name of the neighborhood, where the park is located, is Bairro do Recife. So, this area where Porto Digital is located was a symbolic territory, because it had its peak with the export of sugar, being one of the main economically active cities in the 18th century, and where its decay also happened in the late 90s with the abandonment from the port area and the commercial center of the city, where everything worked, both the economic and the financial center. And “Digital” came precisely to transform this old area into a strategy to attract and strengthen the information and communication technology chain. So, this ‘Porto Digital’ came as the explanation of what we are: a vision of economic and urban recovery to a new sector of information and communication technology.”</p>	



Ruta N – Medellin					
	<p>“It is happening in a city like Medellín, which today is becoming very well known, (...). So, there is as much interest in Medellín and when the story is told. It's like "Wow", that name is perfect.”</p>				<p>Although the word ‘Ruta’ (route in English) has a meaning of road, path, and the "n", in the way it was used, means an exponent within a power, saying that this route is elevated to the power of “n” times, does not have a direct association with the organization. “It is a very loud name and very easy to understand in any Western language, at least. So, in English it is not so different, and it could be translated. People in English end up by saying route N, as is”. So, I still think the name is a hit.</p> <p>I am not an expert in that, but in marketing, with this type of name that does not tell you exactly what it is and what it does, you should explain it later, (...) in any scenario, where the name came from. So, it generates curiosity and an opportunity to explain it, “you give a lot of information about history, storytelling, which is very inspiring”, and considering “it is a very sonorous name”, everyone keeps the story behind.”.</p>
Sk Technopark					
	<p>“It is the geographical name of the place where the Innovation Center was built. It was previously called the Village of Skolkovo.”</p>	<p>“This brand could be classified as patronymic, because it’s also clear the connection with the parent company (SK Skolkovo Foundation) and what we do.”</p>			<p>“SK came from the name of the place: Skolkovo.”</p> <p>“If the person is not from there, a direct association with the letters SK as a place called Skolkovo will not exist.”</p>



TusPark					
<p>“At the very beginning we didn't have this short word; we had the full name Tsinghua University Science Park.”</p>		<p>“About 2007, during a branding study, we invited a consultant to come in. I was the leader of this project, and we shortened the name to TPark, but when I showed this name to my colleagues from Thailand, they said no, because they already had the Thailand Science Park, and used TPark. So, we tried with U and S in between T and Park (TUSPark).”</p>	<p>“TUS means Tsinghua University Science Park.”</p>		

Source: Own elaboration based on interviewees and Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003) and Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016) name labeling model.



TABLE 4. Scales of Name types

Innovation District	year	Country	Owner	Institutional theory			Identity theory			Total
				Claim for similarity			Claim for distinctiveness			
				-100	-70	-30	30	70	100	
Descriptive	Geographic	Patronymic	Acromyn	Associative	Freestand					
22@Barcelona	2019	Spain	U + G + I		-70				100	30
Ann Arbor Sparks	2005	USA	U + G + I		-70				100	30
EECI	2019	Thailand	G			-30	30			0
Porto Digital	2000	Brazil	G + I					70		70
Ruta N - Medellín	2009	Colombia	G + I		-70				100	30
SK - Skolkovo	2010	Russia	G		-70	-30				-100
TusPark	1994	China	U + I			-30	30			0

Source: Own elaboration based on interviewees and Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003) and (Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016) name labeling model

Notes: ¹‘Des’ means Descriptive, ²‘Geo’ means Geographic, ³‘Pat’ means Patronymic, ⁴‘Acr’ means Acromyn, ⁵‘Ass’ means Associative, ⁶‘Fre’ means Freestand. This classification is based on Muzellec et al. (2003).

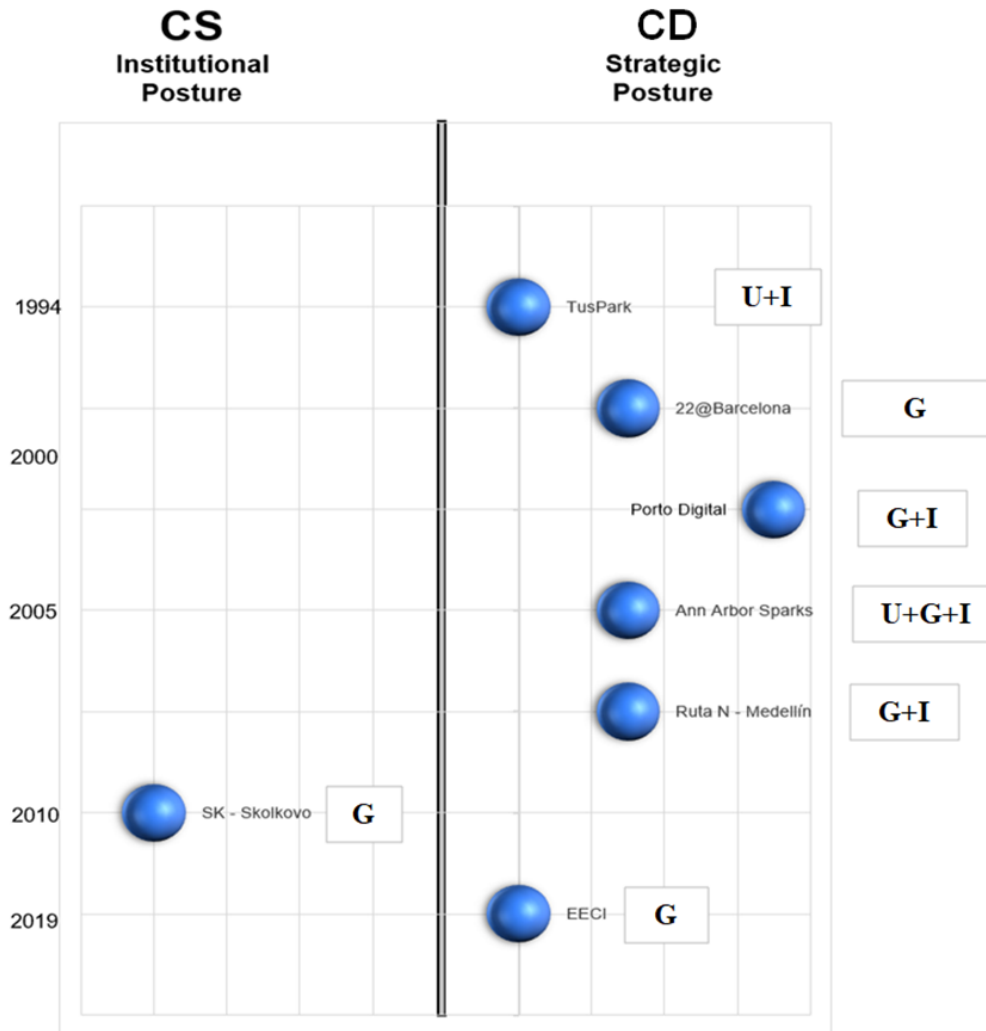


In contrast, the manager at EECi understood the name to be primarily patronymic because they want to be the Innovation Hub from the EEC that is the main project of the Thai government, meaning that EEC is a very familiar term in Thailand. However, it also had an acronym aspect because EEC means Eastern Economic Corridor; to emphasize this this they added the “i” to highlight “innovation”, so as to become the Eastern Economic Corridor of Innovation. The manager at Porto Digital understood the name to be primarily associative due to the word “Porto” came up with the choice of the area, that is located in port of Recife, and “Digital” came the idea to transform this old area into a new sector of information and communication technology. The manager at TusPark understood the name to be primarily descriptive because TusPark in Chinese means Tsinghua University Science Park, which is also patronymic

Table 4 and Figure 2 present the results of our scale, which indicates whether a name tends more towards a strategic or institutional posture. By taking a weighted sum of the names used by each district, it was possible to observe in Figure 2 both the position of each district, that is, if it tends more towards “claim for similarity (CS)” or “claim for distinctiveness (CD)”.

Figure 2 also provides insight into the relationship with the actors of the triple helix. This suggests that when industry participation is the main vector, the name tends towards a more strategic posture (they are more to the right side of the graph), compared to those that have government participation as the main vector.



FIGURE 2. Innovation Districts' naming typology strategy

Source: Own elaboration based on interviewees

Notes: This figure shows the trade name of the innovation districts (ID), the year the ID was created, and who owns it.

*'I' denotes Industry, 'G' denotes government, and 'U' denotes university. This classification is derived from the Triple Helix concept.

Discussion and Conclusion

Considering the important role of a name in defining and differentiating an organization among others, in this paper we have reviewed and integrated the literature on organizational names, theories of name change, and areas of innovation to investigate how innovation districts are

named. We used an inductive approach exploring innovation district directors' perspective through direct semi-structured interviews and analyzing secondary data consisting of website and brochures. We identified new insights into how innovation district leaders create their names by uncovering that they usually use more than one classification name for their organization and that these names either tend towards a more strategic or institutional posture.

We contribute by extending existing naming theory to include innovation districts, a complex organization composed of actors of the Triple Helix (Champenois and Etzkowitz 2018). To do so we have applied the model of Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2016) to this type of complex organization. Using this model, we found that the names of the organizations mostly take more than one classification (in that they have more than one strategy behind its name). The use of mixed strategies has been observed since the creation of the first science parks. Stanford Research Park used patronymic strategy when carrying the name of the Stanford University and descriptive when describing the research park label. Another example of mixed strategies was the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina, US. Its name came from its founders, the Research Triangle Foundation, when "Research Triangle" generally refers to the geographic area berthed by the research universities of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina State University in Raleigh, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Thus, it could be classified as patronymic and associative. Given this trend, and our finding of dominant naming strategies, a fruitful direction for further research is to see if there are naming trends.

We also observed that the decision to use a logo with simply trade name or to use a trade name with the tagline describing their organization varies according to the channel and target audience. This was supported by the leader of Porto Digital who commented that he varies taglines, which he views as temporary according to the needs of those he is going to



communicate with. These align with the findings of Engel, Van Werven and Keizer (2020) relating to different naming strategies achieving resonance with different audiences. Furthermore, these results extend the literature on names and place branding (Yigitcanlar et al. 2016), showing that when there are multiple stakeholders, managers are aware of the importance of developing a brand with a strong name to inspire loyalty. It would be interesting to further investigate the relationship between institutional or strategic postures with cognitive and emotive naming strategies.

We also found evidence of name evolution, although this was not the focus of our research. Many innovation districts had already changed their names at least once and for many a tagline had also been adopted, consisting of a (descriptive) business name. We also found that as the innovation district, its constituting entities, and participants in the district evolved over time, this tagline was no longer used in most communications. Additionally, while innovation district leaders added to their trade name the tagline that presented the business name or attributes, over time this evolved so that many withdrew the descriptive part, corroborating the theory. An important exception is Porto Digital, which has never had a tagline. Furthermore, during their interview, some leaders commented that at the time of the creation of the innovation district, many brands came up with a tagline, which, in turn, was adopted as the business name, to describe what it was (innovation district, innovation city, etc.). These findings suggest that the temporal evolution of innovation district names is another interesting area of further research.

In terms of practitioner contributions, we show that innovation district leaders are aware of the importance of a name, confirming extant scholarly insights into the relevance of name in defining and differentiating an organization from others. When creating a name for the first time or changing it, an organization can show its interest in an organizational field “claiming



similarity” (Navis and Glynn 2010) or both try to be part of new ones or just change the field to which it belongs (Vignoles, Chryssochoou and Breakwell 2000). Furthermore, we help managers understand the importance of thinking about the role of their organization's name in its long-term positioning. This is important in the context of the evolving industrial, political, and technological climate, typical of the Triple Helix, in which they are based, so that managers can have a sense of how to modify or update their name to better fit in their evolving landscape.

There are some limitations to our study. First, innovation districts, our focus of study, are only one type of the wide variety of AOI organizations. While they are fairly typical of AOIs, our findings may not be appropriate to all AOIs. Second, we analyzed a relatively small number (seven) of innovation districts, perhaps limiting the generalizability of the findings. Third, we examined the typology of the name presented through only one channel (the web). It is possible that some AOIs may be using different names depending on the channel, suggesting some intriguing future research directions. Finally, since a pre-existing scale was not readily available as the basis for this study, we have developed a scale from existing literature (Schmeltz and Kjeldsen 2016). While on the one hand this is a minor methodological contribution, we also acknowledge that it may not be appropriate for use beyond our study.

In conclusion, names of innovation districts vary. Taken together, the results of this research have important contributions for scholars and practitioners. On the one hand, this article sheds light on theory, as it is the first time that the proposed model is applied to this relatively new type of complex organization. It also suggests a promising line of research to understand if there is any evolutionary trend towards more strategic or institutional postures during organizational evolution. Second, it also helps managers understand the importance of thinking about the role of the organization's name and its evolution in long-term positioning. Finally, we have shown



that there are important insights that can be gleaned from researching them in a structured manner. We hope we inspire others to research this important phenomenon in more depth.

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