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PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY: THE CASE OF INNOVATION CENTERS

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TITLE	ABSTRACT	BACKGROUND	MOTIVATION	METHODOLOGY	CASE-STUDIES	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS	FUTURE WORK
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ABSTRACT

In the late 2000s, new spaces—such as co-working, maker spaces, and co-living spaces—have been emerging in the knowledge-based post-industrial cities. The paper investigates the emergence of innovation centers through the use of public-private partnerships. The research methodology is based on a multiple case-study approach in which three cases were selected: Barcelona Growth Center in Barcelona (Spain), District Hall in Boston (USA), and Edney Innovation Center in Chattanooga (USA). Innovation centers, which consist of widely diverse creative and knowledge-based activities located within the same building, participate in the urban regeneration of downtown areas through the promotion of entrepreneurship. The paper finds that the local governments, which adopt public-private partnerships to create innovation centers, are entrepreneurial and are aligning their actions and visions with those of the entrepreneurs they are trying to attract. For the entrepreneurial local governments, innovation centers are anchor spaces incorporated in a broader vision of making “innovation districts”.

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BACKGROUND

- Since 2000s, new spaces, such as hacker spaces, maker spaces, Living Labs, Fab Labs, and co-working spaces are emerging (Botsman & Rogers, 2011; Capdevila, 2015).
- Local governments are adopting local development strategies, such as innovation districts, to lure startups and to foster entrepreneurship, and thus, to accelerate their cities' transition into the knowledge economy (Florida, 2002).
- At the center of the strategy to promote innovation districts, some local governments are spurring the creation of innovation centers.
- An innovation center is a space that clusters diverse knowledge-based actors, notably start-ups, while providing a high level of amenities in order to foster proximity and the spread of tacit knowledge between the actors located within the innovation center.
- Some local governments use public-private partnerships in order to provide their cities with innovation centers. Indeed, public-private partnerships have been used as a key tool of the new public governance for delivering and implementing public policies around the world (Osborne, 2002; Osborne, 2006).

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MOTIVATION

To understand how do local governments foster public-private partnerships in order to create innovation centers?

TITLE

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- Multiple Case Study Methodology: three case studies in three different cities: Barcelona, Boston, and Chattanooga.
- Three sources of data: semi-structured interviews, secondary data, and direct observation.
- Semi-structured interviews: 3 interviews in Barcelona; 2 interviews in Boston; 2 interviews in Chattanooga. The persons interviewed were: the District Hall's director, Chattanooga's strategic planner, 22@ Barcelona's employees and director, university professors, and the City of Boston Mayor's Office.

METHODOLOGY

- The secondary data : innovation centers' websites, namely District Hall, Edney Innovation Center, and 22@ Barcelona; the municipal organizations' websites, namely Boston Redevelopment Authority, The Enterprise Center, and 22@ Barcelona; the government websites of the City of Barcelona, Boston, and Chattanooga; real- estate developers' websites such as WS Development, Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona; articles in news websites, newspapers, and magazines such as nooga.com, New York Times, Boston Globe, La Vanguardia, and Boston.com; annual reports from The Enterprise Center, and official planning documents from 22@ Barcelona and Boston Redevelopment Authority.
- Non-participatory observation to uncover the “local buzz” in innovation centers.

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District Hall; Boston, USA

- Opened in 2013
- 1,115-square-meters
- Anchor space for Boston's Innovation District
- Activities: coffee shop, restaurant, open space for startups and entrepreneurs, events...



Barcelona Growth Center; Barcelona, Spain

- Opened in 2010
- 15,000-square-meters
- Anchor space for 22@ Innovation District
- Activities: co-working spaces, one-stop-shop for entrepreneur, learning center, public organizations...

INNOVATION DISTRICT
OF CHATTANOOGAEDNEY Innovation Center;
Chattanooga, USA

- Opened in 2015
- 8,360-square-meters
- Anchor space for the Innovation District of Chattanooga
- Activities: open space for startups, coffee shop, co-working space, accelerator...

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District Hall; Boston, USA



Barcelona Growth Center; Barcelona, Spain

EDNEY Innovation Center;
Chattanooga, USA

CASE STUDIES

- PPP is the outcome of a year-long negotiation between the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the real estate developers as a public benefit for granting additional zoning for the seaport project. District Hall is operated by Venture Café, a nonprofit organization from the Cambridge Innovation Center.

PPP is the outcome of a joint venture between 22 ARROBA BCN, a municipal organization created to transform the Poblenou into an innovation district, and the Consorci of Zona Franca de Barcelona. The land was owned by the city, Consorci built the innovation center and has the right to use the building for a period of 70 years. The city can use 3 floors for knowledge activities.

- PPP is the outcome of a request of proposal issued by the Enterprise Center, a nonprofit organization municipal organization created in 2014 to promote the knowledge economy in the city. The Enterprise Center bought the building on favorable term, asked the real estate developer to buy the building in order to transform it into innovation center.

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- In Barcelona, the municipal company, 22 ARROBA BCN S.A., consisted of public entrepreneurs who had a certain degree of autonomy and flexibility to form innovative public-private partnerships in order to transform the district into an innovation district. The local government in Barcelona through its entrepreneurial spinoff, 22 ARROBA BCN S.A., was using the codes of the entrepreneur community to create a space dedicated to entrepreneurship and innovative activities.
- In Boston, the Mayor's office used multidimensional and creative partnerships in order to spur the creation of its innovation center.
- In Chattanooga, the Enterprise Center, a nonprofit public-private partnership that receives its funding from the City of Chattanooga, Federal grants, foundations, and private companies, is to some extent, the entrepreneurial arm of the Mayor's office that allowed the creation of an innovation center.
- Mayors took advantage of or created entrepreneurial organizations, such as 22 ARROBA BCN S.A. in Barcelona, the Boston Redevelopment Authority in Boston, and the Enterprise Center in Chattanooga, in order to gain in flexibility and to remove bureaucratic processes, and thus, facilitated the implementation of their entrepreneurial visions.

RESULTS

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CONCLUSIONS

- The paper finds that an innovation center can be the outcome of creative and innovative private- public partnerships as it was the case in Barcelona, Boston, and Chattanooga.
- Entrepreneurial mayors support the creation of entrepreneurial organizations to endorse public-private partnerships in order to rapidly and efficiently create innovation centers and accelerate their cities' transition into the knowledge-based economy. In endorsing creative and innovative public-private partnerships, local governments are adopting the codes of the entrepreneurial community.
- The paper finds that the local governments, which adopt public-private partnerships to create innovation centers, are entrepreneurial and are aligning their actions and visions with those of the entrepreneurs they are trying to attract. For the entrepreneurial local governments, innovation centers are anchor spaces incorporated in a broader vision of making “innovation districts”.

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FUTURE WORK

Future work should investigate the differences between publicly funded innovation centers, privately funded innovation centers, and public-private partnership-funded innovation centers.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

If you have any question about the paper, please do not hesitate to contact the author:

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