



Innovation districts in context

- Emerging networked models
around the world

(work in progress; for 2022
Globelics Academy only)

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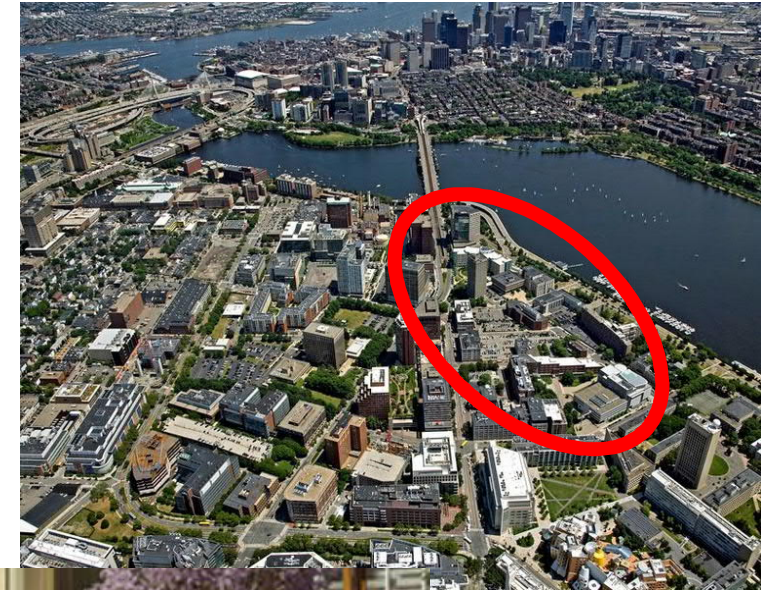
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1a "Innovation district" (ID) as a new urban economic development fashion

- The phenomenon identified in core cities in the global North, emerging also in a range of cities around the world.
- Dense resource-rich areas within urban structures. Designed to serve the needs of innovative firms and the urban lifestyles of their talented employees.
 - Strategic locations in inner cities, connecting a variety of stakeholders (incumbent & new firms, universities, hospitals, research institutes, etc.)
 - Mixed land-use: work, housing, services, leisure
 - Proximity amongst agents within the district: interaction, learning, collaboration, sharing resources
 - Supporting sustainable urban development: introduction of environmental and other new technologies; providing work for the inner city populations
- ID development combines *urban planning* and *policymaking* (Kalliomäki, Oinas, Salo 2022_{w-i-p}).

e.g., Kendall Square area in Cambridge, MA

(a global “model”)



Innovation districts in a historical perspective

- "The new geography of innovation"

(Katz & Wagner 2014)



→ What activities shaped urban economies & everyday lives in different historical periods?

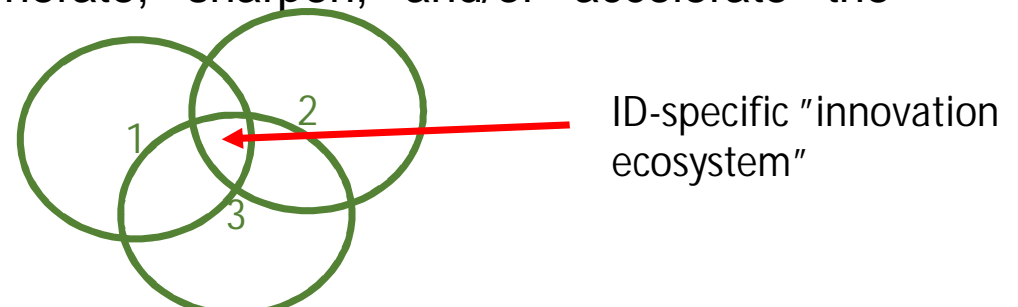
Innovation districts uniquely contain three categories of assets

(Katz & Wagner 2014)

➤➤ **1 Economic assets** are the firms, institutions and organizations that drive, cultivate or support an innovation-rich environment.

➤➤ **2 Physical assets** are the public and privately-owned spaces – buildings, open spaces, streets and other infrastructure – designed and organized to stimulate new and higher levels of connectivity, collaboration, and innovation.

➤➤ **3 Networking assets** are the relationships between actors – individuals, firms, and institutions – that have the potential to generate, sharpen, and/or accelerate the advancement of ideas.



Success tends to be copied

- the ID has become one of the many policy / planning ideas / concepts that seem to have the capacity to “travel” internationally (cf. e.g., Healey 2013; McCann & Ward 2010; Peck & Theodore 2010).
- IDs boosted by policy think-tanks, planning consultancies

1b The *emerging* academic literature on IDs

► early 2000s: Understanding the ‘new economy’ in cities

- Industrial districts & clustering & inner-cities & urban regeneration (Hutton 2004)
- Technological capability in types of urban innovation districts; regional development & resilience in urban planning (Clarck et al 2010)
- 22@ Barcelona – an internationally known ID model case: Urban regeneration & the creative knowledge economy & economic competitiveness (Battaglia & Tremblay; Pareja-Eastaway & Piqué 2011)

► 2017-2020: Evaluating IDs in advanced economies (urban planning, place-making)

- Urban design concept of ‘mixed land use’ (Hawken & Hoon Han 2017)
- Knowledge-based urban development, place quality, societal integration, placemaking, community engagement (Yigitcanlar et al. 2020; Esmailpoorabi et al. 2020, 2018; Monardo 2019; Pancholi et al. 2018)

► 2012-2020 IDs seen as part of circuits of world-class urbanism (largely Latin American studies) (Lederman 2020)

- Knowledge-based restructuring & the global city in international flows & urban competition & development policy (Goicoechea 2012, 2014, 2018)
- Neoliberalism & socio-spatial segregation & uneven development (Goicoechea 2018; Arenas et al. 2020)
- Best practice & framing redevelopment in the language of creativity (Lederman 2020)

... the emerging academic literature ...

- Slowly growing since the (late) 2010s, early predecessors, with different concepts used
- Conceptually still rather imprecise, sometimes difficult to tell apart what IDs actually are and why they matter
- In practice, the literature largely focuses on IDs as isolated from the rest of the city (and the world for that matter)
- Maybe most straightforward text still: a Brookings Institute policy paper (Katz & Wagner 2014)

2 – Our approach (A): IDs as a pooled policy and planning concept in global circulation

Conceptualising IDs along two dimensions based on related (*but not jointly developing*) literatures on "mobilities":

A. "Form" – impact by planning – TPC

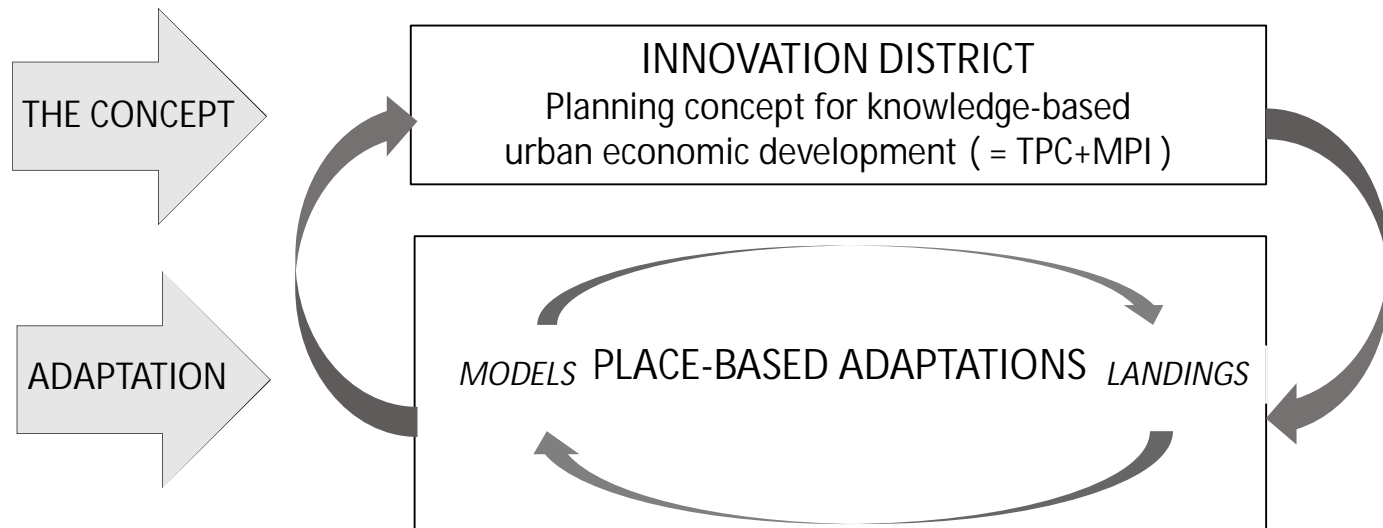
- *"traveling planning concepts"*; Healey 2011, 2013; Healey & Upton 2010

B. "Function" – impact by policy – MPI

- *"policy mobilities"* → mobile policy ideas in circulation; *large literature following Peck & Theodore 2020, 2012)*

TPC+MPI actually often travel together as "assemblages"

Our IDeaS project: IDs in global circulation



2 - Our approach (B): IDs as hubs in intra- and inter-urban networks

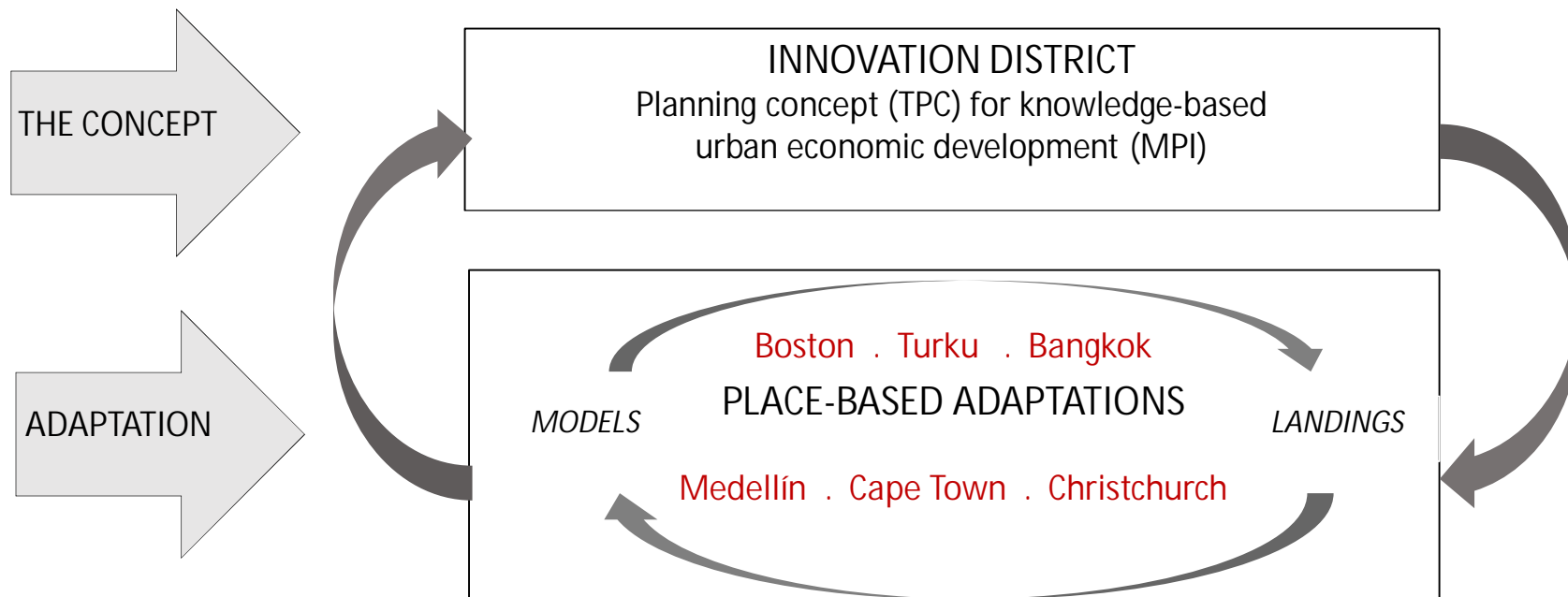
Third dimension arising from our empirical studies:

C. Role in the city: hubs in intra-urban networks

ie they can help import, and provide a platform for the exchange of new-to-the-city knowledge

→ "bigger than their size"

3 - Analysis



E.g., Medellín Innovation District (cf. Cambridge)

MEDELLÍN INNOVATION DISTRICT: STRATEGIC PLAN

TRANSFORMING
TECHNOLOGIES,
MARKETS AND
THE CITY

Gómez L & P Oinas (2022), Traveling planning concepts revisited: How they land and why it matters, *Urban Geography*.

- Culture and recreation stakeholder
- Education stakeholders
- Business-Industry sector stakeholder
- City-Government stakeholders
- Health sector stakeholder
- Social sector stakeholders

Genealogy of the academic literature on IDs



E.g., Cape Town

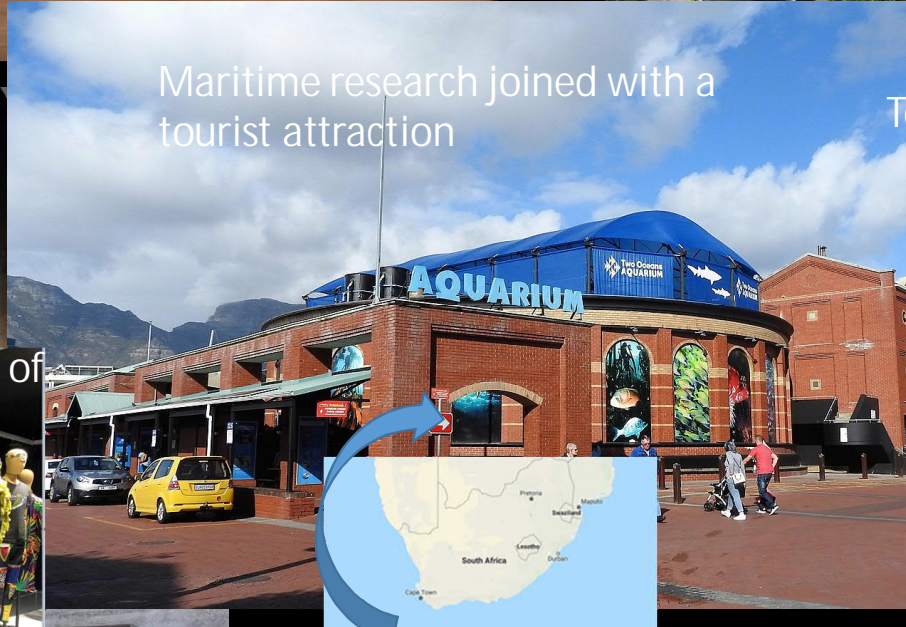
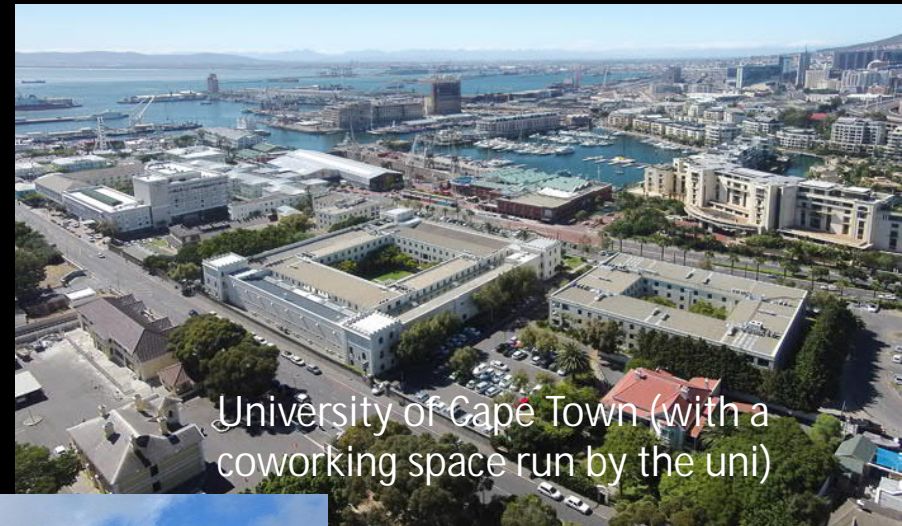
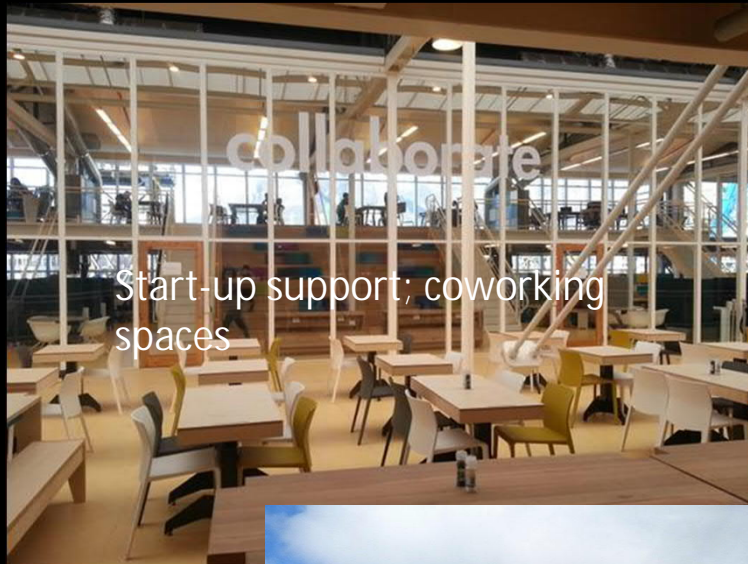
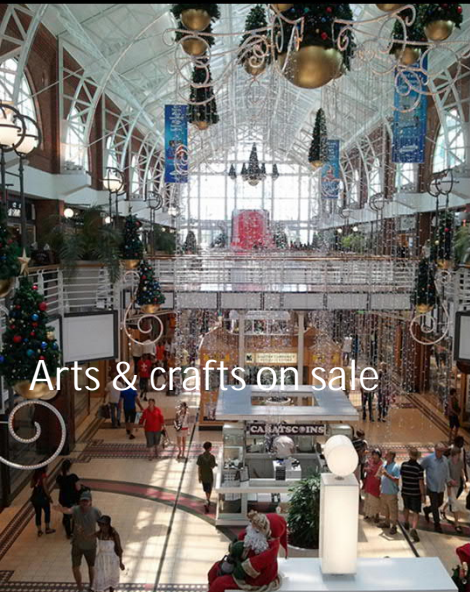
Various types of innovation districts

1. Established 
2. Emergent? 
3. Aspirant? 

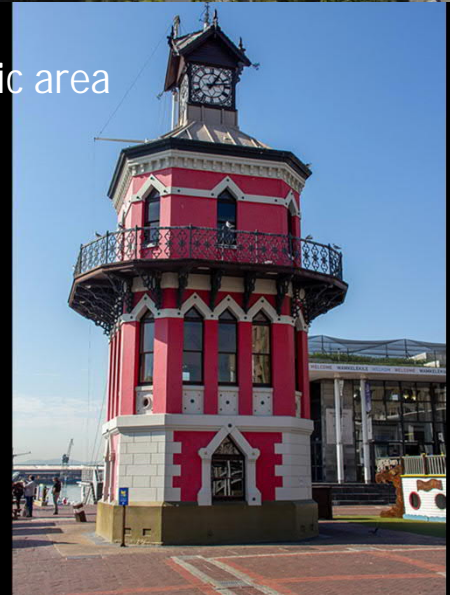
See Oinas P & I Turok (2022)
Urban Policy and Planning
Experimentation in Post-Apartheid
Cape Town: Innovation Districts
and Their Satellites, *Global
Conference of Economic
Geography*, Dublin 7-10 June 2022.



Elements of the V&A Waterfront



Touristic area



Woodstock Exchange & surroundings in Woodstock

– a V&A Waterfront satellite



Bandwidth Barn, Khayelitsha township

- Woodstock Exchange satellite



Catlechom Maphi, founder & CEO
Yoko (fintech), 24 Nov 2018

Philippi Initiative

UCT partnerships and students working with social enterprises, non-profit and local entrepreneurs in Philippi capacity building; bridging the formal economy and resources and the informal economy



East City (Design) Precinct

aimed at local design upgrade – a window of opportunity lost (?)

- initiative supported by Craft + Design Institute (CDI) earlier
located in East City Precinct and at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)



Summing up: Cape Town IDs

- The emerging literature tends to talk about IDs “in solitude” – their characteristics & place-making; their roles in the city economies are not emphasised.
- In Cape Town: “prospective”, “emerging” and “established districts”
- the developmental interconnections between main hubs and satellite districts.
- i.e., variously interlinked when all elements are not and will not be present (e.g., subtly designed / emerged university connections)

Cape Town: varied more & less successful models

- The newest literature on IDs in cities in the global South linked to the idea of "best practices"
 - lists of recommendations; having (or planning) an ID has a signalling effect: you're (aiming to be) "an advanced city" (ie branding; to investors, financiers, etc).
- Cape Town: various versions of the concept
- Much more modest in their aims; aims fitted to the context

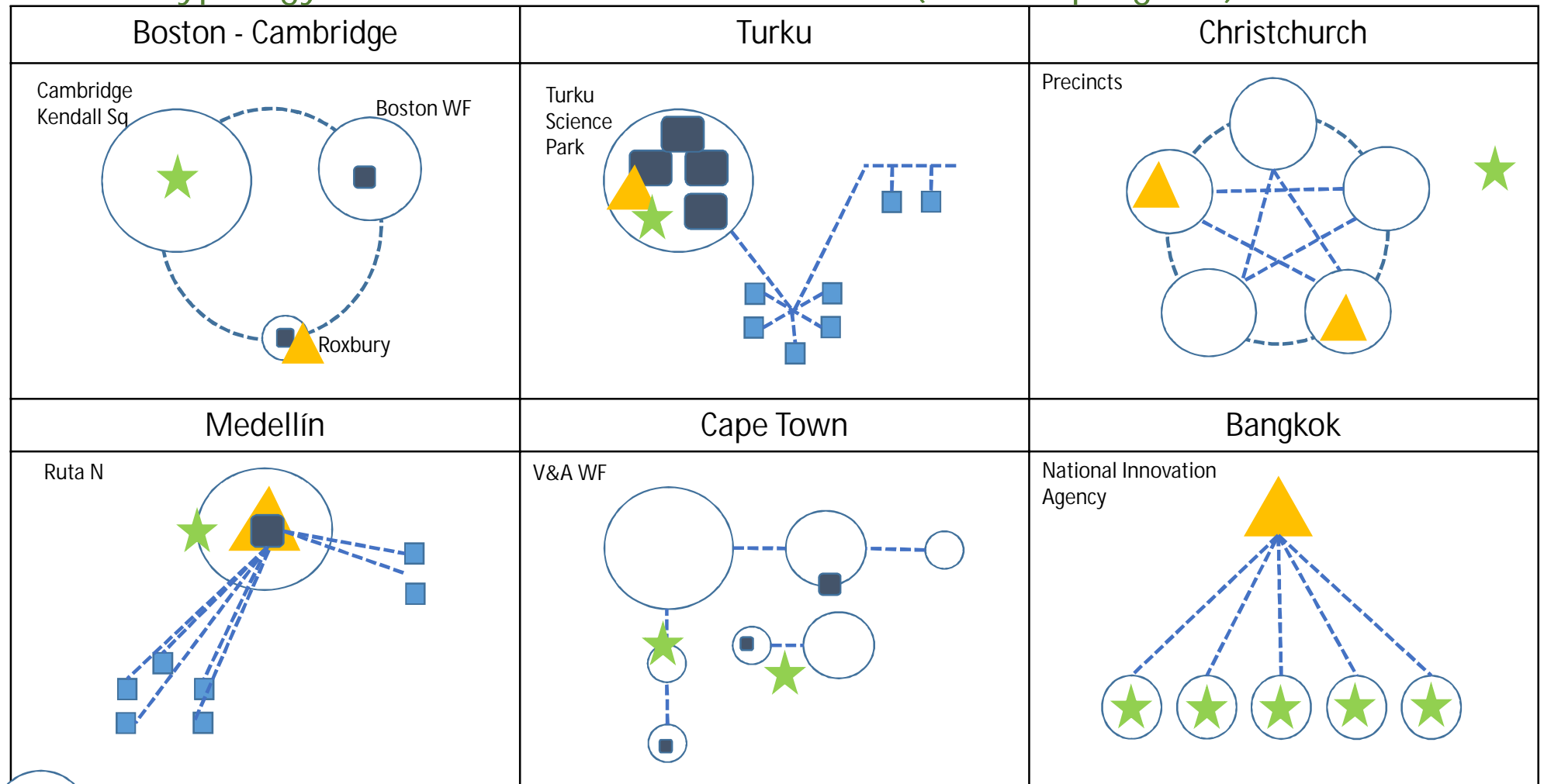
... Cape Town IDs

- Diverse initiatives and initiators, emergent models, various purposes
- Legitimization: urban social and economic development goals explicit
- Interlinked but fragmented initiatives with V&A Waterfront as the landmark ID
- Weak local government role, no overall coordination between IDs
- “pockets of innovation” (Erica Elk at the CDI)

Innovation

- type and level of ambition suited to the needs in the context
- new-to-the-district; suited to the city

Overall typology of the ID networks in case cities (work in progress)



4 – Conclusions

- IDs are mostly seen from a narrow planning perspective, or as mobile policy ideas.
- We conceptualise them as TPCs+MPIs: emphasis on the need for joint public action in cities, specifying the need for coordinated build-up of urban projects fitted to the circumstances of the cities.
- Coordination is difficult: planners (designers, architects) do not necessarily understand what is needed for innovation (standard office blocks? Something else?). Economic policy-makers may expect easy solutions; do not understand the difficulty (and cannot give advice to planners). Lengthy processes of emergence (co-creation) due.
- Network: most of the literature talk about IDs in solitude – their roles in the city economies need to be emphasised.

ADVANCED CITIES

- Intensifying creative urban lifestyles by facilitating an 24/7 "inventive mode"; co-location with various types of likeminded creatives facilitated by planning hip neighborhoods with access to resources, services, amenities
- When a city like Boston creates another ID it can take many of the preconditions for 'granted' (business ecosystems, talent, highly educated labour force, universities and other anchor institutions, global connections, ability to attract resources globally, the model status etc.)
- (But: "hierarchies" of IDs in Boston, too)

CITIES IN EMERGING ECONOMIES

- Aim to “leapfrog” through districts; to attract local and foreign investments
- In many cases, seem to clash with the capacities and cultures of the surrounding communities
- Legitimacy creation is a complex process that requires local and non-local actors and arguments to create credibility to a plan that may be alien to local population/culture
- Translations to suit to local circumstances – networked models
- Strong awareness of the socioeconomic conditions in planning
- Due to resource scarcity, interconnections sought between urban projects that may seem disparate at the outset
- Successful developmental models in cities in the global South may become traveling concepts themselves

“... for an African city to look like Vienna is an utopia, but resembling Medellín is a possibility.”
(Interviewee 6 in Gómez & Oinas, 2022)