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What's in a museum name?

A study of name changes among Danish museums

ANNA KARINA KJELDSSEN & LINE SCHMELTZ

Abstract: *In recent years, Danish museums have experienced ideological, political and structural changes. Simultaneously, a wave of name changes has swept over the field. From a branding perspective, the change and choice of new name can be understood as an attempt to stand out from the group of museums. Conversely, from an institutional perspective, the name change can be perceived as a way to claim membership of the transformed museum landscape. This paper presents a study of ten public museums that have all recently changed their names. Findings suggest that name change is employed as a means to claim category, territory but also distinctiveness. Further, the study reveals different practices regarding the use of the term “museum”, with practical implications for a museum name change as a way to communicate a balance between fitting in and standing out.*

Keywords: Museum names, institutional theory, corporate identity, corporate branding, strategic communication, multiple case study.

Within the last decade, Danish museums have undergone major changes, by some referred to as a paradigm shift (Korsgaard 2013). Politically motivated reforms have changed the structure of the field, and many museums have gone from being government, subsidized organizations insusceptible to ordinary market norms such as being profitable and competitive, to having a much more commercial approach competing for attention, funding and visitors (Lyck 2010, Drotner *et al.* 2011). This development has been described by many scholars (e.g. Skot-Hansen 2008, Lyck 2010) as a shift from an introvert orientation based on a self-reliant and unquestionable status, to a much

more extrovert orientation and contingent position, forcing museums to actively argue for and justify their existence to many different stakeholders. Thus, many museums have turned to for example strategic communication (cf. Kjeldsen 2013) and branding (cf. Skot-Hansen 2008, Korsgaard 2013), and aspects such as the museum building, logo and the museum's name have been addressed theoretically as a means to respond to this new reality (Chong 1998, Caldwell 2000, Scott 2000, Pusa & Uusitalo 2014, Stallabras 2014). However, none of the existing scholarly contributions have studied why and how museums approach name change as a means of addressing this changing reality.

Internationally, a wave of name changes has swept through the museum field, and this tendency is also apparent among Danish museums. Further, many of the new names differ significantly from what has arguably been the common norm for naming among Danish museums. The question is whether these name changes indicate a wish to conform to new norms, to stand out in a new competitive reality, or perhaps even both.

Arguably, Danish museums are currently experiencing changes at both a micro level (changed identities) and a macro level (changed field). Consequently, two bodies of theories seem appropriate for exploring this phenomenon: The micro changes can be investigated through corporate identity and branding theory, and the macro changes through institutional theory. Instead of choosing either or, this paper seeks to explore and understand name changes by combining the two strands of thought in the first empirical study on name changes among Danish museums.

DANISH MUSEUM NAMES

Danish legislation divides museums into three main categories: *museums of natural history*, *art museums* (referred to as art galleries in the UK) and *cultural heritage museums* (Ministry of Culture Denmark 2006). Since the category of natural history museums is very small, we focus on the two larger categories in this study.

In general, art museums (AMs) have divided their joint field of responsibility between them through topics such as: art within a particular period (e.g. the 1800s), genres (e.g. abstract art), individual artists (e.g. Asger Jorn), or scope (e.g. international art). The cultural heritage museums (CHMs) are divided into two groups: One group with

areas of responsibility encompassing a national range (e.g. the history of the Vikings), and one with areas of responsibility closely linked to their geographical location (e.g. the cultural heritage of eastern Jutland). In the latter group, some are also put in charge of archaeological investigations in their geographical area. So, generally speaking, the AMs hold positions that are often not as connected to their geographical location as is the case with many of the CHMs. However, in both categories there are exceptions, related in particular to the foundations of older museums as private collections (Larsen *et al.* 2008), changes in ownership (e.g. from private to public) and financial base. Nevertheless, until recently, almost all Danish cities of a certain size housed at least two museums carrying their name, one AM (e.g. Skive Kunstmuseum/Skive Art Museum) and one CHM (e.g. Skive Museum). Next, we will demonstrate how this, as well as the outlined structure of the Danish museum landscape, to some extent relates to what we argue to be the traditional approach to museum names in Denmark.

Traditional names among Danish museums

Looking at how Danish museums have been named until recently, it is possible to identify a prevalent pattern. Museum names have traditionally combined firstly an indication of either *topic* (e.g. The Women's Museum), or *geographical location*, which can also relate to *ownership* or *patronage*. An example of the latter could be Horsens Kunstmuseum/Horsens Art Museum where the name can both indicate the location of the museum (Horsens is a Danish city), and concurrently the ownership of the museum (owned by the municipality of Horsens). Secondly, names have indicated the *type of organization* (museum) and specific *category* (e.g. AM or

CHM, the latter often only termed “museum”). This pattern of naming museums dominated the Danish museum field until approximately the turn of the millennium, when a new type of name suddenly emerged. The traditional names all looked very much alike, perhaps implying a situation where competition among museums nationally for funding, attention, and recognition, was of no great concern to the museums. On the contrary, the main concerns until then seemed to be those of clearly indicating type of organization, type of museum, as well as geographical location and ownership. This last point also served as a way to identify the primary target audience (local or national visitors).

Structural changes in the museum field

In 2007, the Danish government implemented a structural reform in the public sector, reducing the number of municipalities markedly and converting 13 counties into five regions. Many Danish public museums either lost their subsidies or their owner, and consequently they found themselves in a position where they were a part of a new, and in many cases merged, municipality. After the structural reform, the Ministry of Culture implemented a corresponding reform of the Danish museum landscape, resulting in further re-allocations of funding and, to some extent, also responsibilities. This reform also forced, or strongly urged, mergers of museums, particularly CHMs. Consequently, museums with different geographical, financial and topical characteristics, as well as diversified ownerships, have been merged.

Returning to the traditions for naming museums, this new reality may go some way towards explaining the wave of name changes that this study explores. Mergers obviously require that the merged museums consider

the names of each entity, and whether they should be sustained, combined under a new collective name, or changed entirely. Changes in ownership might also require a name change if the museum’s previous name relates to its former owners. But structural changes cannot wholly account for all the changes in name types that we have identified, especially a tendency to downplay the word “museum”.

CORPORATE BRANDING AND NAMES

In a communication context, the role and importance of the organization’s name, and hence of a potential name change, has been explored from two strongly related perspectives, namely *corporate identity* and *corporate branding* (Balmer 2001, Balmer & Greyser 2003).

Corporate identity is defined as “the self-presentation of an organization: it consists in the cues which an organization offers about itself via the behavior, communication and symbolism which are its forms of expression” (van Riel 1995:36). As the quote illustrates, corporate identity tends to take an inside-out approach, focusing on how the company sees itself, often from a management perspective (Fombrun 1996, Balmer 2008). Corporate identity is furthermore argued to be the *actual identity* (Balmer 2008) based on the central, enduring and distinctive attributes of the organization. Recent research within this field does, however, acknowledge corporate identity as being both multifaceted and able to evolve significantly over time (Balmer 2008). But seen from a narrow corporate identity perspective, the choice of name should mainly reflect how the organization views itself.

Closely related to the field of corporate identity, we find corporate branding. The notion of branding was traditionally centered only around the product, and the idea was that the

brand should identify and also differentiate the product, via unique and strong, positive associations (including the name of the product, cf. Aaker 1996), with a view to strengthening the company's competitiveness (cf. Kapferer 2012). As a further development from this, corporate branding focuses on the entire organization, not just the product, on what the organization is, and aspires to be, taking into consideration the entire range of stakeholders of the organization (Hatch & Schultz 2008). Thus, as opposed to the original concept of corporate identity, corporate branding leaves more room for external audiences to be co-constructors of the corporate brand. Seen from a corporate branding perspective, the name thus carries much importance in offering symbolic value to the brand both externally, for example to customers (or here, visitors), and also internally, to employees. Traditionally, the focus remains on the external perspective, however.

In this study, the so-called integrated approach (henceforth referred to as corporate branding), which combines the thinking behind both corporate identity and corporate branding, is adopted to provide the basis for a more in-depth understanding of name changes in the museum world, by considering both external and internal stakeholders.

The concept and strategic use of corporate branding is no longer confined to the corporate world. Rather, it has spread to political parties, municipalities, NGOs and also cultural institutions and museums (Caldwell 2000, Scott 2000, Needham 2006) which have gradually adopted a more "business-like conduct" (Stallabrass 2014). For example, Pusa & Uusitalo note that:

[...] in order to differentiate themselves from the competition and to attract non-expert audiences, art

museums have to pay more attention to creating a strong brand. Marketing and branding have become necessary if art museums are to maintain their position among other valued cultural institutions in society (2014:18).

The importance of the name

The name of an organization or a museum primarily serves as an identifying marker, but it can also serve as the differentiating or distinguishing marker by indicating what kind of organization we are dealing with (e.g. museum), what the organization specializes in (e.g. modern art), or what the organization promises to deliver (e.g. The Strong – National Museum of Play) (Fombrun 1996, Muzellec 2006). As such, the name plays an important part in the corporate brand's symbolic dimension in terms of increased brand awareness and support for advertising and word-of-mouth communication (Aaker 1996), and by "attracting customers and creating association" (Pusa & Uusitalo 2014: 22). Thus, the name is an important component of the corporate brand, and can be understood as "a communication device for promoting the same consistent message about corporate identity to all concerned parties – consumers, suppliers, workers and, of course, the press" (Stallabrass 2014: 153).

Categorizing and choosing names

A classification of names is necessary when the aim is to analyze and understand name changes among museums. Taking the corporate context as his point of departure, Muzellec (2006) has developed one such classification which is best described as a continuum running from descriptive names to freestanding, more abstract names. The classification as adapted to a museum setting can be seen in figure 1, which, firstly, shows how museum names often


From the most descriptive name  To the most abstract name					
DESCRIPTIVE	GEOGRAPHIC	PATRONYMIC	ACRONYMIC	ASSOCIATIVE	FREESTANDING
Example: DK: - Varde Museum - Museum Jørn - Zoologisk Museum INT: - National Gallery - Erotic Art Museum - Munch Museum	Example: DK: - Varde Museum - Museum Midtjylland - Ordrupgaard INT: - British Museum - Malmö Konstmuseum - The Louvre	Example: DK: - Varde Museum - Museum Midtjylland - Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek INT: - British Museum - Malmö Konstmuseum - The Guggenheim	Example: DK: - SMK - KØS - HEART INT: - V&A - MoMA - MACRO	Example: DK: - CLAY - Historie & Kunst - HEART INT: - Universeum - KIASMA - Kulturen	Example: DK: - Louisiana - Krydsfelt - HEART INT: - The Strong - KIASMA

Fig. 1. Classification of museum names. Based on Muzellec et al. (2003) and Muzellec (2006).

span several categories simultaneously, and secondly, places the traditional naming pattern among the museums already described in the first three categories.

According to Muzellec (2006), most organizations start out by having a fairly descriptive name, but as stakeholder awareness increases over time, it becomes possible to change into more acronymic, associative and even completely freestanding names. This move from descriptive towards associative is also referred to as a *valuization process* (Muzellec et al. 2003), implying that concurrently with stakeholders attaching more intangible values to the organization, rather than just descriptive, functional characteristics, the name also changes towards being more abstract and value-based, perhaps indicative of higher self-confidence. Stakeholder perceptions of the organization or museum are thus key when choosing the (new) name, and here it is important to note that stakeholders in a museum context cover much more than just visitors. All key audiences, external as well as internal, from owners (e.g. municipality or state) employees, board, and sponsors, for example, to local, national and international audiences, the media, and colleagues must be taken into consideration (Fombrun 1996, Kapferer 2012). Furthermore, support from

employees is particularly important if the new name is to succeed (Muzellec et al. 2006), and managerial executional expertise in explaining the reasons for changing the name is also required (Stuart & Muzellec 2004).

Institutional and strategic postures

As to the actual components of the name, academic and practitioner experts seem to propose two opposing strategies of either choosing a name that is so unique that it will attract the attention of external stakeholders, labeled the *strategic postures* by Fombrun (1996), or choosing a name with a more descriptive character enabling the external audience to immediately decode what the organization “offers” and to which category the organization belongs, which is labeled the *institutional posture* (Fombrun 1996). The latter is closely linked to the idea that an organization’s *raison d’être* should be reflected in its name (Stuart & Muzellec 2004, Muzellec 2006). In the museum world, choosing to use the term *museum* as part of the name could be understood as a reflection of the *raison d’être* of the organization.

Why change the name?

Perhaps the most obvious reason for changing an organization’s name is when it does not

seem to match the organization anymore, that is when the name no longer reflects what the organization offers or works towards. But changing the name of the organization is not without possible, sometimes even high, costs, which are listed in figure 2. Here, the potential drivers are also listed and divided into structural drivers and strategic/perceptual drivers, which can also be seen as a division between external and internal drivers. Previous research indicates that the majority of name changes are caused by structural drivers in the form of mergers (forced changes) but the name changes brought about by the strategic driver of an outdated image are also high in number (Muzellec *et al.* 2003, Muzellec & Lambkin 2006).

As the figure illustrates, careful consideration of both the pros and cons of a potential new name is needed. That said, there are still many good reasons for embarking on a name change.

Branded House versus House of Brands

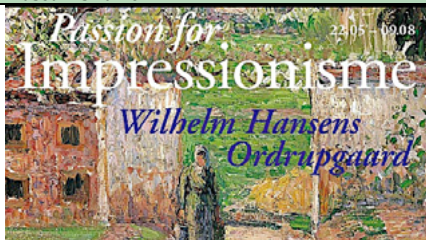

The choice of name also relates to the so-called

brand architecture, which has implications for subsequent strategic and communicative choices and possibilities related to the name of the organization, and how the name is used in relation to the organization's products. The two extremes on the brand architecture continuum are known as *House of Brands* and *Branded House*. In the *House of Brands* architecture, the individual product brands each carry their own name, and are seemingly unrelated to each other. The *Branded House*, on the other hand, refers to a single all-embracing identity where all products carry the same corporate name (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, Cornelissen & Christensen 2011, Kapferer 2012). (Fig. 3.)

Transferred to a museum setting, there could be an important strategic choice between communicating the museum as a *Branded House*, namely the museum brand name precedes that of the special exhibition, for example, or as a *House of Brands*, in that the individual special exhibitions are communicated as the main events and precede the museum name.

Fig. 2. Name change: Drivers and dangers. Based on Muzellec *et al.* (2003), Osler (2004), Muzellec (2006), Muzellec *et al.* (2006) and Kapferer (2012).

DRIVERS FOR NAME CHANGE	DANGERS IN NAME CHANGE
Structural drivers (external)	External dangers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mergers and acquisitions - Spin-offs and de-mergers - Political necessity - Product change - Lost court cases - Changing business category - Change in ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confusion among key stakeholders - Loss of customers (loyalty) - Dilution of strong image - Lack of recognition - Lack of awareness - Problems in international markets (language issues)
Strategic/perceptual drivers (internal)	Internal dangers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdated name/image - Changing business category - Changing brand perceptions - Reputation problems - Internationalization of brand (same brand name globally or international language considerations) - Localization of brand - Access to new market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of support among employees - Loss of ownership among employees - High costs

	HOUSE OF BRANDS	BRANDED HOUSE
Architectural characteristic:	Individual names for each product	One-brand name for all products
Corporate examples:	Procter & Gamble with their wide product portfolio covering Ariel, Braun, Oral B etc.	Apple, Google, Nike, Nestlé
Museum brand architecture:	The individual activity (exhibition, sub-division, event, shop etc.) is communicated before the museum's name	The museum's name precedes all activities (exhibition, sub-division, event, shop etc.)
Example:		
Explanation:	<p>"- Let's go and see that exhibition!"</p> <p>The title of the exhibition is emphasized in the communication (e.g. posters, programs, Facebook posts), and communicates an approach where the potential visitor chooses to visit firstly this particular exhibition – and secondarily the museum where the exhibition is on display</p>	<p>"- Let's go to the TATE!"</p> <p>The museum's name is emphasized in the communication (e.g. posters, programs, Facebook posts), and communicates an approach where the potential visitor chooses to visit firstly the museum – and secondarily the particular exhibition on display</p>
Pros:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possibility to create strong individual brands/activities - High degree of flexibility, i.e. freedom to try out and offer a range of brands/activities, that do not need to relate to each other and/or the main organization - If one brand/activity fails, there is no negative contamination of other activities/organization - If a brand/activity fails, it can be removed without any damage to the rest of the organization/activities - The employees responsible for the individual brand/activity may feel a sense of ownership - Possibility to target specific audiences with individual brands/activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One strong brand to be communicated/promoted - Simple, uniform communication creates strong visibility and recognition - Synergy between all sub-brands - New sub-brands/activities inherit the brand strength from the mother-brand - Strong degree of coherence and cohesion i.e. one shared brand > feeling of unity and shared ownership among employees - Easier to recruit as large well-established brands attract more applicants - Strong degree of recognition and/or ownership among external stakeholders i.e. visitors (cf. museum ambassadors) - Easier to attract/maintain relations to external stakeholders i.e. sponsors, partners and colleagues
Cons:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization is weakly profiled - No synergy in the communication of brands/activities - High costs because each brand/activity needs to be communicated/promoted separately - More brands/activities > higher costs of communication/promotion - Low feeling of unity among employees - Less probability of attracting/maintaining relations to external stakeholders i.e. visitors (cf. museum ambassadors) or sponsors, partners and colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Bet everything on one card": Failure in one sub-brand/activity impacts the entire brand/organization - Low degree of flexibility i.e. less room for diversity in portfolio of activities - Risk of diluting the brand if it has to encompass too many, too diverse activities - Loss of credibility i.e. too many too diverse activities - The brand is limited to one particular business category - The employees responsible for the individual activity may feel a loss of ownership

INSTITUTIONAL THEORY AND NAME CHANGE

We have now presented a range of strategic considerations that a museum name change may involve from a corporate branding perspective. However, a museum does not exist in a vacuum, but resides in a field of other museums. Therefore, we turn to institutional theory where a line of thought on name changes offers insights into the inter-relations between names in organizational fields, and particularly how name change can be related to the notion of legitimacy.

Museum names as legitimacy claims

Institutional theory argues that when an organization chooses a new name, it does so – consciously or unconsciously – to maintain or pursue legitimacy (Glynn & Abzug 2002, Sherer & Lee 2002, Glynn 2008). Legitimacy is defined as: “A generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman 1995:574).

As such, actors in an organizational field are subjected to field level pressures to act desirably and appropriately in order to gain legitimacy (Scott 1995). Legitimacy is granted a museum by all internal and external stakeholders, who often hold many opposing stakes in a museum. The challenge in a name change then is to balance them, either by meeting as many stakeholder expectations as possible, as described by Muzellec: “[...] names were selected on their ability to be widely accepted by the lowest common denominator [...]” (2006:316), or by choosing a name specifically

targeted at those stakeholders who ostensibly exert the most decisive power over the museum (Glynn & Abzug 2002).

The museum landscape as an organizational field

The concept of organizational fields is central to institutional theory (Scott 1995), and we focus particularly on how this concept is linked to legitimacy and name changes. Glynn and Abzug (2002) describe how certain so-called *constitutive rules* for naming exist within organizational fields: “[...] broad-based sociocultural norms and more local activities [...] give rise to rule-like industry ‘recipes’ [...] that define what is credible, appropriate, or legitimate in a name” (Glynn & Abzug 2002:268).

Following these rules may reflect and ensure not only legitimacy but also, as a consequence thereof, an organization’s position in a particular field because: “conformity to these constitutive rules appropriately and legitimately categorizes an organization into referent fields” (Glynn & Abzug 2002:268). Thus, by applying institutional theory to our empirical phenomenon, Danish museums are seen as actors in such an organizational field, and changing the museum’s name consequently not only becomes a matter of communicating the individual museum’s identity or brand, but also a matter of addressing the field. The constitutive rules for names work as “boundaries of meaning or as a frame of comparability” (Glynn & Abzug 2002:268). Hence, by changing its name, a museum can then signal and create a desired future status within the museum field.

Fig. 3. Museum names and brand architecture. Based on Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000), Kapferer (2012) and Cornelissen (2011).¹

Institutional postures – claiming similarity

Fombrun and Shanley’s (1990) institutional posture, that is following the field’s constitutive

rules for naming, is thus a sign of organizations striving for legitimacy or trying to ensure it. This naming strategy is also referred to as *claiming similarity* (Glynn 2008). It connects with a widely established theory (cf. DiMaggio & Powell 1983), which states that as organizational fields mature, such as is arguably the case in the Danish museum field, organizations in the field tend to become increasingly similar, i.e. they choose similar names. Accordingly, we find an explanation here for the naming pattern that has dominated museums until recently: As members of this particular field, museums have referred to the same constitutive rules for names – names have been a way to communicate what they are, and where they “fit in”. Thus, the described name pattern among Danish museums hereby not only reflects a preferred choice of descriptive/geographic/patronymic name types (cf. fig. 1), it possibly also reflects an inherent norm for proper and thus legitimate naming which has dominated the field until recently.

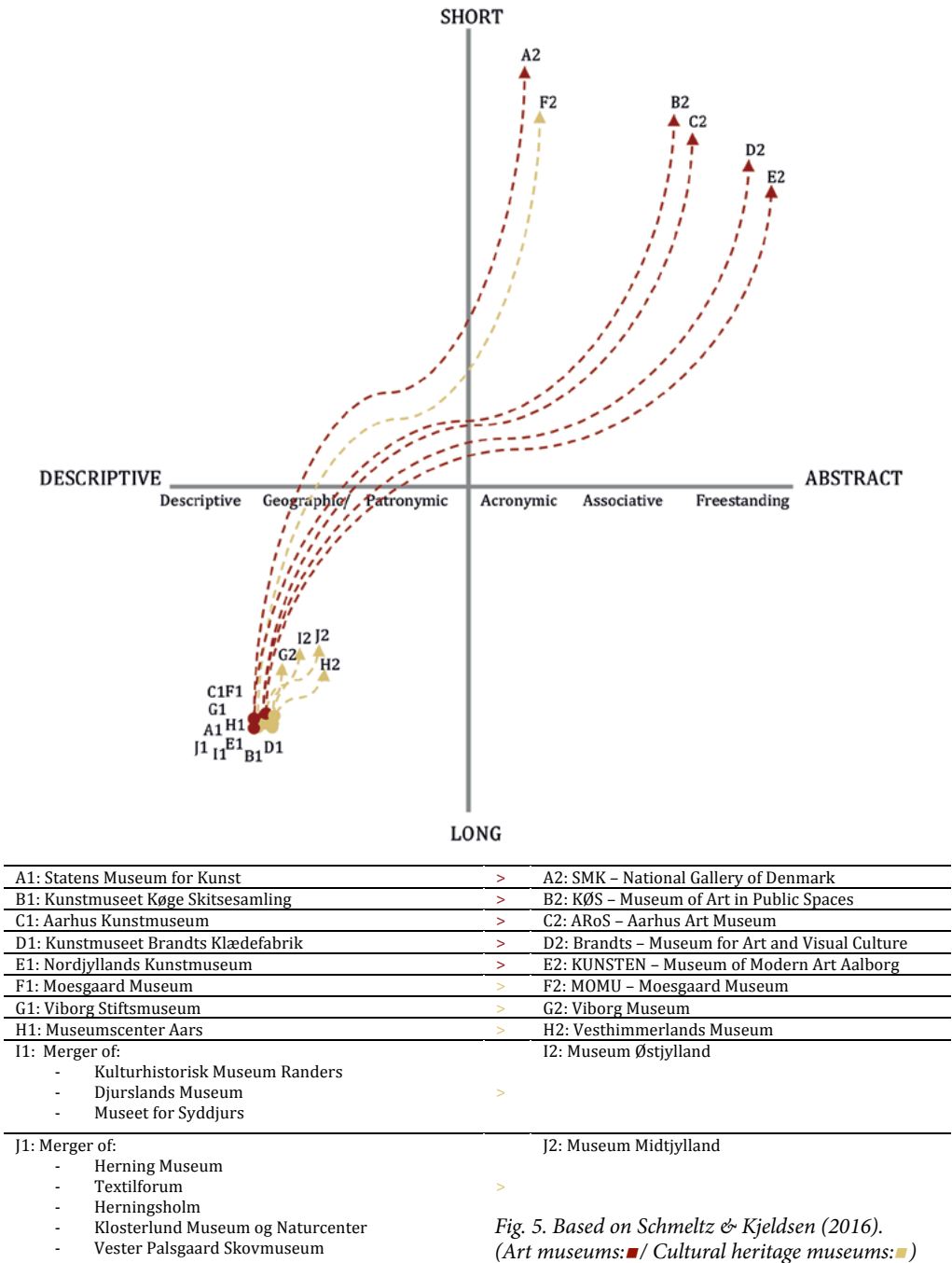
Strategic postures – claiming uniqueness

But how do we then explain the recent string of name changes among Danish museums? Here, we see museums continuing the constitutive rules for naming (e.g. Viborg Stiftsmuseum → Viborg Museum), thus conforming to the validated way of doing things and claiming similarity. Conversely, others choose radically new name types (e.g. Grimmerhus → CLAY), thus confronting and discarding the field's rules for naming by *claiming uniqueness* (cf. Glynn 2008). Recently, a series of contributions within institutional theory have noted that the drive for legitimacy does not always lead to homogeneity in an organizational field. Sometimes heterogeneous reactions to field-level pressures occur (e.g. Røvik 2011) because even though constitutive rules develop and to

some extent define what is legitimate in a field, such rules are not static or enduring. Rather, they too need to develop because: “[...] although institutional prevalence can legitimate, at some point, it can also delegitimize. Crossing that threshold of overinstitutionalized (or commonplace) nomenclature, organizations may seek radical new names” (Glynn & Abzug 2002:278). Thus, the new naming pattern among Danish museums could be a sign of the field's maturation, followed by a need for development and innovation, which becomes evident in the growing number of new name types among the museums (e.g. CLAY, Krydsfelt, Muse@um).

However, not all members in a field will be able to, or indeed want to break away from a field's given rules for naming (Scherer & Lee 2002). Organizations with a presumed low status, or lack of legitimacy, are likely to react by conforming to the current, validated way of doing things. They will choose names that reproduce the constitutive rules, i.e. make an institutional posture, in order to ensure their position in the field, thus reaching out for legitimacy. But organizations with a presumed high status and legitimacy in the field can and may want to adopt a strategic posture. They have the ability and status to choose new names that break away from the constitutive rules in the field; names that make them stand out. Figure 4 outlines the two approaches to name change as they are presented in institutional theory.

The organizations adopting the strategic posture do so, initially because they have legitimacy that enables them to innovate and stand out. But these organizations may also choose such new names as an attempt to either enter into new organizational fields (typically trying to follow the constitutive rules for naming in the new field), or in order to change



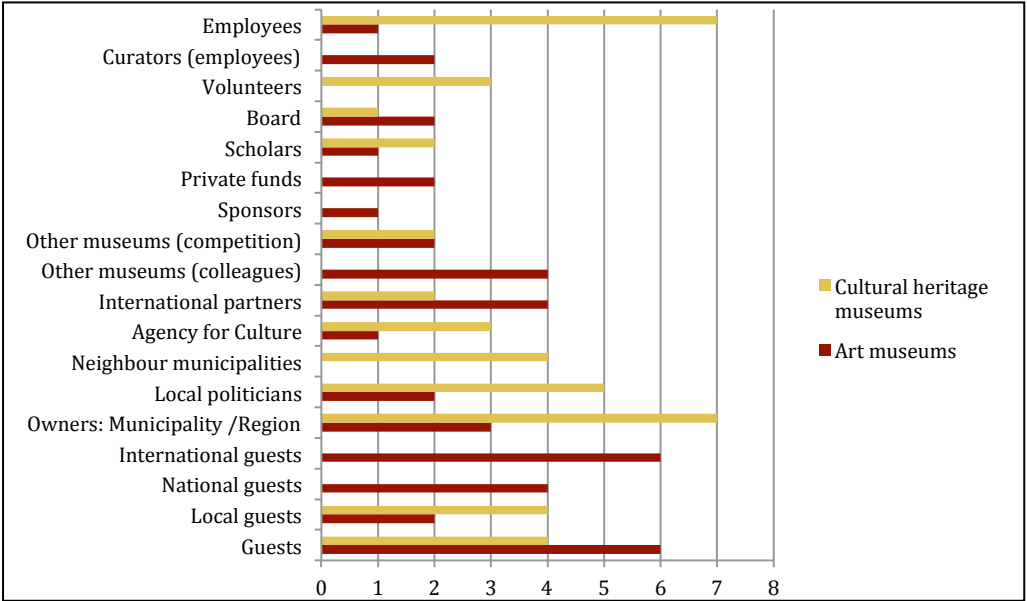
FINDINGS: OLD AND NEW NAMES

Figure 5 illustrates how all the participating museums' old names more or less adhere to the traditional name pattern described in figure 1 as spanning the categories of descriptive, geographic and patronymic names. The old names are thus characterized by being fairly long and descriptive. When we turn to the new names, the ten museums suddenly become clearly divided into two different groups: the ones that stick to the descriptive name type, and the ones that make a radical change towards shorter, much more abstract names. Interestingly, the majority of the latter group are AMs – only MOMU represents the group of CHMs here. Conversely, the group that sticks to descriptive names is made up

entirely of CHMs. Initially, this suggests that the structural differences between CHMs and AMs, namely that CHMs are typically more locally oriented, whereas AMs are more nationally and perhaps internationally orientated, is emphasized in this pattern in the new names. Underlining this is the sole exception, MOMU, as this museum is the only CHM in the study with a national area of responsibility.

When examining the drivers, there is no one-to-one relationship between the driver for name change and the type of new name. The drivers of merger, change in ownership and new market position, for example can lead to the choice of both descriptive and abstract names. There is, however, a pattern

Fig. 6. Stakeholders targeted with new name. Stakeholders mentioned unprompted by the participants as target audiences for the new name were considered as primary target audiences and given the value 2. Stakeholders mentioned by the participants only when prompted were considered as secondary target audiences and given the value 1.



32 of structural (external) drivers leaning more towards a descriptive name choice, and conversely of strategic (internal) drivers leaning more towards an abstract name choice. This is unsurprising perhaps, as structural, external drivers tend to carry with them an element of force, and in those situations museums will often choose a name that will please the majority of the involved stakeholders. For example, one museum (Interview G) describes the choice of new name as “something that both municipalities could live with and also see themselves in” and continues by explaining that the new name was not chosen “from the heart, but rather it was what we could agree on and live with” (Interview G). Strategic, internal drivers are, on the other hand, logically related to a larger degree of free will (it is something that the organization wishes to do), and that in turn gives more room for creativity and scope in the choice of the new name. One museum (Interview E) wanted a new name as a part of an ongoing branding process and saw the new (abstract, not including the term museum) name as being reflective of its identity as “something else and something more – museum is just a part of what we are” (Interview E). Furthermore, the new abstract

name was seen as a way of opening up new business opportunities and of providing more room for creative communication.

Finally, when we look at the stakeholders targeted with the new name (fig. 6), the two groups again have different considerations. The museums opting for abstract names are mainly concerned with the name appealing to guests (both local, national and international), international partners, and with differentiating themselves from competitors. The group opting for the more descriptive names focus instead on the name appealing to employees, volunteers, local politicians and municipalities (owners). To sum up, figure 7 illustrates the relationship between specific drivers, leading to a focus on specific stakeholders, which in turn tends to lead to a specific choice of name type.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE “MUSEUM”?

Among all of the participants, we find recognition of the word “museum” as significant in the world in general, and in the museum world in particular. For example: “A museum – people know what that is” (Interview H1). “‘Museum’ [...] explains what we do” (Interview B).

The participants mention a range of positive

Fig. 7. Connections between drivers, stakeholder focus and name type among the museums.

MAIN DRIVERS	→ DOMINANT STAKEHOLDER FOCUS	→ CHOSEN NAME TYPE
External (e.g. change in ownership, mergers, political necessity)	→ Internal (primarily employees, volunteers local municipality (owners)), secondarily local and national (Agency for Culture), politicians, local visitors	→ Descriptive (geographic, acronymic) - MUSEUM MIDTJYLLAND - MUSEUM ØSTJYLLAND - VESTHIMMERLANDS MUSEUM - VIBORG MUSEUM
Internal (e.g. change in brand perception, change in business category, outdated name/image, access to new market, (internationalization))	→ External (visitors; local, national, international, other museums, international partners, competitors)	→ Abstract (acronym, associative, freestanding) - ARoS - KUNSTEN - KØS - MOMU - SMK

CATEGORY	MUSEUM AS LEADING ACTOR	MUSEUM AS SUPPORTING ACTOR	MUSEUM AS WALK-ON ACTOR
Cultural heritage museums	<p>"A museum – people know what that is" (Interview H1)</p> <p>"It's important to me [to use the word museum in the name] ... we have that one word in the world which characterizes the space where reflection takes place, where time matters...That's why it's so important to me to hold on to that word" (Interview I)</p> <p>"We still wanted to be called 'museum' because we wanted to acknowledge this brand and what it entails, for better or for worse" (Interview F)</p>	<p>"Museum indicates professionalism" (Interview G)</p> <p>"Rather than just casting it aside, my hope is that our museum can assist in creating new images of what a museum is" (Interview J)</p>	<p>"It's [not using <i>museum</i> much] about adapting to a new era" (Interview J)</p>
Art museums	<p>"I love the word museum ... the word museum is so deeply rooted as being indicative of our form, it's an indication of our 500 years of heritage" (Interview B)</p> <p>"It is a word that explains what we do, so we see it as very important word" (Interview D)</p>	<p>"The museum is the important back cloth, but the real diva on stage, that's Brandts" (Interview B)</p> <p>"It's super cool being a museum. But do people understand how cool it is that we're a museum?" (Interview C)</p> <p>"What we want to explore is what it means to be a museum in the 21st century" (Interview C)</p>	<p>"It's [not using <i>museum</i> in the name] not about walking away from something, but about walking towards something better" (Interview E)</p> <p>"I don't have a problem with the word museum... but I think that some people, especially politicians, are not so keen on us using the name museum because then people won't come and visit us. I don't know where they get that from" (Interview A)</p> <p>"There are risks associated [with turning down the use of <i>museum</i>], but it aligns very well with our self-understanding" (Interview E)</p>

Fig. 8. The role of "museum" among participants.

as well as less positive connotations of the term "museum", the latter all expressing a concern that "museum" may conjure a negative image among external stakeholders. Metaphorically speaking, they see the term museum as leading actor as the supporting actor, or just as the walk-on actor. This is illustrated in figure 8.

As a result, although the participants generally agree on the positive connotations and brand value of the term museum, they also worry to some extent that outside of the

museum world, the term might not carry that same positive weight.

Museum name = "Museum" in name?

It is evident that the ten museums have approached their name change in two different ways when it comes to the role that the term "museum" plays. The museums that have changed names towards the descriptive end of the continuum (CHMs) have all chosen new names that incorporate "museum" in their

main name. In contrast to this group, the museums that have chosen names towards the abstract end of the continuum (AMs and MOMU) have all made name changes apparently downplaying the term museum, either “hiding” it in an acronym, or making it part of a descriptive by-line (fig. 5). Although moving “museum” from the main name to a by-line arguably downplays the term, several in this group see it otherwise. For example: “We have never wanted to tone down ‘museum’ [...] on the contrary, we are a museum for something and that is what explains what we do, so it is a very important word” (Interview D).

But, nonetheless, in the type of names chosen by this group, we see both a break away from the traditional normative rules in the field, and also a new approach to naming museums, driven by internal, strategic considerations in combination with an external orientation as to the target audience for the name (fig. 6). The question is then, why have these museums chosen this new approach, while the other group has maintained and reinforced the normative rules?

LEGITIMACY: FITTING IN OR STANDING OUT?

Through the combined theoretical lens of corporate branding and institutional theory, it becomes apparent that what this study has found is perhaps evidence of museums in two different situations in relation to the outlined changes in the museum field.

Fitting in and claiming territory

Common to the group that has kept descriptive names is, apart from the fact that they are all CHMs, a rationale which clearly echoes the institutional posture. They describe the name change as a way to argue for and fit into the

museum landscape: “It is probably a matter of where you think you belong, and we see ourselves as a part of the field of museums” (Interview F). “With that name, you have a clearly assigned task” (Interview I).

Further, among these museums we find a general perception of heightened competition, leading to a need to argue for one’s existence: “There is this political pressure for the individual museum to *really* mark off its territory, and show what you’ve got, and what you think you’re entitled to” (Interview I).

Apparently, as these museums also share the denominator of being either merged or having experienced changes in ownership, the new names also reflect a desire to both (re) establish good relations to new municipal or regional owners, and to simply claim territory in a national perspective: “It’s turned into imperialism – that you have to demonstrate that you have volume and can claim certain territories – and it is of course also directed at the Danish Agency for Culture” (Interview I). “We knew that if we didn’t ‘take’ the geographical name, someone else might do it and claim ownership of eastern Jutland because obviously this wave of mergers is also an elimination race – so it [new name] is also about positioning” (Interview F).

Clearly, this group exemplifies the notion of name change as an institutional posture, duly indicating a group of museums that are possibly not experiencing a strong and undeniable status in the field right now – museums grappling for legitimacy by following the normative rules for naming in the field they are trying to fit into.

Standing out and entering new territory

In the group of AMs and MOMU, we find radically different rationales for choosing their new names, especially when it comes

to the relation to the museum field. Here the new names are explained as a way to stand out among other museums and to create new and/or stronger positions nationally and internationally: “The name change was related to a strategic process where we wanted to set new goals for the museum and try to rethink the position, possibilities and vision” (Interview D). “It’s [not using *museum*] about adapting to a new era” (Interview J).

Further, these museums all have in common that they relate their choice of new name to a wish to challenge the notion of what it is to be a museum: “[...] my hope is that our museum can assist in creating new images of what a museum is” (Interview J). “What we want to explore is what it means to be a museum in the 21st century” (Interview C).

Conclusively, this group has made name changes as strategic postures, and as the following quotes exemplify, they also seem to find themselves in a position where challenging the field, and the common norms it upholds, is both possible and necessary – because they have the legitimacy to do so:

“If you are a ‘museum,’ you are, all things being equal, very, very far away from Nike, Mercedes or Apple. But if you are called something flashy, such as ARoS, MOMU or KØS, you are much closer to someone who is actually succeeding in their branding” (Interview E).

“It takes certain strength and also quite a performance history to reach the point where you do not have to call yourself a museum anymore” (Interview E).

WHO GETS TO BE THE DIVA ON STAGE?

When it comes to the choice between applying a Branded House strategy or a House of

Brands strategy, we can once again detect a clear pattern. The group with abstract names (consisting mainly of AMs) subscribes to the Branded House approach, whereas the group with more descriptive names (the CHMs) makes use of the House of Brands approach.

For the CHMs (with the exception of MOMU), the choice of branding strategy once again is closely related to the initial driver of the entire name change process: as the museums often change their names as a result of external pressures, such as a merger, structural changes and so forth, there has been no strong internal desire to work with a new name. Furthermore, in merger situations, key internal stakeholders, such as employees, volunteers and local communities, have very strong emotional attachments to the old name. This makes the choice of a House of Brands strategy the most obvious choice as it is possible to work with one overall (new) name, but still make room for the use of the old name:

We use the new common name, but at the same time, we also still use the old names and identities of the individual departments. We know that the municipality would like one common brand, and we’re working towards that, but we also need to work towards a more united organization first (Interview G).

An example of this strategy in practice is that this group of museums tends to communicate the name of the special exhibition as the main component, and then the name of the museum is added afterwards. Consequently, what should be attracting people’s attention is the exhibition, not the museum itself.

For the AMs, the wish to become a Branded House has sometimes even been governing the choice of new name and is seen as a significant and major advantage in

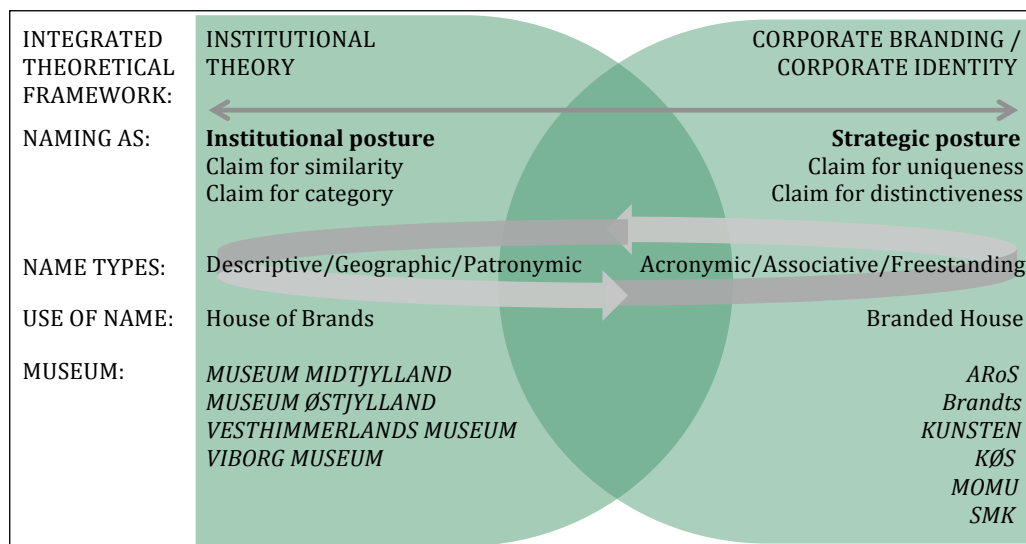


Fig. 9. Integrative framework for name changes among Danish museums, based on Schmeltz & Kjeldsen (2016).

the museum's strategic communication and branding efforts (Interviews C and E). It is also seen as being reflective of the development in the museum field with increased focus on differentiation from competitors in the widest sense: the museums acknowledge that they face competition not only from other museums but also, perhaps even more so, from other culture and leisure activity providers. Thus, in this group, the choice of the Branded House approach is "not about moving away from something [being a museum], but about moving towards something new" (Interview E). For this group, refraining from using the term museum in their main name thus seems to be indicative of the perception that not all stakeholders love and understand the term museum (Interview A) to the same extent as the museum professionals: "It's super cool being a museum. But do people understand how cool it is that we're a museum?" (Interview C).

"People say: 'We don't want to go to a museum, but we want to go to ARoS'" (Interview E).

One way to get around this is to apply the Branded House strategy where the (strong) brand is always in the forefront as a means of supporting and co-branding new initiatives (for example exhibitions and loyalty clubs). The participants do, however, still emphasize the importance of having the concept of "museum" to add considerable weight to the main brand: "The museum is the important backcloth, but the real diva on stage, that's Brandts" (Interview C).

Consequently, when this strategy is applied in practice, the name of the museum (and not the fact that it is a museum) is communicated as the main component and as the one presenting and facilitating a special exhibition, for instance. As opposed to the other group's approach, here it is primarily the museum itself (its brand and what that brand offers)

that is supposed to generate interest, not the special exhibitions. In this respect, it should be noted that a danger related to this strategy is that some employees express a certain loss of ownership in relation to, say, new exhibitions when the brand name of the museum becomes more dominant than that of the exhibition (Interview C). This could have consequences for the working environment and employee motivation.

Finally, the choice of brand strategy also seems to be closely related to the status attached to the museum by other important actors in the field as well as recognition and awareness levels. When probed about this question, interviewees repeatedly mentioned that not all museums can go for the Branded House strategy, where the descriptive and defining museum word is not part of the main name. As explained by one of the participants: “You cannot embark on this new [branding] without that [strength and performance history] – that is the precondition if you want to call yourself something without ‘museum’” (Interview E).

MUSEUM NAMES ANNO 2016: A DIVIDING FIELD?

In conclusion, we can position the ten museums in relation to our overall theoretical framework on name changes as shown in figure 9.

The circular arrow related to *name types* indicates that although the study has found that the current development in name types echoes the one described in the naming theory (Muzellec 2006), this move away from descriptive, long names towards shorter, abstract names, is perhaps not as linear as the theory suggests. At least not in this case. As one participant says: “Often in processes of change [...] you have to take a giant step away

from where you came from, in order to find out where you can go [...] and I am quite sure, that within a few years, the term ‘museum’ will once again be super, super cool” (Interview C).

Further, we suggest that the clear demarcation between the two groups in relation to name types may be symptomatic of an increasing division of this field. As Glynn & Abzug (2002) explain, names and developments, along the lines of what we have found among the AMs and MOMU, can be a sign of organizations seeking to either develop the field they belong to or enter new fields. Evidently, after the political and structural reforms, these two groups of museums find themselves in somewhat different situations, and their name choices reflect just that. One group is fighting to survive, to find common ground in a newly merged unit, to claim their territory and to (re) establish relations to their local subsidiaries. The other group of museums is pushing the field in new directions, and/or trying to enter into a new competitive reality and international market outside of the museum field.

So, what *is* in a museum name? First of all, the name can be used as a means of standing out, creating attention and attracting visitors, as expressed here: “You want your museum to attract many visitors, so you use all the tools you have to do just that – one of those tools is the name” (Interview E).

This study shows that a name can function as a marker of where you want to go as an organization, and who you would like to compare, or not compare, yourself with. In other words, names can be applied strategically as a means of developing the field, claiming (new) territory, and establishing legitimacy.

Finally, based on the insights generated in this study, we can now suggest a range of practical implications, here divided into implications of keeping and moving away from

	Interview	Museum	Interviewee	Interview guide/themes
Art mus.	Interview A	KUNSTEN	Head of communications	a) Driver for name change b) Aim of new name c) Perceived target audience for new name d) Use of name e) Use of 'museum' f) Legitimacy g) Strategic use of new name
	Interview B	Brandts	Manager	
	Interview C	SMK	Head of communications	
	Interview D	KØS	Manager	
	Interview E	ARoS	Branding and business manager	
Cultural heritage mus.	Interview F	Museum Østjylland	Manager	
	Interview G	Museum Midtjylland	Manager	
	Interview H1	Viborg Museum	Manager	
	Interview H2	Viborg Museum	Marketing assistant	
	Interview I	Vesthimmerlands Museum	Manager	
	Interview J	MOMU	Manager	

Appendix 1. Participants and interview themes.

the word museum in the name, respectively. As illustrated through this study, it is important to acknowledge that there is no unambiguous answer to what a good museum name is. This will always be highly dependent on the specific situational and contextual aspects of the individual museum.

Practical implications of keeping museum in the name

- Clearly indicating category and genre.
- Clearly indicating special societal status (not e.g. an amusement park).
- Inheriting strength and legitimacy from the word museum.
- Ensuring easy recognition and identification (e.g. when tourists are looking for places to see).

Practical implications of moving away from using museum in the name

- Offering more graphical, visual possibilities (e.g. logo, advertising).
- Using the abstract name in more creative ways (play on words).
- Not inheriting the negative aspects of the museum word – offering more room to maneuver creatively.

- Establishing collaborations with new partners is easier as they like to be associated with a strong brand.

NOTE

1. Images downloaded from: <https://www.facebook.com/4848468962315/photos/a.10150834430282316.481018.48468962315/10154159317647316/?type=3&theater> and <http://logok.org/tate-logo/s/a.10150834430282316.481018.48468962315/10154159317647316/?type=3&theater> and <http://logok.org/tate-logo/>

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