Chapter 1
Knowledge Networks, Crowds, and Markets:
A Social Entrepreneurship Project in Latin America

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ABSTRACT

In some knowledge-based urban contexts, a new way of conducting creativity and innovation is already operating quasi-independently of the current money system. Its chief ingredients are intangible assets such as time, imagination, knowledge, initiative, and trust, to which money has quickly moved from primary to secondary concern. In this context, this chapter explores their links to emerging models of Commons and Peer-to-Peer (P2P) economies in order to frame a recent crowdfunding experience in the Mexico-Texas borderland.

1. INTRODUCTION

As we move further onto the second decade of the millennium, a convergence of three key concepts: *urban networks, crowds*, and *markets* have increasingly gained emphasis both in theoretical and practical knowledge-based models in urban studies. This also could imply a more mature stage of understanding the dynamics of the *Commons*, and the challenges behind managing them. There is no easy path to it, but clearly, alternative regulating models are urgently needed as we further develop knowledge-based societies and economies, "at the center of which the logic of the *commons* would perform an essential role in how we handle organizations" (Vercellone,et.al., 2015:4). In such context, theoretical advancements from Elinor Ostrom's (2007), *Knowledge as a Commons*, to *cognitive capitalism, collaborative consumption,* or the more radical advancements of *Peer-to-Peer Economy* are urging us to develop *Commons*-based organization systems. They are above all, social constructions based on the value-creating capabilities of knowledge and self-governance logic, and not on the pre-assumed nature or value of goods. That is why practices for governance of commons loudly resonate, based on collaboration and

sharing. They portray elements of the *collaborative economy* and the s*haring economy* models in which shared resources and infrastructures promote the development of the commons, and they have started to act as a new significant form of economic and social organization. Emerging organizations like *Uber, Airbnb, Kickstarter, Cropital, Guardian Angels, Rockethub* and many others are examples of what some authors have already analyzed from the point of view of the *knowledge-based markets* model (Carrillo, et. al., 2014). Such organizations seem to thrive and actually address the emerging sustainability and resilience challenges of knowledge-based contexts, despite facing major difficulties in managing their key intangibles (knowledge, social relationships, rules and values, options) in order to keep the commons viable (Cantino, et. al., 2017).

In this context, this paper is aiming to dive into a literature review of Knowledge Cities as Knowledge Markets, and explore their links to emerging models of *Commons* and *Peer to Peer (P2P)* economies in order to frame a recent crowdfunding experience in the Mexico-Texas Borderland.

2. KNOWLEDGE CITY CONCEPTS

The *Knowledge City* concept is a subfield of Knowledge-based Development (KBD) and stems from a convergence of Urban Studies and Planning with Knowledge Management (KM) (Carrillo, 2006:xiii). In fact, KBD is the particularly distinctive third generation of KM, as shown in Table 1. While the first generation mainly addressed information storage, and the second generation made a clear shift "from collecting knowledge to connecting people" (Huysman and Wulf, 2005), the third KM generation is the generation of complex, deeply inter-connected systems of knowledge generation and knowledge exchange. It focuses on systemic, societal change analysis, which is becoming increasingly predominant: "in the next years, knowledge management theorists and practitioners will find themselves asking how revolutions can be managed" (Toumi, 2002). In such intriguing context, our globe is seemingly turning into a world of *parallel systems of meaning* (Toumi, 2004:1).

Within this multi-meaning universe, the emerging societies in different parts of our world are increasingly depending on international links and networks to live on: their communication activities become critically important in the social construction of *communities that learn* (Tuomi, 2004a:1). Hence, our unconventional exchanges of information, knowledge and experiences (i.e. over the Internet) are becoming permanent and personal processes of *meaning negotiation*. Message significance depends on who and where are the users at the moment of interaction. At the core of this complex makeover of the social, economic and technical sub-systems, sits the *system of learning* on which each of our societies rely on. Our systems of learning are historical societal structures now seemingly developing into *systems of meaning-creation* (Tuomi, 2004a:2) as the basis of learning systems in emerging knowledge-based societies. For the analysis of these knowledge-based contexts, emerging frameworks that could include the emerging complexities were critical to the sense-making process of prospective and development of cities. In a reflection on how value-based concepts develop in urban settings, some considerations on the progress and historic evolution of KM as a discipline are highly relevant as part of this study (as expressed in Table 1). The perspectives of Knowledge Management (KM) scholars (Tuomi, 2004; Huysman and Wulf, 2005; Carrillo, 2006) who have identified distinct and influential KM generations are essential to characterise the recent transformations in the discipline and their relevance in emerging research.

The third KM generation was triggered by notions such as *learning regions* that started to emerge as a framework for understanding development in a multi-dimensional, highly networked setting beyond

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