

Evangelists of Innovation: Territory, Technology, and Ideology in Technology Parks and Innovation Districts

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INSTITUTO DE
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Evangelists of Innovation: Territory, Technology, and Ideology in Technology Parks and Innovation Districts

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This book emerges from the activities of the International Research Agreement signed on June 9, 2022, between the Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (UNGS) and the Institute of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo (IAU-USP). The agreement aims to analyze, through a dialogue between the cases of Argentina and Brazil, regional trends in the transformation of the world of work, articulating them with the specific dynamics of territorial configuration from a comparative and relational perspective.

The book is also linked to the CNPq research project, developed within the framework of the Research Productivity Fellowship, entitled **"Regional Trends and Dynamics in the Restructuring of Territories and the World of Work: A Comparative and Relational Perspective between the Technological District of Buenos Aires (CABA, Argentina) and the Technology Park of São José dos Campos (SP, Brazil)"** - Process no. 301583/2022-6.

About the Cover

The cover of this book was conceived as a visual allegory of the **evangelists of innovation**. Inspired by the pictorial tradition associated with Saint Luke - evangelist, narrator of the *Acts of the Apostles*, and, according to Christian tradition, painter of sacred images - the composition displaces religious imagery into the contemporary universe of technology, entrepreneurship, and the territories of the new economy.

At the center of the image, the figure of the evangelist-painter observes and records a landscape in transformation. His gesture is not merely artistic; it is also interpretive. He paints, narrates, and consecrates a new secular faith: the faith in innovation. Around him, elements of religious iconography coexist with symbols of the knowledge economy: maps, circuits, models, towers, arches, technology districts, factories in decline, and luminous buildings. The ancient evangelizing mission is reinterpreted as a metaphor for the contemporary diffusion of concepts, promises, and myths about innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, and urban development.

The presence of the angel and the ox evokes the traditional iconography of Saint Luke, but here these symbols are placed in tension with a hybrid landscape in which the industrial past and the technological future overlap. Factories, urban plans, and electronic circuits indicate that innovation does not emerge from nowhere: it depends on territory, infrastructure, the State, capital, universities, labor, and social imagination. The cover, therefore, refuses the simplified image of innovation as an individual miracle or spontaneous revelation.

In the background, the technological city appears as both vision and promise. Towers, bridges, arches, and iconic buildings suggest technology parks, innovation districts, and urban landmarks that seek to give visible form to the knowledge economy. These elements operate as signs of a new modernity, but also as a warning: every landscape of innovation is also a landscape of power, symbolic dispute, and ideological production.

The cover thus synthesizes the central thesis of the book: territories of innovation are not merely built; they are narrated, painted, evangelized, and converted into collective belief. Between the sacred and the technological, between the studio and the innovation district, between the gospel and the pitch, the image asks: who paints the future of cities? Who defines their symbols? Who transforms infrastructure, capital, and public policy into promises of salvation through innovation?

This cover is, therefore, an image of ambiguity. It recognizes the historical force of innovation, but also reveals its mythical dimension. It shows that, under contemporary capitalism, evangelists do not announce only religious good news: they announce smart cities, creative districts, startups, talents, ecosystems, hubs, and technological futures. The book is born precisely from this tension between promise and critique, faith and politics, image and structure.

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Why Study the Evangelists of Innovation?

To study the evangelists of innovation is to study one of the most powerful forms of ideological production in contemporary capitalism. Over the past decades, words such as innovation, entrepreneurship, disruption, creativity, talent, ecosystem, startup, hub, innovation district, and smart city have come to organize public policies, business strategies, university reforms, and urban projects. They no longer belong only to the technical vocabulary of economics or management; they have become a kind of common language of the future. Governments, universities, companies, consultants, multilateral banks, and urban managers increasingly speak through them, as if they contained the answer to industrial crisis, global competition, labor precarization, and the restructuring of cities.

But these words do not circulate by themselves. They are formulated, translated, simplified, disseminated, and repeated by subjects and institutions that act as mediators between complex theories, economic interests, and territorial policies. These mediators are the **evangelists of innovation**. They do not merely describe the new economy; they help produce it symbolically. They narrate the crisis of the industrial city, announce the arrival of the knowledge economy, promise redemption through technology, and indicate the paths through which cities, regions, and countries may be recognized as innovative.

The notion of evangelists of innovation finds a decisive conceptual foundation in Sharon Zukin, especially in *The Innovation Complex: Cities, Tech, and the New Economy*. For Zukin, the new urban economy articulates land, labor, culture, and capital in an innovation complex that is both material and symbolic. On one side, there are buildings, hubs, accelerators, universities, venture capital offices, technology districts, and digital infrastructures. On the other, there are narratives, expectations, urban anxieties, discourses of the future, and promises of shared prosperity (ZUKIN, 2020). Innovation, therefore, is not merely an economic activity; it is also a way of imagining, organizing, and legitimizing the transformation of cities.

This is why studying the evangelists of innovation matters. They are the agents who transform concepts into recipes, theories into slogans, public policies into territorial brands, and economic disputes into promises of the future. Richard Florida, by formulating the creative class, offered local governments a seductive narrative: it would be enough to attract talent, promote tolerance, technology, and urban quality in order to stimulate the economy (FLORIDA, 2002). Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner, by disseminating the idea of innovation districts, gave territorial form to this promise, advocating dense, mixed, connected urban spaces located near universities and companies (KATZ; WAGNER, 2014). Borja and Castells, by treating cities as political actors in the age of globalization, helped consolidate the shift from traditional urban planning to competitive strategic planning (BORJA; CASTELLS, 1997).

The problem does not lie simply in these authors, nor in the existence of technology parks, innovation districts, or entrepreneurship policies. The problem lies in the way complex ideas are appropriated, vulgarized, and converted into universal formulas. The creative class becomes the myth that cafés, bike lanes, bars, and nightlife automatically attract talent. Open innovation becomes a generic rhetoric of collaboration. The Triple Helix can be reduced to the formal signing of agreements between universities, companies, and government. The entrepreneurial State, in its poorest version, can be distorted to the point of suggesting that every precarious worker is an entrepreneur of the self, erasing Mazzucato's central

argument about public risk, mission, market creation, and the strategic direction of State investment (MAZZUCATO, 2013).

To study the evangelists of innovation is therefore to study the mechanisms through which the new economy constructs its myths. The garage myth presents innovation as the result of individual genius, concealing universities, the State, public contracts, the military-industrial complex, and long-term financing. The café myth suggests that urban amenities are sufficient to attract talent and transform cities. The "if you build it, they will come" myth claims that the mere construction of a park, hub, or technology district will attract companies, brains, and investments. The icon myth bets that a tower, a bridge, a museum, or a landmark can reposition a city on the global map of innovation. These myths are not innocent narratives; they guide investments, legitimize urban policies, and define public priorities.

There is also an institutional dimension. The gospel of innovation is promoted by think tanks, multilateral banks, rankings, manuals, funding agencies, international associations, universities, consultancies, and starchitects. The OECD defines metrics; WIPO measures patents and innovation; UNCTAD organizes the creative economy as a strategic sector; the IDB disseminates the Orange Economy; IASP standardizes the language of technology parks; the World Bank and the World Economic Forum associate development with the digital economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Innovation thus becomes a global grammar of government: it is measured, ranked, financed, certified, and territorialized.

In the Brazilian case, this debate is even more urgent. In a country marked by deindustrialization, urban inequality, labor precarization, and the fragmentation of development policies, the rhetoric of innovation often appears as a substitute for a national strategy. There is much talk of startups, pitches, hackathons, coworking spaces, and technology districts, but not always of industrial policy, productive capacity, wages, infrastructure, public procurement, technological sovereignty, and national missions. When detached from these elements, innovation risks becoming merely an aesthetic of modernization.

Studying the evangelists of innovation, therefore, does not mean rejecting innovation. On the contrary: it means taking innovation seriously. It means recovering its historical, political, territorial, and social density. It means asking who finances it, who decides, who benefits, who is displaced, which problems are prioritized, and which forms of public appropriation of value are constructed. Innovation only becomes development when it encounters a collective mission, a productive base, a territorial strategy, and a democratic form of social return.

This book begins from that concern. It does not ask only where technology parks, innovation districts, or creative hubs are located. It asks who narrates them, who legitimizes them, who finances them, who designs them, who measures them, who transforms them into images, and who convinces society that the future has already begun there. To study the evangelists of innovation is, ultimately, to study how contemporary capitalism constructs its territorial promises of salvation.

What the Evangelists of Innovation Teach - and Do Not Teach - the Global South

The evangelists of innovation teach the Global South many important things. They teach that knowledge production matters; that universities can play a strategic role in development; that innovative firms do not emerge in isolation; that public policies can create favorable environments for technology; that cities must think about their productive futures; and that creativity can be a relevant dimension of the contemporary economy. Authors such as Schumpeter, Drucker, Etzkowitz, Florida, Katz, Castells, Chesbrough, Ries, and Mazzucato helped build a powerful grammar for interpreting the reorganization of capitalism over the last decades: innovation, entrepreneurship, network society, Triple Helix, creative class, innovation districts, open innovation, lean startup, and the entrepreneurial State.

The problem, therefore, is not simply learning from these authors. The problem is learning from them poorly - in a rushed, imitative, and decontextualized way. For countries in the Global South, these theories often circulate through manuals, consultancies, rankings, reports by international organizations, entrepreneurship events, and showcase urban policies. In this process, complex concepts are converted into simple recipes: build a technology park, create an innovation district, organize hackathons, open coworking spaces, attract startups, install cafés, measure patents, promote pitches, and brand the city as creative, smart, or innovative.

What these evangelists teach, in their best version, is that innovation is not merely technical invention. It depends on institutions, networks, financing, culture, trust, talent formation, the articulation between university, business, and the State, and the capacity to transform knowledge into social and economic value. This is an important lesson. Zukin shows that the innovation complex is not simply a group of technology companies, but an articulation of physical spaces, organizations, capital, labor, culture, government, and urban narratives. Innovation, in this sense, is also a political and territorial category, because it organizes alliances among investors, universities, governments, companies, and real estate promoters in the concrete production of the new urban economy (ZUKIN, 2020).

For the Global South, this lesson is useful because it helps overcome a naïve view of innovation as the result of individual genius. No peripheral or semi-peripheral country builds relevant technological capabilities through spontaneous creativity, individual effort, or "entrepreneurial spirit" alone. Historical experience shows that innovation requires the State, long-term financing, universities, public procurement, national firms, engineering, industry, infrastructure, regulation, and strategic missions. Mazzucato is especially important in this regard, because she restores the State as an agent of risk, a creator of markets, and an organizer of public missions, against the simplistic narrative that the public sector merely obstructs or regulates innovation produced by the private sector (MAZZUCATO, 2013).

But the evangelists of innovation also fail to teach many things. The first is that territories do not start from the same place. It is not the same thing to speak of innovation in New York, San Francisco, Barcelona, Shenzhen, São José dos Campos, Recife, Buenos Aires, Medellín, or Nairobi. Cities in the Global South carry specific histories of colonization, technological dependence, unequal urbanization, informality, premature deindustrialization, socio-spatial segregation, limited fiscal capacity, labor precarization, and

environmental vulnerability. Importing the language of innovative ecosystems without recognizing these conditions can produce only an aesthetic layer of modernization over deep structures of inequality.

The second thing that evangelists generally fail to teach is that innovation depends on macroeconomics. The theory of the creative class, for example, suggests that talent moves toward tolerant, vibrant, culturally diverse cities endowed with urban amenities (FLORIDA, 2002). This is not entirely false, but it is insufficient. In the Global South, highly qualified workers also decide where to live based on wages, monetary stability, security, career opportunities, family networks, the quality of public services, housing costs, and possibilities for international insertion. Cafés, bike lanes, bars, nightlife, and coworking spaces can make a city more pleasant, but they do not replace income, industry, science, financing, and a national development policy.

The third absence is the productive dimension. Many discourses on the creative economy, smart cities, and innovation districts speak of talent, ideas, creativity, and connectivity, but say little about manufacturing, productive chains, engineering, industrial capacity, and technological sovereignty. This is particularly serious for the Global South. A country may have good applications, startup events, and sophisticated urban hubs, yet remain dependent on the importation of machinery, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, digital systems, medical equipment, and strategic technologies. Without a productive base, innovation can become the sophisticated consumption of someone else's technology rather than the construction of autonomy.

The fourth thing that evangelists do not teach sufficiently is that innovation can deepen inequalities. The innovation complex may generate qualified jobs, new services, and urban dynamism, but it can also raise land prices, displace residents, elitize neighborhoods, precarize platform workers, expand digital surveillance, and subordinate urban policy to the interests of investors. Zukin shows precisely that the new urban economy involves promises and dangers: tech titans, venture capital, universities, governments, and real estate markets may articulate themselves in ways that make the city more innovative, but also more unequal (ZUKIN, 2020).

The fifth absence is the question of mission. For the Global South, innovation cannot be merely competitive positioning, nor merely adaptation to the new economy. It must respond to historical problems: sanitation, housing, mobility, public health, education, climate adaptation, food security, energy transition, green industrialization, inequality reduction, and technological sovereignty. Without mission, innovation becomes a slogan. Without public direction, funding becomes a pulverization of disconnected calls. Without social return, public risk may be privately appropriated. Without industrial policy, technology parks may become real estate projects dressed in the language of the future.

For this reason, the Global South must learn from the evangelists of innovation, but it should not passively convert to their gospel. It must read Florida, Katz, Castells, Etzkowitz, Landry, Howkins, Drucker, Christensen, Chesbrough, Ries, and Mazzucato in a critical, territorialized, and historical way. It must ask: which parts of these theories help build local capabilities? Which parts merely reproduce imported models? Which parts help confront dependency? Which parts transform inequality into market opportunity? Which parts confuse development with urban branding?

The decisive question is not whether the Global South should innovate. Of course it should. The question is different: **innovate for what, for whom, with which resources, through which institutions, in which**

territories, and with what form of social appropriation of the results? When this question disappears, the gospel of innovation becomes ideology. When it remains at the center, innovation can once again become a public project, a collective mission, and an instrument of social transformation.

Methodological Procedures: A Critical, Narrative, and Interdisciplinary Review

The preparation of this book was guided by a **critical, narrative, and interdisciplinary review**, bringing together urbanism, economic geography, urban sociology, the political economy of innovation, organizational studies, urban planning, science and technology studies, and critique of ideology. Unlike a systematic review, whose main objective is to exhaustively map a bibliographic field delimited by rigid search protocols, this book adopts an interpretive strategy aimed at constructing a critical thesis: to understand how authors, institutions, concepts, images, metrics, public policies, and urban projects operate in the dissemination of a true "gospel of innovation."

The methodological starting point was a cross-reading of four previous investigations: **Territories of Innovation in China: Technology Parks, the Developmental State, and Industrial Missions**; **Technopolitics of Territory in Brazil: Technology Parks, the Technical-Scientific-Informational Milieu, and the Contradictions of Innovation**; **Technopolitics of Silicon Valley: Innovation, Territory, and Power in Digital Capitalism**; and **Technopolitics of 22@ Barcelona: Innovation, Territory, and Power in the Knowledge City**. These four works constitute the initial authorial corpus of the research, since they made it possible to observe, across different historical and territorial contexts, the recurrence of narratives, models, promises, and myths associated with innovation.

On this basis, the book was structured around three main analytical axes: **territory, technology, and ideology**. The territorial axis made it possible to analyze technology parks, innovation districts, hubs, areas of innovation, waterfronts, revitalized historic centers, creative neighborhoods, and urban landmarks as spatial forms of the new economy. The technological axis enabled a discussion of the emergence of the digital economy, the network society, open innovation, startups, artificial intelligence, the platform economy, and the rhetoric of disruption. The ideological axis made it possible to examine how complex concepts are appropriated, simplified, and converted into slogans, public policies, management models, motivational phrases, rankings, and territorial marketing strategies.

The main conceptual reference used was Sharon Zukin, especially her notion of the **innovation complex**. Zukin understands the new urban economy as an articulation between land, labor, culture, and capital, emphasizing that innovation has both material and symbolic dimensions. On the one hand, it is expressed in buildings, hubs, accelerators, universities, venture capital offices, technology districts, and urban infrastructures; on the other hand, it is expressed in narratives, expectations, discourses of the future, and disputes over the control of urban change (ZUKIN, 2020). This formulation made it possible to understand the "evangelists of innovation" not merely as charismatic individuals, but as agents of mediation between theory, public policy, the market, territory, and the social imaginary.

The construction of the bibliographic corpus followed criteria of conceptual relevance, political-institutional impact, and international circulation. The book incorporates authors who shaped, directly or indirectly, the contemporary language of innovation, the creative economy, and entrepreneurial urbanism, such as Joseph Schumpeter, Peter Drucker, Richard Florida, Charles Landry, John Howkins, Henry Etzkowitz, Clayton Christensen, Henry Chesbrough, Steve Blank, Guy Kawasaki, Eric Ries, Bruce Katz, Julie Wagner, Jordi

Borja, Manuel Castells, and Mariana Mazzucato. These authors were selected not only because of their academic importance, but also because of their capacity to produce categories that circulated through public policies, consultancies, strategic plans, business discourses, and urban projects.

The book also analyzes institutions that act as **institutional evangelists** of innovation. This group includes think tanks, multilateral organizations, development banks, international agencies, professional associations, funding institutions, networks of technology parks, and talent-training centers. The analysis considers institutions such as the Brookings Institution, IASP, the IDB, the OECD, WIPO, UNCTAD, Nesta, the European Commission, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, Finep, BNDES, the MIT Media Lab, the Martin Trust Center, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, and Singularity University. The objective was not to examine each organization exhaustively, but to understand how reports, manuals, rankings, indicators, conferences, methodologies, and funding programs help transform concepts into policies, metrics, and territorial forms.

The book also adopts a methodology of **critical cartography of concepts**. Rather than treating categories such as "creative class," "creative city," "Triple Helix," "innovation district," "disruptive innovation," "open innovation," "lean startup," "entrepreneurial State," and "network society" as neutral notions, the research sought to reconstruct their origins, main meanings, appropriations, and risks of vulgarization. The central interest was less the purity of the original concepts than the way these ideas came to circulate socially, often simplified in manuals, lectures, slogans, entrepreneurship policies, and city branding strategies.

Another procedure adopted was the construction of a **typology of the myths of innovation**. Based on the comparative reading of cases and authors, the research identified recurrent narratives that help legitimize policies and investments. Among them are the **garage myth**, which presents innovation as the result of individual genius; the **café myth**, which associates cafés, bars, bike lanes, and urban amenities with the automatic attraction of the creative class; the **"if you build it, they will come" myth**, which assumes that the mere construction of parks, hubs, or technology districts will attract companies, brains, and investments; the **icon myth**, which bets on landmarks and spectacular architecture as instruments of urban repositioning; and the **wall pedagogy of innovation**, expressed in motivational phrases that shift structural debate toward individual voluntarism.

The comparison between the cases of Silicon Valley, 22@ Barcelona, China, and Brazil was conducted through a qualitative and interpretive approach. Silicon Valley was taken as the territorial matrix of the contemporary mythology of innovation, especially because of the power of the garage myth and the erasure of the role of the State, universities, and the military-industrial complex. 22@ Barcelona was analyzed as a European urban translation of the knowledge economy, articulating strategic planning, city branding, the restructuring of industrial areas, productive gentrification, and landmarks. China was examined as a developmentalist counterpoint, in which technology parks and science cities are linked to national missions, industrial policy, and technological sovereignty. Brazil was treated as a case of tension, marked by the importation of global innovation models in a context of deindustrialization, territorial inequality, fragmented funding, and the absence of a consistent national mission.

The methodology also incorporates an essayistic and authorial dimension. The book does not limit itself to reviewing existing literature; it proposes its own interpretive concepts, such as the **Café Myth**, the **Wayne's**

World Myth, the **Wall Pedagogy of Innovation**, the **Displacement of the Urban Mission**, and the **Builders of the Visual Imaginary**. These concepts were developed through the combination of bibliographic reading, critical analysis of the four previous studies, and observation of contemporary forms of circulation of innovation in academic, urban, institutional, and business environments.

Finally, the research assumes as a methodological limitation the fact that it does not constitute a statistical analysis of technology parks, innovation districts, or entrepreneurship policies. Its objective is not to measure economic performance, number of startups, patents, jobs, or investments, but to understand the symbolic, ideological, and territorial forms through which innovation is narrated, legitimized, and converted into public policy. It is, therefore, a critical investigation into the production of belief in innovation.

In summary, the methodological procedures combine a critical review of the literature, comparative case analysis, conceptual cartography, institutional reading of reports and global organizations, interpretation of urban myths, and authorial theoretical elaboration. The result is an approach that seeks to understand not only **where** innovation happens, but **who narrates it**, **who finances it**, **who measures it**, **who transforms it into an image**, and **who convinces governments, universities, companies, and cities that the future has already begun there**.

Part I - The Faith in Innovation

1. When the Factory Whistles Fall Silent

The image is simple, but powerful: when the factory whistles fall silent, the city must invent a new narrative about itself. Throughout much of the twentieth century, the sound of the factory marked urban time, organized daily movements, structured working-class neighborhoods, defined collective identities, and gave many industrial cities their economic meaning. The whistle announced the beginning and the end of the working day, but it also symbolized a specific territorial insertion into capitalism: material production, wage labor, industry, unions, infrastructure, logistics, technology, and the State.

When that sound disappears, what disappears is not merely an economic activity. An entire urban grammar also disappears. Warehouses become empty, neighborhoods lose their productive centrality, former industrial areas become frontiers of real estate speculation, workers are pushed into informality, local governments search for new revenues, and the city begins to look for another language through which to explain its future. It is within this material and symbolic void that innovation appears as a promise.

In recent decades, words such as innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, disruption, talent, startup, hub, ecosystem, smart city, technology park, and innovation district have come to occupy the place once held by terms such as industry, production, infrastructure, sanitation, housing, transportation, employment, and national development. This substitution is not merely lexical. It reveals a profound transformation in the way governments, companies, universities, and cities have come to imagine development.

Innovation, in this context, does not emerge only as a technical or economic process. It emerges as a language of salvation. It promises to put the city back on the map, attract talent, retain qualified young people, generate high-value jobs, recover degraded areas, revitalize urban centers, bring universities and companies closer together, create startups, produce real estate rent, modernize public management, and insert local territories into the global knowledge economy. The promise is seductive: in the face of the crisis of the industrial city, the innovative city appears as a horizon of redemption.

But every promise needs preachers. This is where the evangelists of innovation enter.

1.1 The City Facing the Loss of Its Industrial Horizon

Deindustrialization does not simply mean the closing of factories. It means the loss of productive density, the weakening of industrial chains, the reduction of wage employment, the weakening of unions, the transformation of the labor market, and the displacement of economic power toward finance, services, digital platforms, logistics, real estate, and consumption. In many core countries, this process was linked to productive restructuring, automation, the relocation of industrial plants to lower-cost regions, and the financialization of the economy. In the Global South, and especially in Brazil, it combined with trade liberalization, low productive investment, technological dependence, high interest rates, macroeconomic instability, and the fragility of long-term industrial policies.

The industrial city was unequal, polluted, disciplinary, and often violent in the way it organized labor and space. It is not a matter, therefore, of romanticizing the factory past. The Fordist factory also produced alienation, exploitation, urban segregation, workplace accidents, environmental contamination, and peripheries deprived of infrastructure. But it offered a material reference for urban policy: workers had to be

housed, masses had to be transported, and water, energy, sanitation, housing, schools, health services, roads, public facilities, and the conditions of social reproduction had to be guaranteed.

Modern urban policy, despite its contradictions, was strongly associated with public missions of universalization. Sanitation, housing, transportation, drainage, lighting, collective facilities, and territorial integration were central themes of the industrial city and of the developmentalist city. The fundamental question was: how should the city be organized in order to guarantee minimum living conditions for the urban population as a whole?

With the neoliberal and post-Fordist turn, this question was gradually displaced. The city began to be called upon to compete. Instead of being thought of primarily as a public totality, it began to be presented as a strategic actor within a global network of flows, investments, events, talents, and opportunities. Urban planning ceased to focus only on the provision of infrastructure and began to incorporate the vocabulary of competitiveness, territorial marketing, city branding, public-private governance, and entrepreneurial urbanism (HARVEY, 1989; BORJA; CASTELLS, 1997).

This displacement is decisive for understanding the rise of technology parks and innovation districts. They appear as urban responses to the crisis of industry, but also as symptoms of a deeper ideological transformation: the passage from the city as a collective mission to the city as a competitive platform.

1.2 From the Factory to the Hub

The hub is, in a sense, the anti-whistle of the factory. If the factory organized collective time through the noise of material production, the hub organizes the sociability of the new economy through the silence of laptops, informal conversations, mentoring sessions, pitches, networking events, glass walls, and motivational phrases. In place of the factory floor, the shared table. In place of the assembly line, the build-measure-learn cycle. In place of the worker, the talent. In place of the union, the community. In place of the wage, the opportunity. In place of the job, the project.

This substitution does not occur only in physical space. It also occurs in the social imaginary. The city that once took pride in its industries now takes pride in its innovation environments. Industrial warehouses are converted into coworking spaces. Former working-class neighborhoods become creative districts. Port areas are rebranded as innovation waterfronts. Historic centers are treated as assets of the creative economy. Public universities are pressured to form entrepreneurs. Public authorities begin to organize hackathons, startup calls, acceleration programs, and open innovation events.

The question, however, remains: what exactly is produced in these spaces? Is technology produced? Is public value produced? Is productive capacity produced? Is real estate rent produced? Is image produced? Is belief produced?

Sharon Zukin offers an important key to this discussion through her notion of the innovation complex. For Zukin, the new urban economy articulates land, labor, culture, and capital, combining material and symbolic dimensions. The innovation complex is made up of buildings, hubs, accelerators, universities, venture capital offices, business networks, and technology districts, but also of narratives, expectations, urban anxieties, and disputes over the control of change. In her analysis, contemporary cities construct landscapes of innovation

as a way of imagining growth, jobs, and the future, even though this process also produces conflicts, inequalities, and the private appropriation of gains (ZUKIN, 2020).

This formulation is central to this book. Innovation is not only something that happens in the city. It is also a way of making the city happen. It reorganizes urban land, redefines public priorities, attracts investments, creates images, legitimizes partnerships, and repositions territories. The hub, the technology park, the innovation district, and the coworking space are not merely infrastructures. They are narrative devices.

1.3 Innovation as a Response to Urban Anxiety

The post-industrial city lives in permanent anxiety. It fears losing companies, talent, investment, qualified young people, regional relevance, international competitiveness, and fiscal revenues. It fears becoming obsolete. It fears being left outside the network. It fears becoming a city of the past.

It is in this context that innovation appears as a symbolic antidote to the fear of irrelevance. It offers a language capable of replacing industrial mourning with an expectation of the future. If the factory has closed, an incubator opens. If the center has emptied out, a creative district is created. If young people are leaving, the city promises to attract the creative class. If the university seems distant from the market, a technology park is created. If public authorities lack a robust industrial policy, they organize a hackathon. If the city cannot produce structural transformation, it produces a brand of innovation.

This dynamic is not exclusive to Brazil. The vocabulary of innovative ecosystems has become global. Very different cities have begun to speak the same language: hub, startup, talent attraction, creative district, innovation district, smart city, open innovation, living lab, sandbox, accelerator, venture capital, impact, disruption. This repertoire circulates through reports by international organizations, consultancies, rankings, conferences, development agencies, corporate foundations, multilateral banks, and global networks of technology parks.

This circulation creates an illusion of equivalence. By adopting the same vocabulary, cities with radically different histories, capacities, and productive structures appear to be participating in the same game. Shenzhen, Barcelona, New York, São José dos Campos, Recife, Medellín, Buenos Aires, or São Carlos can be described through similar expressions, even though their economic bases, industrial policies, wage structures, scientific institutions, productive chains, and State capacities are profoundly different.

The gospel of innovation operates precisely at this point. It offers a common repertoire for unequal territories. And, in doing so, it often transforms historical problems into narrative deficits: the city would not be poor, dependent, or deindustrialized; it would simply not yet have found its ecosystem.

1.4 The Global South and the Risk of Imitation

For the Global South, the rhetoric of innovation is ambiguous. On the one hand, it is necessary. Peripheral and semi-peripheral countries need to innovate, produce knowledge, train engineers, strengthen universities, develop their own technologies, reduce dependencies, expand industrial capacities, create solutions for social problems, and build technical sovereignty. There is no social justice possible in the twenty-first century without scientific, technological, and productive capacity.

On the other hand, innovation can be imported as an empty formula. The risk lies in copying the form without building the structure. The technology park is imported, but not the industrial policy. The coworking space is imported, but not the productive chain. The pitch is imported, but not patient financing. The hackathon is imported, but not the national mission. The discourse of the creative class is imported, but not the wages capable of retaining talent. The landmark is imported, but not universal urban infrastructure. The ranking is imported, but not sovereign technological capacity.

This is one of the central problems of this book: global innovation reaches the Global South through concepts, institutions, manuals, events, metrics, and images that do not always recognize the historical conditions of dependency. The recommendation to create vibrant, dense, walkable, and creative environments may make sense in certain contexts. But it becomes insufficient when applied to countries with limited investment capacity, labor precarization, extreme urban inequality, structural informality, premature deindustrialization, and technological dependence.

The idea that it is enough to build a technology district with cafés, bars, bike lanes, coworking spaces, compact housing, modern facades, and pitch events in order to attract talent and investment is a territorial version of the faith in innovation. This is what this book will call the Café Myth and the "if you build it, they will come" Myth. Both express the belief that urban atmosphere or physical infrastructure can replace the structural conditions of development.

But talent does not migrate only because of cafés. Companies do not invest only because of urban aesthetics. Universities do not innovate only through agreements. Startups do not scale only through events. Technology parks do not become ecosystems simply because they have been inaugurated. Innovation requires wages, markets, demand, public procurement, laboratories, industry, infrastructure, capital, institutional trust, political continuity, regulation, technical training, and mission.

1.5 From Public Mission to Competitive Showcase

The notion of mission is fundamental. Before being captured by the language of innovation, modern urban policy was marked by great collective missions. Universalizing sanitation was a mission. Expanding electricity was a mission. Structuring transportation systems was a mission. Producing social housing was a mission. Reducing urban diseases, controlling floods, guaranteeing water supply, integrating peripheral neighborhoods, and building public facilities were tasks that required planning, investment, and public legitimacy.

These missions were imperfect, often incomplete, and frequently exclusionary. In Brazil, for example, accelerated urbanization coexisted with enormous deficits in sanitation, housing, transportation, and land regularization. Even so, the idea of public mission placed the city as a whole as the normative reference. The horizon was universalizing, even when practice failed to achieve it.

With entrepreneurial urbanism, the focus shifts. Instead of asking how to universalize infrastructures and rights, many governments begin to ask how to reposition the city in the global market. The city comes to be treated as a brand, a company, an asset, a platform, or a product. Strategic urban planning, in its most competitive version, transforms local governance into a permanent search for investments, events, tourists, companies, and talent (BORJA; CASTELLS, 1997; HARVEY, 1989).

This displacement does not eliminate public policy. It redefines it. The State continues to act, but it often acts as a promoter of markets, a guarantor of partnerships, a financier of selective infrastructure, a producer of images, and a reducer of risks for private capital. Rather than disappearing, the State changes function. It ceases to be only a provider of rights and becomes a curator of opportunities.

In this context, innovation districts are presented as a perfect synthesis: they are urban, economic, technological, real estate, and symbolic projects. They promise to regenerate degraded areas, attract companies, bring universities and markets closer together, create qualified jobs, produce public spaces, stimulate creativity, generate revenue, and project the city internationally. Few formulas are as seductive for mayors, development agencies, and universities.

But precisely for that reason, they must be critically analyzed. The more a promise seems to solve everything, the more necessary it becomes to ask what it conceals.

1.6 The Role of the Evangelists

The evangelists of innovation are mediators of this new grammar. They are not only individual authors. They are consultants, managers, professors, investors, directors of technology parks, leaders of accelerators, startup founders, multilateral banks, think tanks, funding agencies, international associations, rankings, starchitects, mayors, secretaries of development, and institutions that translate innovation into replicable models.

Some formulate concepts: creative class, creative city, Triple Helix, open innovation, lean startup, innovation districts, network society, entrepreneurial State. Others construct methodologies: pitch, MVP, acceleration, mentoring, design thinking, hackathon, sandbox. Others finance: multilateral banks, national funding agencies, venture capital funds. Others measure: rankings, indicators, manuals, R&D metrics, global innovation indexes. Others design the landscape: towers, arches, bridges, museums, corporate headquarters, landmarks, and city branding projects.

The evangelist of innovation is the one who announces a secular good news: the city can be reborn through technology; the worker can reinvent himself through entrepreneurship; the university can save itself through the market; the territory can reposition itself through the ecosystem; the State can modernize itself through open innovation; the future can be built through hubs, startups, talents, cafés, and districts.

The problem is not that all these ideas are false. Many contain partial truths. Universities matter. Networks matter. Talent matters. Urban culture matters. Technology matters. Financing matters. Collaborative environments matter. The problem arises when these dimensions are separated from the structures that give them meaning: industrial policy, the State, labor, territory, inequality, productive base, technological sovereignty, public mission, and social return.

It is at this point that innovation becomes ideology. It ceases to be a complex strategy of social and economic transformation and begins to function as a simplified explanation of the world. If the city does not grow, it lacks innovation. If young people cannot find jobs, they lack entrepreneurship. If the university cannot fund itself, it lacks the market. If the territory is unequal, it lacks an ecosystem. If industry disappears, it lacks creativity. If the worker fails, he lacked resilience.

1.7 Brazil Facing the Gospel of Innovation

In Brazil, the rhetoric of innovation encounters a particularly contradictory terrain. The country has relevant public universities, consolidated scientific institutions, strategic companies, public banks, funding agencies, islands of technological excellence, and important experiences in sectors such as aeronautics, energy, tropical agriculture, public health, heavy engineering, oil, vaccines, banking automation, and social technologies. At the same time, it faces deindustrialization, technological dependence, unstable financing, extreme urban inequality, labor precarization, weak coordination between science policy and industrial policy, and fragile long-term national missions.

This combination creates a permanent tension. The country needs to innovate, but it often imports the language of innovation without building the structural conditions that would sustain its realization. Technology parks, incubators, coworking spaces, calls for proposals, entrepreneurship events, public challenges, hackathons, and discourses on startups multiply. Yet these instruments are not always articulated with a national strategy of productive development, territorial integration, technological sovereignty, and the confrontation of inequalities.

This is why this book proposes to recover Brazilian examples of mission-oriented innovation. The electric shower, associated with the trajectory of Francisco Canhos in Jaú, can be read as a deeply territorial social innovation: it responded to the need to provide hot showers in a continental country, marked by urban expansion, unequal sanitation infrastructure, the absence of a broad domestic gas network, and great potential for electricity generation. It was not a digital startup, it was not born from a pitch, and it did not need a creative district to transform the daily lives of millions of people. But it solved a real problem.

Embraer, in São José dos Campos, offers another decisive example. The Bandeirante aircraft was not merely an aeronautical product. It was the expression of a territorial and national mission: to integrate regions, respond to the demands of the National Air Mail, form technical capacity, and articulate the State, engineering, the university, industry, and production. In this case, innovation was not simply business creativity. It was long-term institutional construction.

These examples allow us to formulate a central distinction: innovation as mission is not the same as innovation as slogan. Innovation as mission begins with collective problems, articulates institutions, mobilizes resources, builds capacities, and produces social return. Innovation as slogan produces language, aesthetics, events, and expectations, but may remain disconnected from structural transformation.

1.8 What This Book Asks

This book is born from that tension. It does not reject innovation. On the contrary: it takes innovation too seriously to leave it in the hands of slogans. The question is not whether we should innovate, but what innovation we want, for whom, financed by whom, located where, appropriated by whom, and oriented by which missions.

For this reason, this book does not ask only where technology parks, innovation districts, hubs, and creative environments are located. It asks who narrates them. Who finances them. Who measures them. Who designs them. Who transforms them into images. Who legitimizes them. Who convinces governments, universities, companies, and society that the future has already begun there.

It also asks what is left outside this narrative. Where are the precarious workers of the platform economy? Where are the residents displaced by real estate appreciation? Where are the peripheries without sanitation, while urban centers receive creative districts? Where are the closed factories, while coworking spaces are inaugurated? Where is industrial policy, while hackathons multiply? Where is public mission, while slogans of innovation are sold?

The thesis that guides this first chapter is simple: when the factory whistles fall silent, the city does not need only a new brand. It needs a new project. Innovation can be part of this project, but it cannot replace it. Without mission, innovation becomes a slogan. Without territory, it becomes abstraction. Without a productive base, it becomes dependence. Without public policy, it becomes market. Without social justice, it becomes ideology.

Industrial City	Innovation City
Factory	Hub
Worker	Talent
Union	Community
Assembly line	Lean startup
Industrial policy	Entrepreneurial ecosystem
Sanitation, housing, and transportation	Branding, districts, and investment attraction
Public mission	Territorial competitiveness
Material production	Narrative of the future
Factory whistle	Startup pitch

The passage from one pole to the other is neither linear nor total. Factories continue to exist, workers continue to produce, infrastructure remains necessary, and the materiality of the economy has not disappeared. What has changed is the dominant imaginary. The new economy likes to present itself as light, creative, digital, flexible, and collaborative. But it continues to depend on land, energy, logistics, minerals, cables, servers, buildings, transportation, labor, the State, and money.

For this reason, the challenge is not to choose between industry and innovation, past and future, factory and technology. The challenge is to reconstruct innovation as part of a public project of development, capable of confronting deindustrialization, reducing inequalities, strengthening productive capacities, and repositioning the city as a territory of rights, not merely as a competitive showcase.

2. Sharon Zukin and the Innovation Complex

Cities, Technology, and the New Economy

In the previous chapter, we saw that innovation has emerged, in recent decades, as a new language of the future for cities marked by deindustrialization, productive restructuring, and the search for new forms of economic insertion. When factory whistles fall silent, the city begins to look for other narratives: hubs, startups, innovation districts, technology parks, the creative economy, the network society, the creative class, smart cities, and entrepreneurial ecosystems. But this change is not merely economic. It is also urban, symbolic, political, and ideological.

It is at this point that Sharon Zukin becomes a decisive reference for this book. In *The Innovation Complex: Cities, Tech, and the New Economy*, Zukin offers a powerful key for understanding the new urban economy not as a purely technological phenomenon, but as an articulation between **land, labor, culture, and capital**. For Zukin, contemporary cities are central sites both for the creation of and resistance to the new economy. They concentrate companies, universities, investors, governments, highly skilled workers, coworking spaces, accelerators, venture capital offices, digital platforms, transforming neighborhoods, and urban conflicts resulting from technological restructuring (ZUKIN, 2020).

The concept of the **innovation complex** allows us to overcome two simplifying readings. The first is the idea that innovation happens only in companies, laboratories, or garages. The second is the idea that it is enough to build physical spaces of innovation - parks, hubs, districts, accelerators - for the knowledge economy to flourish automatically. Zukin shows that contemporary innovation is produced by a much broader set of relations: local governments, financial capital, real estate markets, universities, foundations, nonprofit organizations, technology companies, qualified workers, consultants, investors, urban managers, and narratives of the future.

For this reason, this chapter presents Zukin as one of the central theoretical foundations of the book. Her contribution allows us to understand the evangelists of innovation not merely as charismatic individuals, but as agents of a broader urban machinery. They are mediators who help transform innovation into landscape, public policy, real estate strategy, territorial identity, discourse of modernization, and promise of development.

2.1 What Is the Innovation Complex?

The term "innovation complex" is important because it carries a double meaning. On the one hand, it refers to a **material complex**: buildings, universities, accelerators, incubators, hubs, venture capital offices, innovation districts, coworking spaces, laboratories, digital infrastructure, transportation systems, cafés, bars, housing, and requalified public spaces. On the other hand, it refers to a **symbolic complex**: urban anxiety, the desire for modernization, fear of obsolescence, the cult of talent, faith in technology, the promise of growth, and the expectation that the new economy will produce shared prosperity.

This double dimension is central. Innovation needs infrastructure, but it also needs belief. It needs buildings, but also narratives. It needs capital, but also legitimacy. It needs universities, but also rituals of community.

It needs companies, but also symbols capable of convincing governments, investors, workers, and residents that a given territory is entering a new historical stage.

In Zukin's work, the city is not a passive container of innovation. It is a constitutive part of the new economy. Innovation territorializes itself in neighborhoods, streets, buildings, waterfronts, former industrial warehouses, port areas, university campuses, and technology districts. At the same time, the city provides the cultural elements that make innovation desirable: diversity, consumption, lifestyle, informal encounters, social networks, cafés, events, and spaces of sociability.

This formulation is especially important for this book because it allows us to understand technology parks and innovation districts as more than facilities. They are spatial forms of a promise. When a city inaugurates an innovation district, it is not merely offering square meters of office space or urban infrastructure. It is saying something about itself: that it wishes to be modern, competitive, creative, technological, connected, and capable of claiming a place in the global economy.

The innovation complex, therefore, is an articulation between materiality and imagination. It is made of bricks, cables, tables, laboratories, servers, and buildings, but also of pitches, slogans, rankings, reports, events, metaphors, success stories, and founding myths. It is within this articulation that the evangelists of innovation operate.

2.2 Cities as Sites of Creation and Resistance

One of the strengths of Zukin's analysis is that she does not treat the city only as a space for celebrating the new economy. She shows that cities are also places of conflict, resistance, and contestation. Innovation promises jobs, growth, and modernization, but it can also produce precarization, digital surveillance, gentrification, rising land prices, the private capture of public resources, and the deepening of urban inequalities.

This point is decisive. Many discourses on innovation present the new economy as a naturally positive process. The arrival of technology companies, startups, qualified workers, cafés, coworking spaces, and accelerators is taken as proof of urban vitality. Yet Zukin shows that the success of the innovation complex can make the city less livable for a large share of its residents. When companies, investors, and high-income workers arrive in certain areas, the real estate market reorganizes itself, rents rise, popular uses come under pressure, and the territory becomes disputed by groups with very unequal economic capacities (ZUKIN, 2020).

This argument is fundamental for our book because it allows us to dismantle one of the false premises of the ideology of innovation: the idea that the arrival of the technology economy automatically improves the city. It may improve some dimensions, create certain jobs, attract investments, and requalify degraded spaces. But it can also displace residents, elitize neighborhoods, reduce social diversity, transform local culture into a commodity, and subordinate urban policy to the interests of investors.

The innovative city is therefore an ambiguous city. It is promise and threat. It can be a place of creation, but also of exclusion. It can produce new opportunities, but also new forms of inequality. It can mobilize knowledge, but also capture public resources in favor of private sectors. It can transform abandoned areas, but also produce gentrification and speculation.

This ambiguity will be central in later chapters on the **Café Myth**, the **Icon Myth**, and the **"If You Build It, They Will Come" Myth**. Urban innovation should not be analyzed only in terms of what it promises, but also in terms of what it transforms, displaces, conceals, and valorizes.

2.3 Innovation as a Narrative of Change

Zukin insists on a decisive idea: building the new economy also means disputing the narrative of change. Innovation does not simply arrive in the city; it must be imagined, justified, and legitimized. Local governments, companies, universities, investors, and real estate promoters must convince society that certain transformations are necessary, desirable, and inevitable.

This is a fundamental point for understanding the evangelists of innovation. The evangelist is not only the one who invents a technology or manages a company. The evangelist is the one who narrates transformation. He explains why the city must change. He presents the old economy as obsolete, the new economy as inevitable, and the territory of innovation as the solution. His function is to produce adherence.

The narrative of innovation usually follows a recognizable sequence. First, a crisis is diagnosed: deindustrialization, loss of competitiveness, brain drain, unemployment, low productivity, degraded urban centers, universities distant from the market. Then a solution is presented: hubs, startups, innovation districts, the creative economy, acceleration, technology, talent, public-private partnerships. Finally, a future is promised: qualified jobs, urban revitalization, modernization, investment attraction, inclusion in the global economy, and cultural transformation.

This narrative is powerful because it offers hope in contexts of uncertainty. Cities that have lost factories, regions facing economic stagnation, and countries suffering from technological dependence find in innovation a language of symbolic recomposition. The problem is that this language can replace the confrontation of the structural causes of the crisis. Instead of discussing industrial policy, wages, infrastructure, technological sovereignty, financing, and inequality, public debate turns to branding, business environments, pitches, cafés, and events.

This is why the innovation complex must be read as a form of power. Not only economic power, but narrative power. Whoever controls the narrative of innovation controls, in part, public priorities, urban investments, the official images of the city, and the criteria of success.

2.4 Local Government and Urban Industrial Policy

Another decisive aspect of Zukin's analysis is her emphasis on the role of local government. The rhetoric of innovation tends to value entrepreneurs, startups, investors, and talent, but often conceals the action of the State. Zukin shows that, in New York, municipal government played a central role by subsidizing spaces, supporting training programs, creating infrastructure, promoting technology hubs, and organizing partnerships among companies, universities, and nonprofit organizations (ZUKIN, 2020).

This observation is important for two reasons. First, because it contradicts the narrative that urban innovation emerges spontaneously from the market. Second, because it shows that the State does not disappear in the new economy. On the contrary, it acts intensely: it finances, organizes, deregulates, regulates, builds infrastructure, grants incentives, negotiates with companies, mobilizes universities, creates programs, and legitimizes projects.

The question, therefore, is not whether the State participates in innovation. It does. The question is **how** it participates and **in favor of whom**. The State can orient innovation through public missions, articulating technological development with collective problems such as sanitation, health, mobility, housing, climate adaptation, energy transition, and productive sovereignty. But it can also act as a guarantor of private profitability, subsidizing companies, increasing land values, and assuming risks that will be appropriated by investors.

Here, the approximation with Mariana Mazzucato is inevitable. Mazzucato shows that the State has historically assumed decisive risks in the development of radical technologies, creating markets and financing innovations that private capital would not have supported alone (MAZZUCATO, 2013). Zukin, in turn, shows that in contemporary cities local government also plays an active role in the construction of spaces of the new economy. The critical question is whether this public risk returns to society in the form of development, services, infrastructure, qualified employment, and urban justice, or whether it is captured by financial capital, technology companies, and real estate markets.

This question is especially important for the Global South. In countries such as Brazil, public authorities frequently finance technology parks, incubators, hubs, and innovation programs. However, without a national mission, industrial policy, and clear mechanisms of social return, these investments may become dispersed, finance isolated projects, or legitimize urban ventures with low productive density. The State assumes the risk; the market may capture the rent.

2.5 The Public-Private-Nonprofit Coalition

Zukin analyzes the new urban economy through networks that combine the public sector, private companies, universities, nonprofit organizations, real estate developers, investors, and intermediary institutions. This coalition is fundamental to the innovation complex. It allows innovation to appear as a consensual project, above traditional conflicts between State and market.

The language of partnership is seductive. It speaks of collaboration, ecosystem, governance, community, connection, and impact. Yet every partnership involves interests. Companies seek markets, contracts, talent, and brand valorization. Universities seek resources, prestige, economic insertion, and funding. Governments seek jobs, tax revenues, public image, and investment attraction. Nonprofit organizations seek financing, influence, and legitimacy. Developers seek real estate valorization. Investors seek returns.

The innovation complex transforms these interests into a common narrative. Everyone begins to say that they are working for innovation. But the word innovation can conceal asymmetries of power. Not everyone gains equally. Not everyone assumes the same risks. Not everyone defines the priorities. Not everyone remains in the territory after real estate appreciation begins.

This coalition is also the space in which evangelists operate. They translate different interests into a shared language. A technology park may be good for the university, for the city government, for the developer, for the anchor company, for the funding agency, and for the consultancy - but for different reasons. The evangelist creates the vocabulary that allows these interests to appear naturally aligned.

It is in this sense that "ecosystem" is a politically effective word. It suggests balance, cooperation, diversity, and interdependence. But an innovation ecosystem is not a natural forest. It is an institutional, selective, and

hierarchical construction. There are central and peripheral actors. There are those who define the rules and those who merely participate. There are flows of capital and forms of dependence. There are valorized territories and discarded territories.

2.6 Land, Labor, Culture, and Capital

The strength of Zukin's concept lies in its articulation of four fundamental dimensions: land, labor, culture, and capital. These categories allow innovation to be analyzed much more broadly than in traditional managerial literature.

Land is decisive because the new economy needs location. Even when it presents itself as digital, immaterial, and networked, innovation occupies buildings, neighborhoods, campuses, urban centers, warehouses, public land, port areas, industrial zones, and physical infrastructures. The digital does not eliminate space; it reorganizes it. The location of technology companies, venture capital offices, universities, and highly qualified workers redefines real estate values, land uses, and urban centralities.

Labor is equally central. The new economy depends on programmers, designers, engineers, researchers, managers, communicators, delivery workers, drivers, technicians, maintenance workers, cleaners, security guards, professors, and a broad chain of visible and invisible labor. Yet the discourse of innovation tends to value only creative and technological "talent," concealing the material and precarized base that sustains innovative environments.

Culture is also indispensable. Innovation must appear desirable. For this reason, it mobilizes lifestyles, cafés, bars, events, informal language, glass architecture, motivational phrases, reused industrial aesthetics, bicycles, street art, diversity, youth, and creativity. Culture is not accessory; it helps produce the atmosphere of the new economy.

Capital, finally, organizes the scale of transformation. Venture capital, real estate funds, banks, public subsidies, tax incentives, development agencies, and large companies define which projects leave the drawing board. Without capital, the innovation district remains a model. But the presence of capital also raises the question of appropriation: who captures the gains of innovation?

The articulation between land, labor, culture, and capital allows us to understand why the innovation complex is so powerful. It does not operate only in one sector. It operates in the economy, urban space, subjectivity, landscape, university, State, labor market, and social imagination.

2.7 Talent as the Subject of the New Economy

Zukin also draws attention to the importance of talent pipelines: universities, accelerators, coding schools, training programs, and mentoring networks. In the innovation complex, talent is presented as a strategic resource. Cities must attract, train, and retain talent. Companies compete for talent. Universities produce talent. Innovation districts promise to concentrate talent.

This centrality of talent brings Zukin close to Richard Florida, but it also allows for critique. The theory of the creative class suggests that qualified professionals are attracted by tolerant, diverse, culturally vibrant, and technologically dynamic cities (FLORIDA, 2002). Zukin shows that these cultural choices exist, but insists that capital, markets, and the concentration of wealth are equally important. The location of

innovation does not depend only on urban taste or lifestyle; it also depends on financial resources, institutions, and power.

This distinction will be fundamental for the **Café Myth**. The presence of cafés, bike lanes, bars, and coworking spaces may matter for the sociability of the new economy, but it does not alone explain the location of talent. Qualified people also consider wages, career opportunities, cost of living, stability, professional networks, the quality of public services, and macroeconomic prospects. In peripheral countries, these factors are even more decisive.

Talent, therefore, cannot be treated as a magical subject of urban transformation. It is produced by educational systems, universities, research grants, science and technology policies, families, social networks, infrastructure, and labor markets. When a city says it wants to attract talent, it must ask: what kind of talent? Trained by whom? To work where? With what wages? In which sectors? With what return to society?

2.8 Innovation and Its Selective Geography

The innovation complex is not evenly distributed across the city. It chooses places. It tends to prefer well-located, connected areas endowed with infrastructure, close to universities, with real estate potential, a good urban image, and the ability to attract investment. It often occupies former industrial areas, waterfronts, central neighborhoods in transformation, or zones with reusable architectural heritage.

This selectivity creates a tension. Innovation is presented as a project for the whole city, but it often materializes in privileged urban fragments. The innovation district may be sold as an engine of collective development, but its benefits tend to concentrate in specific groups and territories. Meanwhile, peripheries continue to face precarious sanitation, deficient transportation, inadequate housing, floods, heat islands, and lack of public facilities.

This critique is especially important in Brazil. In cities marked by deep inequalities, the creation of technology or creative districts can reinforce urban fragmentation if it is not articulated with redistributive policies, social housing, public transportation, broad professional training, digital inclusion, and territorially balanced productive development.

The question is not only where innovation should be located. It is how it should be socially distributed. An innovation district may create jobs, but for whom? It may valorize land, but who captures that valorization? It may requalify spaces, but who remains there? It may attract companies, but what links do these companies establish with the local economy? It may improve the city's image, but does that image correspond to the life of most of its residents?

2.9 The Innovation Complex as Secular Faith

The title of this book - *Evangelists of Innovation* - speaks directly to this symbolic dimension. Contemporary innovation often operates as a secular faith. It has its preachers, temples, rituals, sacred texts, manuals, business saints, pilgrimage sites, wall phrases, and promises of salvation.

The temples are hubs, parks, accelerators, coworking spaces, auditoriums, and innovation districts. The rituals are pitches, hackathons, meetups, demo days, mentoring sessions, and conferences. The sacred texts are management manuals, reports from international organizations, global rankings, books by gurus, and

best-practice guides. The business saints are figures such as Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, or garage entrepreneurs transformed into cultural heroes. The promises are growth, disruption, impact, freedom, creativity, and the future.

Zukin helps us understand why this faith territorializes itself. Innovation needs places in order to be seen. It needs addresses, neighborhoods, buildings, photographs, maps, signs, events, and landmarks. It needs to appear real. The urban landscape functions as visual proof of the promise. If there is a district, a hub, a tower, a café, an accelerator, and young people with laptops, then the city appears to be innovating.

But the appearance of innovation is not the same as innovation. This distinction runs throughout the entire book. The innovation complex can produce knowledge, companies, jobs, and real solutions. But it can also produce only landscape, expectation, and real estate valorization. The difference depends on mission, productive base, financing, public policy, institutional capacity, and social appropriation of results.

2.10 Zukin's Contribution to This Book

Reading Zukin allows us to organize a matrix for analyzing the evangelists of innovation. This matrix contains seven main elements.

First, innovation is **urban**. It does not happen only in companies or laboratories, but in cities, neighborhoods, districts, networks, and real estate markets.

Second, innovation is **material and symbolic**. It needs infrastructure, but also narrative.

Third, innovation is **political**. It depends on governments, subsidies, regulations, partnerships, and public decisions.

Fourth, innovation is **financial**. It depends on venture capital, investment, funds, banks, and expectations of return.

Fifth, innovation is **cultural**. It constructs lifestyles, languages, spaces of sociability, and urban identities.

Sixth, innovation is **unequal**. It can concentrate gains, raise prices, exclude residents, and precarize workers.

Seventh, innovation is **disputed**. It produces resistance, conflicts, criticism, and alternatives.

This matrix guides the entire book. In the following chapters, we will see how authors, institutions, cities, banks, architects, managers, and consultants act as evangelists of this new economy. Some create concepts; others create metrics; others build buildings; others finance; others design brands; others train talent; others organize rituals. All, in some way, help produce the innovation complex.

The objective, however, is not to reject innovation. On the contrary, it is to rescue it from vulgarization. Socially relevant innovation cannot be reduced to pitch, coworking, café, ranking, or landmark. It must respond to collective problems. It needs the State, universities, industry, financing, labor, territory, and mission. It must produce public value, not merely private valorization.

Zukin shows that the new urban economy is made of promises and dangers. This book begins from that ambiguity to ask: who promises? Who gains? Who loses? Who narrates? Who finances? Who measures? Who transforms innovation into image? Who convinces the city that a given territory is the place of the future?

Table 2 - The Innovation Complex as Read in This Book

Dimension	How It Appears in the Innovation Complex	Critical Question
Land	Districts, hubs, parks, waterfronts, coworking spaces, urban campuses	Who captures real estate valorization?
Labor	Talent, programmers, researchers, platform workers, invisible service workers	Who is included and who is precarized?
Culture	Cafés, events, phrases, lifestyle, creativity, tech community	Does culture promote diversity or branding?
Capital	Venture capital, banks, subsidies, public and private funds	Who assumes the risk and who captures the return?
State	Incentives, infrastructure, partnerships, regulation, innovation programs	Is there a public mission or only support for the market?
University	Research, training, patents, startups, science parks	Public knowledge or private capture?
Narrative	Future, disruption, talent, ecosystem, smart city	Does the discourse reveal or conceal conflicts?
Image	Landmarks, towers, arches, iconic architecture, city branding	Does the landscape express development or replace it?

2.11 Final Remarks

Sharon Zukin offers an indispensable key for understanding innovation as a total urban phenomenon. The innovation complex is not merely an economic sector, nor simply a science and technology policy. It is a form of urban reorganization under the hegemony of the new economy. It articulates capital, culture, land, labor, government, university, technology, real estate markets, and narrative.

For this book, this contribution is decisive because it allows us to understand the evangelists of innovation as agents of historical mediation. They translate the crisis of the industrial city into the promise of the technological city. They transform complex policies into slogans. They convert urban spaces into brands. They present economic interests as inevitable destiny. They create the language through which governments, universities, companies, and citizens come to imagine the future.

But the innovation complex also reveals its limits. The innovative city may be more unequal. The hub may replace the factory without replacing the jobs. The district may valorize land without democratizing opportunities. The café may produce atmosphere without producing development. The landmark may give a

face to the future without building its productive base. The ranking may measure innovation without measuring social justice.

From Zukin, therefore, we can formulate a central thesis: innovation must be studied not only for what it creates, but for what it promises; not only for what it finances, but for what it conceals; not only for the buildings it constructs, but for the beliefs it produces. The innovation complex is, at once, infrastructure and imaginary. It is in this space between materiality and faith that the evangelists of innovation operate.

3. From Urban Mission to Entrepreneurial Urbanism

Neoliberalism, Strategic Planning, and the Competitive City

The recent history of urban policy can be read as a profound transformation in the way cities have come to justify their projects for the future. Throughout much of the twentieth century, public action upon urban space was legitimized by great collective missions: universalizing sanitation, expanding water and energy networks, building housing, structuring transportation systems, organizing urban growth, controlling floods, providing public facilities, opening avenues, implementing parks, integrating peripheries, and guaranteeing minimum conditions for the reproduction of urban life.

These missions were neither neutral nor free of contradictions. They were often associated with technocratic interventions, removals, authoritarianism, hygienism, unequal modernization, and the production of precarious peripheries. In Brazil, for example, accelerated urbanization combined large infrastructure works, metropolitan expansion, industrialization, socio-spatial segregation, and persistent deficits in sanitation, transportation, housing, and public facilities. Even so, within the horizon of modern urban policy there was a strong idea of the city as a public totality. The urban problem was formulated as a collective question: how to provide infrastructure, services, and living conditions for the population as a whole?

From the final decades of the twentieth century onward, this grammar began to shift. With the crisis of Fordism, productive restructuring, financialization, economic globalization, and the rise of neoliberalism, the city increasingly came to be treated as a competitive actor. Urban planning ceased to be presented primarily as an instrument for universalizing rights and began to be mobilized as a strategy of territorial positioning. The question "how can sanitation, housing, and transportation be guaranteed for all?" began to compete with another question: "how can the city become attractive to investments, companies, tourists, talents, and global events?"

This turn is decisive for understanding technology parks, innovation districts, creative hubs, requalified waterfronts, and smart city projects. They are not only technical responses to the new economy. They are also spatial expressions of a political transformation: the passage from the city as public mission to the city as competitive project.

3.1 The City as Public Mission

Modern urban policy was born linked to the need to govern the consequences of industrialization. The concentration of factories, workers, housing, diseases, waste, circulation, and social conflicts required new forms of State intervention. The industrial city confronted public authorities with problems of unprecedented scale: water supply, sewage systems, collective transportation, popular housing, public health, land-use regulation, epidemic control, street opening, lighting, drainage, and collective facilities.

In this context, urban policy had a mission-oriented dimension. The city had to be equipped to function as a support for production, social reproduction, and collective life. This mission was crossed by class interests, modernization projects, and political disputes, but its legitimacy was associated with the idea of public infrastructure. The city was seen as an organism to be sanitized, integrated, and expanded.

In Brazil, this mission-oriented dimension of urban policy was particularly contradictory. Large infrastructure works, road-based planning, metropolitan expansion, and sanitary interventions coexisted with peripheralization, self-construction, informality, removals, and inequality in access to services. Universalizing sanitation, decent housing, and public transportation remained much more an incomplete promise than an effective reality. Even so, these themes organized the vocabulary of the urban question.

The city was thought through material deficits: housing deficit, sanitation deficit, transportation deficit, equipment deficit, infrastructure deficit. The legitimacy of urban policy depended on its capacity to respond to these deficits. Public authorities were charged with works, networks, services, regulation, and planning.

This logic has not disappeared. It remains present and is even more urgent in countries of the Global South. What has changed is the symbolic hierarchy of agendas. In many cities, urban policy has become increasingly crossed by selective projects of competitiveness, revitalization, innovation, creativity, and territorial branding. The problem is not that these agendas exist. The problem is when they displace or obscure universal public missions that remain unfulfilled.

3.2 The Neoliberal Turn of the City

David Harvey, in his classic text on the transformation of urban governance in late capitalism, identifies the passage from **urban managerialism** to **urban entrepreneurialism**. In the managerial model, local government would be more oriented toward the administration of services, infrastructure, and urban reproduction. In the entrepreneurial model, it begins to act more aggressively in promoting economic growth, attracting investment, forming public-private partnerships, and engaging in interurban competition (HARVEY, 1989).

This passage must be understood in the context of the fiscal crisis of national States, productive restructuring, the deindustrialization of former industrial regions, and the intensification of competition for capital flows. Cities that had previously relied on relatively stable industrial bases began to compete for corporate headquarters, events, tourism, advanced services, real estate investments, cultural institutions, universities, technology centers, and qualified workers.

Neoliberal urbanism does not mean the absence of the State. On the contrary, it means a new form of State action. Local government begins to create conditions for private valorization: it offers incentives, flexibilizes rules, invests in selective infrastructure, promotes strategic areas, reorganizes central zones, participates in partnerships, subsidizes anchor facilities, produces images, and reduces risks for investors.

The entrepreneurial city acts as if it were operating in a market of cities. It must differentiate itself, sell itself, build a brand, identify niches, attract consumers, compete in rankings, and demonstrate innovation capacity. In this context, urban projects cease to be merely responses to collective needs and also become instruments of competitive repositioning.

The consequence is a change in the way public investments are justified. A project does not only need to solve an urban problem; it must project the city, attract capital, improve its image, create a business environment, and demonstrate modernity. Public works acquire both economic and symbolic functions. A bridge, a tower, a cultural center, a technology park, or a creative district becomes a sign that the city is "reinventing itself."

It is within this environment that innovation becomes a keyword. It allows economic growth, technological modernization, youth, creativity, universities, entrepreneurship, venture capital, urban requalification, and territorial marketing to be united in a single narrative.

3.3 Borja, Castells, and the City as Political Actor

Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells occupy a central place in this turn. In texts from the 1990s, the authors argued that cities, in a globalized and informational world, were no longer merely administrative units subordinated to the national State, but were becoming political protagonists. Local governments should formulate strategies, articulate actors, build consensus, establish partnerships, and insert their cities into global networks of economic, cultural, and technological flows (BORJA; CASTELLS, 1996; 1997).

This formulation had great impact because it recognized a real change: cities were, in fact, gaining greater political and economic visibility. Mayors, development agencies, business coalitions, and metropolitan governments began to compete for investments, international events, cultural facilities, corporate headquarters, and strategic projects. The city became a privileged scale of experimentation in globalization.

However, this valorization of the city as political actor also opened the way for a business-oriented interpretation of urban management. If the city is an actor, it must have a strategy. If it has a strategy, it must identify competitive advantages. If it competes for flows, it must construct an image. If it wants to attract capital, it must offer projects, security, infrastructure, governance, and visibility. Thus, the city-actor can easily become the city-enterprise.

Borja and Castells should not be read simplistically. Their formulations also carried concerns with local democracy, participation, citizenship, and urban integration. But the international circulation of these ideas, especially among governments, consultancies, and planning organizations, contributed to strengthening the language of strategic urban planning. The city should define a vision of the future, mobilize public and private actors, build major projects, and position itself in the global economy.

This transition is fundamental for our book. The evangelists of innovation do not emerge in a vacuum. They appear in a context in which the city had already been redefined as a competitive agent. Innovation enters as the privileged content of this strategy. If, in the 1990s, the language was that of the global city, strategic planning, and the Barcelona model, in the following decades it became that of innovation districts, hubs, the creative class, smart cities, and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

3.4 The Barcelona Model and the Seduction of Strategic Planning

Barcelona became one of the great symbolic laboratories of this transformation. The city was widely celebrated for its ability to use the 1992 Olympic Games as an instrument for urban restructuring, opening the city to the sea, recovering public spaces, modernizing infrastructure, international repositioning, and constructing an image of a creative, cosmopolitan, and competitive city.

The so-called **Barcelona model** combined urban planning, high-quality public space design, major events, partnerships, the requalification of strategic areas, the valorization of local identity, and international projection. For many local governments, it became an example of how a city could reinvent itself through urban projects articulated with a global narrative.

Later, 22@ Barcelona would be presented as a continuation of this logic, now associated with the knowledge economy. The former industrial Poblenou, often called the "Catalan Manchester," was reimagined as an innovation district. Warehouses, factories, industrial blocks, and underused areas were integrated into a strategy to attract technology companies, universities, research centers, housing, cultural facilities, and advanced services.

The strength of 22@ lies precisely in this combination: strategic planning, productive restructuring, city branding, iconic architecture, universities, companies, the knowledge economy, and the real estate market. It offers a powerful image of the post-industrial city: where there was once a factory, there is now a hub; where there was a chimney, there is now a tower; where there was a worker, there is now talent; where there was an industrial neighborhood, there is now a creative district.

But this image also conceals conflicts. The requalification of industrial areas can produce real estate valorization, the displacement of residents, the replacement of productive activities, the loss of working-class memory, and gentrification. When exported as a recipe, the model of urban success tends to erase the specific historical conditions that produced it.

This is a recurring problem in urban gospels: singular experiences are transformed into universal models. The "Barcelona model" begins to circulate as a manual of urban modernization. The 22@ begins to circulate as a reference for innovation districts. The risk is that other cities import the form without importing the history, institutional capacity, economic structure, conflicts, and complementary policies.

3.5 From the City of Rights to the City of Assets

The neoliberal turn reorganizes the language of urban policy. Territories cease to be seen only as places of housing, work, memory, and social reproduction, and begin to be treated as assets. Historic centers become cultural assets. Waterfronts become real estate assets. Universities become knowledge assets. Industrial neighborhoods become creative assets. Qualified workers become human capital. Diversity becomes competitive advantage. Culture becomes the creative economy. Public space becomes urban experience.

This transformation does not completely eliminate the vocabulary of rights, but it often subordinates it to the vocabulary of competitiveness. A square is valued because it improves quality of life, but also because it attracts investment. A bike lane is defended as sustainable mobility, but also as an amenity for talent. A cultural center is seen as a public facility, but also as an anchor for revitalization. A university is recognized as an institution of knowledge, but also as an engine of entrepreneurship and spin-offs.

This logic creates permanent ambiguity. Urban projects may produce real benefits and, at the same time, operate as instruments of selective valorization. They may improve public spaces and raise rents. They may recover heritage and displace popular uses. They may attract companies and precarize support work. They may strengthen universities and subordinate research agendas to business demands.

The city of assets does not completely replace the city of rights, but it competes with it at the center of political imagination. What was once justified as a collective need begins to be presented as strategic investment. The territory becomes a portfolio. Urban management begins to speak the language of the market.

In this scenario, innovation becomes a kind of supreme asset. An innovative city appears better prepared for the future, more attractive to companies, more interesting to qualified young people, more desirable for investors, more visible in rankings, and more legitimate before multilateral organizations. Innovation becomes a territorial brand.

3.6 The Displacement of the Urban Mission

This book proposes to call this transformation the **displacement of the urban mission**. It is the process through which universalizing public objectives - sanitation, housing, transportation, drainage, urban health, collective facilities, territorial integration, and the reduction of inequalities - lose symbolic centrality in the face of selective agendas of competitiveness, innovation, territorial marketing, investment attraction, and the construction of urban images.

The displacement of the urban mission does not mean that sanitation, housing, and transportation cease to matter. On the contrary, they remain fundamental conditions of life. The problem is that, in many discourses of urban development, these agendas begin to be treated as old, heavy, expensive, and not very glamorous, while innovation, creativity, technology, and entrepreneurship appear as modern, light, promising, and media-friendly.

This asymmetry has consequences. It is easier to inaugurate a hub than to universalize sanitation. It is more photogenic to launch an innovation district than to recover flood-prone peripheries. It is more attractive to investors to announce a technology cluster than to confront land regularization. It is simpler to organize a hackathon than to build an industrial policy. It is faster to produce a smart city brand than to structurally reform public management.

The displacement of the urban mission therefore produces a politics of visibility. Some actions gain centrality because they communicate modernity. Others remain invisible because they concern the daily reproduction of urban life. Innovation can then become a form of concealment: a discursive shine over persistent deficits.

This is why this book insists on the idea of mission. Innovation only becomes socially relevant when it is articulated with collective missions: universalizing sanitation, confronting the climate crisis, reducing inequalities, expanding sustainable mobility, strengthening public health, building technological sovereignty, guaranteeing food security, qualifying housing, recovering urban rivers, producing clean energy, reindustrializing on a green basis, and democratizing access to knowledge.

Without mission, innovation becomes a slogan. With mission, it can once again become public policy.

3.7 Strategic Planning and the Production of Consensus

Strategic urban planning was one of the central instruments of the entrepreneurial turn. Inspired by business practices, it proposes that the city define its vision, objectives, priorities, structuring projects, competitive advantages, and forms of governance. In theory, it can be an instrument for democratic articulation and the collective construction of the future. In practice, it has often served to produce consensus around major urban projects led by public-private coalitions.

Carlos Vainer criticized this tendency by showing how strategic planning can transform the city into enterprise, commodity, and homeland. As enterprise, the city must be competitive. As commodity, it must be sold. As homeland, it must produce internal consensus around a supposedly common project (VAINER, 2000). This critique is fundamental for understanding how the language of innovation can function as a mechanism of political pacification.

When a project is presented as innovative, it tends to acquire a positive aura. Who would be against innovation? Who would be against qualified jobs, technology, creativity, youth, and the future? The word innovation creates a zone of anticipated consensus. It makes criticism more difficult, because it positions the opponent as backward, pessimistic, or resistant to change.

This is particularly evident in projects of technology parks and innovation districts. They are presented as inevitable, modern, and strategic. But rarely are the following questions asked with the same intensity: which sectors will be strengthened? Which companies will benefit? How many jobs will be created? For whom? With what wages? What public resources will be mobilized? Will there be social return? Will there be affordable housing? Will there be connection with peripheries? Will there be industrial policy? Will there be mechanisms to capture real estate appreciation?

When captured by entrepreneurial logic, strategic planning can replace democratic conflict with a narrative of competitive consensus. Innovation appears as destiny, not as political choice.

3.8 The Competitive City and the Knowledge Economy

The rise of the knowledge economy reinforced the idea that cities should compete for immaterial flows: information, talent, financial capital, scientific knowledge, patents, brands, data, and creativity. Manuel Castells, in formulating the network society, showed that the new economy is organized through global flows of information, capital, and communication, in which certain territorial nodes concentrate strategic functions (CASTELLS, 1999).

This reading helped to understand real transformations in informational capitalism. But it was also appropriated by urban policies that began to affirm that cities disconnected from global networks would be condemned to irrelevance. Thus, local governments began to invest in digital infrastructure, technology districts, innovation networks, creative environments, and strategies of insertion into the knowledge economy.

Again, the problem is not recognizing the importance of these dimensions. Cities need connectivity, universities, technology, research, culture, and economic networks. The problem is when the knowledge economy is treated as a substitute for the material economy. The new economy continues to depend on energy, minerals, infrastructure, transportation, logistics, labor, housing, sanitation, food, and industry. The digital does not eliminate materiality; it reorganizes its chains and hides part of its costs.

For the Global South, this distinction is crucial. A city may create innovation districts and remain dependent on the importation of strategic technologies. It may have startups and no industry. It may have applications and no sanitation. It may have coworking spaces and no qualified jobs at scale. It may have innovation events and no consistent science and technology policy.

The competitive city must be confronted with the real city. The knowledge economy cannot be built upon the denial of basic infrastructures. Urban innovation should not replace public missions; it should be placed at their service.

3.9 Entrepreneurial Urbanism as Political Pedagogy

Entrepreneurial urbanism does not act only upon governments. It also acts upon subjectivities. The entrepreneurial city requires entrepreneurial subjects: flexible public managers, innovative professors, students who found startups, adaptable workers, creative residents, competitive universities, results-oriented public servants, communities engaged in challenges, and citizens converted into users.

This political pedagogy appears in calls for proposals, events, awards, hackathons, incubators, innovation labs, acceleration programs, and motivational wall phrases. The city begins to teach its inhabitants to think in terms of opportunity, solution, impact, scale, prototype, MVP, pitch, and resilience. Urban problems are transformed into innovation challenges. Rights become services. Citizens become clients or users. Public policies become solutions.

This change is not merely linguistic. It displaces responsibilities. If the city is an ecosystem of opportunities, individual failure can be interpreted as lack of initiative. If everyone can become an entrepreneur, unemployment appears as an opportunity for reinvention. If precariousness is treated as flexibility, the absence of rights can be narrated as freedom.

In innovation environments, this pedagogy appears in condensed form in motivational phrases: "love what you do," "fail fast," "get out of your comfort zone," "think different," "take risks," "innovate." These phrases displace structural problems into individual morality. Public policy is replaced by attitude. Inequality is converted into challenge. Failure is psychologized.

This is why entrepreneurial urbanism must be analyzed as ideology. It produces spaces, but it also produces subjects. It produces districts, but it also produces beliefs. It produces events, but it also produces ways of interpreting success and failure.

3.10 Technology Parks and Innovation Districts in This Turn

Classical technology parks often emerged as planned spaces, frequently located away from urban centers, associated with universities, technology-based companies, and specialized infrastructure. In many cases, they assumed the form of enclaves: controlled, zoned, monofunctional areas, dependent on the automobile and separated from the everyday life of the city.

Innovation districts appear as a supposed overcoming of this model. Instead of the isolated park, they propose dense, mixed, walkable urban spaces, connected to public transportation, close to universities, companies, housing, cafés, bars, culture, leisure, and services. Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner presented innovation districts as the new geography of innovation, in which proximity, density, and urbanity would replace the suburban isolation of traditional technology parks (KATZ; WAGNER, 2014).

This formulation is important and responds to a real change. Contemporary innovation depends on encounters, the circulation of knowledge, diversity of uses, institutional proximity, and attractive urban environments. However, when converted into a recipe, it can produce another myth: the idea that it is

enough to create a vibrant district for the creative class to come, companies to settle, capital to appear, and the local economy to transform.

This is the core of what we will call, in the following chapters, the **Café Myth** and the **"If You Build It, They Will Come" Myth**. The innovation district can be a useful instrument when articulated with industrial policy, strong universities, financing, companies, worker training, affordable housing, and public mission. But without these elements, it may become merely a sophisticated form of real estate valorization.

The difference between an innovation district and a landscape of innovation lies in the density of the real relations it sustains. The landscape communicates the future. The ecosystem produces capacities.

Table 3 - From Urban Mission to Entrepreneurial Urbanism

Urban Policy as Mission	Entrepreneurial Urban Policy
Universalization of sanitation, housing, and transportation	Attraction of investments, talent, and companies
City as public totality	City as competitive actor
Planning as provision of infrastructure	Planning as positioning strategy
State as provider of rights	State as promoter of markets
Urban deficit as collective problem	Competitiveness deficit as strategic problem
Structural works of social reproduction	Anchor projects, landmarks, and districts
Territorial integration	Valorization of selective areas
Citizen	User, consumer, entrepreneur
Urban development	Urban branding
Public mission	Innovation ecosystem

3.11 Final Remarks

The rise of the evangelists of innovation must be understood within this historical turn in urban policy. They do not appear only because new technologies emerged. They appear because cities began to seek new narratives of development in a context of deindustrialization, globalization, territorial competition, and the neoliberalization of urban governance.

Previously, urban policy was legitimized by universalizing missions, even if incomplete: bringing water, sewage, housing, transportation, energy, facilities, and infrastructure to the city as a whole. With the

entrepreneurial turn, urban policy is increasingly legitimized by its ability to make the city attractive, competitive, creative, smart, and innovative.

This change should not be interpreted in a Manichean way. Cities need strategy. They need to innovate. They need to attract investment. They need to strengthen universities, companies, and technology. The problem is when this agenda replaces the public mission; when image replaces structure; when competitiveness replaces urban justice; and when innovation is treated as a universal solution to problems that require social, industrial, environmental, and territorial policy.

The evangelists of innovation operate precisely at this frontier. They translate the competitive city into the innovative city. They transform urban crisis into opportunity. They convert former industrial areas into promises of the knowledge economy. They present districts, hubs, cafés, events, and landmarks as signs of the future. They produce the language through which the neoliberal city narrates itself as creative, smart, and entrepreneurial.

The critical task of this book is to place mission back at the center. Innovation should not be rejected, but reoriented. Instead of asking only how to make the city competitive, we must ask how to make it just, productive, democratic, sustainable, and technologically sovereign. Instead of asking only how to attract talent, we must ask how to train, remunerate, and retain people within collective projects of development. Instead of asking only how to create innovation districts, we must ask how to connect innovation to sanitation, housing, mobility, health, climate, industry, and the reduction of inequalities.

The city does not only need to appear innovative. It needs to innovate in what guarantees dignified life. This is the point at which urban policy can rediscover its mission.

Part II - The Evangelists of Innovation

4. The Constellation of Evangelists

Authors, Concepts, and Myths of Contemporary Innovation

Contemporary innovation did not become a dominant language merely because new technologies were created. It became dominant because it was narrated, conceptualized, translated, taught, institutionalized, and repeated by a constellation of authors, consultants, managers, entrepreneurs, professors, policymakers, and intellectuals who helped organize the imaginary of the new economy.

These authors do not form a single school, nor do they necessarily share the same political orientation. Some are economists; others are urbanists, sociologists, management scholars, business consultants, theorists of creativity, innovation researchers, urban strategists, or advocates of the centrality of the State. Yet, taken together, their ideas helped build the vocabulary through which cities, universities, governments, and companies began to imagine their future.

This chapter calls them **evangelists of innovation** not in order to reduce them to simplistic propagandists, but to highlight their historical function: they helped disseminate a secular good news. This good news declared that the industrial, bureaucratic, rigid, Fordist economy was being replaced by another economy: creative, flexible, digital, entrepreneurial, open, collaborative, urban, knowledge-intensive, and network-oriented. For some, this new economy would require entrepreneurs capable of breaking productive routines. For others, it would require tolerant and culturally vibrant cities. For others, entrepreneurial universities. For others, dense and connected districts. For others, lean startups. For still others, an entrepreneurial State capable of orienting great missions.

The problem, therefore, does not lie simply in these authors. Many of them produced decisive contributions for understanding real transformations of capitalism. The problem begins when their ideas are removed from their contexts, simplified, converted into slogans, appropriated by consultancies, and transformed into universal recipes for public policy. Innovation then moves from analytical concept to commandment. The creative city becomes a package of amenities. The creative class becomes a justification for gentrification. The Triple Helix becomes a formal agreement. Disruption becomes a catchword. The lean startup becomes a general model for society. The entrepreneurial State becomes, in impoverished versions, an incentive to precarious self-entrepreneurship.

The constellation of evangelists is, therefore, ambiguous. It illuminates and obscures. It teaches and simplifies. It opens paths and constructs myths. Its strength lies precisely in having produced a grammar capable of crossing different fields: economics, management, urbanism, sociology, public policy, science and technology, strategic planning, architecture, entrepreneurial education, and regional development.

4.1 Evangelists, Theorists, and Translators

Before examining the authors, it is important to distinguish three figures: the theorist, the evangelist, and the translator. The theorist formulates concepts to interpret reality. The evangelist disseminates a worldview, mobilizes adherence, and constructs belief. The translator converts complex concepts into tools, methodologies, manuals, public policies, and objects of management.

In many cases, the same person occupies more than one of these positions. Richard Florida, for example, formulates a theory of the creative class, but also acts as a major disseminator of a vision of the city based on talent, tolerance, and technology. Henry Etzkowitz proposes an analytical model for understanding the relationship between university, industry, and government, but his Triple Helix also becomes an operational language for technology parks and innovation policies. Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner analyze the emergence of innovation districts, but their formulation also guides urban managers, development agencies, and consultancies. Guy Kawasaki is even more explicit: he transforms business evangelism into a practice of persuasion, mobilization, and diffusion of products and ideas.

This distinction is important because the book does not intend to claim that all these authors are responsible for later simplifications of their ideas. Dense concepts often become impoverished precisely when they circulate in institutional, business, and governmental environments that require quick formulas. Theory becomes a slide. The book becomes a lecture. The lecture becomes a slogan. The slogan becomes a coworking wall. The wall becomes pedagogy.

Sharon Zukin is decisive for understanding this process because she shows that the new urban economy is made not only by companies and technologies, but also by narratives, institutions, spaces, capitals, governments, and communities that construct what she calls the innovation complex. In her book, hackathons, meetups, accelerators, startups, venture capital, talent pipelines, and "innovation addresses" appear as parts of a broader urban and symbolic machinery (ZUKIN, 2020). The constellation of evangelists is the intellectual and discursive field that helps feed this machinery.

4.2 Schumpeter and the Entrepreneur as Agent of Creative Destruction

Joseph Schumpeter occupies the place of the founding classic. In *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, published in 1942, he consolidated the notion of **creative destruction** as a central element of capitalism. For Schumpeter, innovation is not mere gradual improvement. It reorganizes markets, destroys previous productive forms, creates new products, new methods, new markets, new sources of raw materials, and new forms of economic organization (SCHUMPETER, 1942).

With Schumpeter, the entrepreneur appears as an agent of rupture. He is not simply the owner of a small business, nor merely someone who works on his own. He is the one who introduces new combinations and destabilizes established economic routines. This distinction is fundamental, because part of the contemporary vulgarization of entrepreneurship consists precisely in transforming any survival activity into innovative entrepreneurship.

In the Global South, this confusion is especially problematic. The app driver, the informal vendor, the necessity-based micro-entrepreneur, or the indebted small shop owner may demonstrate work capacity, resilience, and practical creativity. But this does not mean that they are automatically Schumpeterian agents of productive transformation. Often, they are expressions of precarization, unemployment, informalization, and the transfer of risk to the individual.

Schumpeter's contribution is decisive because it places innovation at the center of capitalist dynamics. But the myth that derives from its vulgarization is dangerous: the entrepreneur as abstract hero. In this myth, structural conditions disappear. The State disappears. Credit disappears. Universities disappear. Industry

disappears. Market demand disappears. What remains is the solitary individual who, through vision and courage, supposedly transforms the world.

The Schumpeterian entrepreneur, when transformed into ideology, becomes the saint of the new economy.

4.3 Drucker and Innovation as Discipline

Peter Drucker occupies another fundamental place in the constellation. In *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, published in 1985, he argued that innovation could be treated as a systematic discipline. Innovation would not be only a spontaneous event, a stroke of genius, or a rare invention; it could be organized, managed, learned, and incorporated into the practices of firms and institutions (DRUCKER, 1985).

Drucker's contribution is important because it helps demystify innovation as pure inspiration. He shows that organizations can observe changes, identify opportunities, mobilize knowledge, structure processes, and create conditions for innovation. In this sense, he builds a bridge between economics and management. Innovation becomes not only a macroeconomic force, but also a managerial practice.

However, this contribution also carries a risk of vulgarization. When innovation is transformed into discipline, it can also become a manual. What was an invitation to organize learning becomes a set of recipes. What was a management reflection becomes a universal methodology. The word innovation begins to function as a moral imperative: innovate, adapt, change, reinvent yourself.

Drucker, in this sense, participates in the construction of a bridge between economy and management. His contribution is real: innovation requires organization. But its vulgarization can produce the myth of innovation as a managerial manual, as if it were enough to apply management techniques, observe opportunities, and create an organizational culture in order to overcome technological dependence, urban inequality, the absence of industrial policy, or the crisis of work.

4.4 Christensen and the Seduction of Disruption

Clayton Christensen, in *The Innovator's Dilemma*, published in 1997, popularized the theory of **disruptive innovation**. His central argument is that established companies can be challenged by entrants that begin by offering simpler, cheaper products or products aimed at neglected segments and gradually transform entire markets (CHRISTENSEN, 1997).

The idea was extremely influential because it offered a powerful narrative: giants can fall; small actors can win; innovation can come from the margins; the future can be born from solutions initially considered inferior by dominant markets. For startups, investors, and consultants, disruption became a magic word.

But few words have been as vulgarized as "disruption." Any application became disruptive. Any change in interface, business model, or platform began to claim historical rupture. In public policy, this language can be even more problematic, because it suggests that complex institutions - health, education, transportation, sanitation, urban planning - can be "disrupted" by fast, scalable, technological solutions.

Disruption, when transformed into ideology, devalues continuity, maintenance, infrastructure, public work, and accumulated knowledge. In the urban field, this is particularly serious. Cities are not simple markets to be "disrupted." They are territories of rights, memories, infrastructures, inequalities, and conflicts. Not every rupture is emancipatory. Some ruptures merely transfer risks, precarize workers, and privatize gains.

4.5 Chesbrough and the Promise of Open Innovation

Henry Chesbrough, in *Open Innovation*, published in 2003, formulated the idea that companies should not depend only on their internal research and development laboratories, but should open their processes to universities, startups, suppliers, partners, clients, and external knowledge networks (CHESBROUGH, 2003). Open innovation became one of the most widespread expressions of the knowledge economy.

His contribution is important. In a world of distributed knowledge, no organization alone holds all the competencies necessary to innovate. Collaboration, circulation, partnerships, licensing, spin-offs, platforms, and knowledge networks can expand technological and organizational possibilities. For universities and technology parks, this language was especially influential, since it legitimized the construction of interfaces between academia, companies, and public agencies.

However, open innovation can also be converted into a generic rhetoric of collaboration. Everyone speaks of networks, ecosystems, cooperation, and co-creation. But rarely are the conditions of appropriation discussed with the same intensity. Who owns the knowledge generated? Who finances the research? Who captures the patent? Who defines the agenda? Who assumes the risk? Who receives the return?

In the Global South, this question is decisive. Opening innovation without industrial policy can mean opening public knowledge to private capture. Collaboration without sovereignty may deepen dependence. Partnerships without public strategy may subordinate universities to short-term business demands.

Open innovation teaches that knowledge circulates. But it does not automatically answer the political question of who controls the value created by that circulation.

4.6 Blank and the Society Treated as a Startup

Steve Blank occupies a central position in the formation of the startup methodology. His idea of **customer development** proposed that startups should not simply build products based on internal assumptions, but continuously test problems, hypotheses, markets, and users. Rather than executing a fixed business plan, startups should learn from uncertainty, validate hypotheses, and adjust their trajectories (BLANK, 2005).

The contribution is relevant for contexts of uncertainty. It recognizes that new ventures do not begin with complete knowledge of their markets and that learning from users can reduce risks. This logic influenced incubators, accelerators, entrepreneurship courses, innovation labs, and public programs aimed at startups.

The problem begins when society as a whole is treated as a startup. Public policies cannot always be organized as experiments subject to rapid pivoting. Health, education, housing, transportation, climate adaptation, sanitation, and urban planning involve rights, long-term infrastructures, vulnerable populations, and irreversible effects. They require experimentation, but also responsibility, continuity, accountability, and institutional memory.

The startup logic can help test solutions. But it cannot replace the democratic construction of public policy. A city is not a startup. A public school is not a minimum viable product. A sanitation system cannot simply pivot if the first hypothesis fails. The language of validation must be subordinated to the ethics of rights.

4.7 Ries and the Lean Startup

Eric Ries, in *The Lean Startup*, published in 2011, systematized the language of the **minimum viable product**, rapid learning cycles, metrics, pivoting, and validated learning (RIES, 2011). His proposal became central in entrepreneurial environments because it offered a method for reducing uncertainty in the creation of new businesses.

The lean startup became almost a catechism of entrepreneurship. Build, measure, learn. Test fast. Fail fast. Pivot. Scale. Seek product-market fit. These expressions left the business world and began to circulate in universities, public administration, innovation labs, social organizations, and urban policies.

Once again, the contribution is real. Learning from evidence, testing hypotheses, avoiding waste, and adapting to concrete problems are valuable practices. But the risk lies in transforming a startup method into a general philosophy of government and society. Public policy cannot be reduced to a sequence of disposable experiments. Social rights cannot be treated as provisional prototypes. Urban infrastructures cannot be abandoned at each pivot.

When applied without critique, the lean startup can reinforce a culture of speed, improvisation, and permanent experimentation that is incompatible with many collective missions. A climate adaptation policy, a public health strategy, or a transportation system requires learning, but also durability, coordination, maintenance, and institutional responsibility.

The danger is that the language of agility may conceal the dismantling of long-term public capacities.

4.8 Kawasaki and Business Evangelism

Guy Kawasaki is perhaps the author who most explicitly assumes the term evangelism in the business world. In *The Art of the Start*, he discusses how to mobilize communities, persuade audiences, build adherence, and transform products, companies, and ideas into causes capable of inspiring followers (KAWASAKI, 2004).

His contribution helps to understand an essential aspect of the new economy: products and technologies are not sold only through technical attributes. They are also sold through narratives, communities, beliefs, identities, and affects. The success of a startup, a platform, a brand, or an innovation ecosystem depends on its capacity to produce belonging.

This idea is central to the contemporary innovation environment. It explains the importance of pitches, events, storytelling, communities, ambassadors, mentors, influencers, and symbolic leadership. The entrepreneur does not only present a product; he announces a future. He does not only seek customers; he seeks believers.

But here, too, there is a risk. Passion can replace structural analysis. Mobilization can replace public debate. Adherence can replace critique. The community can be summoned to celebrate innovation without asking who finances it, who works for it, who profits from it, and who is excluded from it.

Kawasaki helps us understand why the word evangelist is not merely metaphorical. Contemporary innovation needs people capable of converting others to its promise.

4.9 Etzkowitz and the Triple Helix

Henry Etzkowitz, together with Loet Leydesdorff, formulated and disseminated the **Triple Helix** model, centered on the relationship between university, industry, and government (ETZKOWITZ;

LEYDESDORFF, 2000; ETZKOWITZ, 2008). The model became one of the most influential frameworks in innovation policy.

Its contribution is undeniable. It shows that knowledge-based innovation depends on institutional interaction. Universities are not only spaces for teaching and research; they may also participate in economic development, technology transfer, incubation, patents, spin-offs, and public-private partnerships. Government is not only a regulator; it may induce, finance, coordinate, and create conditions. Firms are not isolated innovators; they depend on scientific knowledge, public support, and institutional networks.

The Triple Helix became an almost mandatory vocabulary in technology parks, innovation agencies, incubators, and science and technology policies. It offers a simple and powerful image: university, industry, and government interacting to produce innovation.

But this simplicity also explains its risk. In many contexts, the Triple Helix is reduced to the formal signing of agreements. A university, a company, and a government body sit at the same table, create a council, sign a cooperation agreement, inaugurate a park, and call it an ecosystem. But interaction is not the same as integration. A meeting is not a strategy. A formal agreement is not a productive system.

In the Global South, the Triple Helix needs to be read with caution. If industry is weak, if government lacks coordination, if universities are underfunded, and if companies have low technological density, the mere articulation among actors does not produce innovation. The Triple Helix requires material conditions: funding, laboratories, firms with absorptive capacity, public procurement, trained workers, technological demand, and long-term missions.

Without these conditions, the helix spins in the discourse, but not in reality.

4.10 Florida, Landry, and Howkins: Creativity as Urban Promise

Richard Florida, Charles Landry, and John Howkins occupy a decisive place in the construction of the urban and cultural vocabulary of innovation. Each, in his own way, helped place creativity, culture, talent, and urban life at the center of the debate on development.

Florida, in *The Rise of the Creative Class*, argued that economic dynamism would increasingly depend on attracting creative workers, especially in cities marked by technology, talent, and tolerance (FLORIDA, 2002). His formulation was enormously influential among local governments, consultants, and urban planners, because it offered a seductive recipe: create vibrant, open, diverse, culturally attractive cities and the creative class will come.

Landry, in *The Creative City*, emphasized imagination, culture, and creativity as resources for urban planning and city transformation (LANDRY, 2000). Howkins, in *The Creative Economy*, helped consolidate the notion of the creative economy as a field of value generation based on ideas, culture, design, intellectual property, and symbolic expression (HOWKINS, 2001).

These contributions were important because they expanded the understanding of development beyond traditional industry. Culture, creativity, design, audiovisual production, fashion, music, software, games, heritage, and the arts began to be treated as relevant economic sectors. For many cities, especially those with historical heritage, universities, youth, and cultural life, this language opened new possibilities.

But there was also simplification. Creativity began to be treated as an inexhaustible resource and a universal solution. Popular neighborhoods, urban cultures, artistic scenes, and industrial heritage were converted into assets. The creative city, in many cases, became the city of cultural consumption, tourism, branding, and real estate valorization.

The creative economy can generate work, income, and cultural recognition. But it can also precarize artists, commodify identities, expel populations, and replace cultural policies with investment-attraction strategies. The risk is to reduce culture to an economic asset and creativity to an input for competitiveness.

This is the basis of what this book calls the **Café Myth**: the belief that cafés, bars, cultural amenities, bike lanes, nightlife, and a certain aesthetic of urban diversity are sufficient to attract talent and transform the economy.

4.11 Katz, Wagner, and Innovation Districts

Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner gave contemporary territorial form to the gospel of innovation. In *The Rise of Innovation Districts*, published by the Brookings Institution in 2014, they argue that innovation was moving away from suburban and isolated technology parks toward dense, mixed, walkable, connected urban districts close to universities, companies, startups, housing, services, and transportation (KATZ; WAGNER, 2014).

This formulation is central to later chapters of this book. The innovation district appears as an evolution of the classical technology park. Instead of the monofunctional enclave, it proposes urban integration. Instead of distance, proximity. Instead of the automobile, walkability. Instead of the isolated campus, mixed uses. Instead of the closed corporate building, an open ecosystem.

The contribution is relevant because it recognizes that innovation depends on interaction, proximity, and urbanity. However, when converted into generic urban policy, it can feed the **"if you build it, they will come" Myth**: the belief that it is enough to create a well-designed district, with cafés, coworking spaces, housing, and anchor companies, for talent, investment, and innovation to appear.

The critical issue is that urban form alone does not produce a productive base. Density does not replace industrial policy. Proximity does not replace technological capacity. Walkability does not replace wages. Cafés do not replace laboratories. Mixed-use urbanism does not replace public procurement, financing, and mission.

Innovation districts can be important instruments. But they are instruments, not miracles.

4.12 Borja, Castells, and Strategic Urban Planning

Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells helped construct one of the most influential urban languages of the late twentieth century: the city as a political actor in globalization. In their formulation, cities should not merely administer services; they should formulate strategies, build coalitions, mobilize actors, produce international visibility, and compete for flows of capital, knowledge, tourism, events, and talent (BORJA; CASTELLS, 1997).

This perspective had great influence because it recognized the growing importance of the urban scale in informational capitalism. Cities became places of strategic coordination, institutional innovation, and global insertion. Local governments were called upon to act, plan, negotiate, and position their territories.

However, the same formulation could also be appropriated by entrepreneurial urbanism. The city as political actor becomes the city as company. Strategic planning becomes territorial marketing. Participation can become consensus around large projects. Local identity can become a brand. Public-private partnerships can become mechanisms of selective valorization.

Borja and Castells provide the political justification for many later projects of urban innovation: if cities are protagonists of globalization, they must act entrepreneurially. They must create districts, attract talent, produce iconic landmarks, dispute companies, and build narratives. In this sense, they are evangelists of strategic urban planning.

Their contribution helps us understand how the language of innovation entered the urban field. Innovation became the content of the competitive city. The city that once sought global positioning through infrastructure, culture, and events now seeks it through ecosystems, startups, hubs, and districts.

4.13 Castells and the Network Society

Manuel Castells deserves separate attention because his trilogy *The Information Age* provided one of the most influential interpretations of the transition to the network society. His distinction between the **space of flows** and the **space of places** became fundamental for understanding how informational capitalism articulates global networks and local territories (CASTELLS, 1996; 1999).

For Castells, the new economy does not eliminate territory, but reorganizes its function. Some places become strategic nodes of global flows; others are marginalized. Cities, regions, and institutions therefore need to understand their position in networks of information, capital, knowledge, and power.

This reading is fundamental, but it can also be vulgarized. The idea of the network can be transformed into technological determinism: cities that do not connect would be condemned. Digital infrastructure becomes presented as destiny. Smart cities, platforms, data, and connectivity become symbols of modernity, sometimes without sufficient debate on control, surveillance, digital inequality, and informational sovereignty.

The network society teaches that the geography of power has changed. But it does not authorize the conclusion that every city should simply adapt itself to global flows. The political question is different: how can networks be built that strengthen territories rather than merely subordinating them?

4.14 Mazzucato and the Counter-Evangelism of the State

Mariana Mazzucato occupies a singular position in this constellation. In *The Entrepreneurial State*, published in 2013, she dismantles the narrative that the State merely regulates, corrects market failures, or obstructs innovation. Her argument is that the State has historically been a risk-taking investor in radical technologies, financing research, creating markets, and sustaining innovation trajectories before private capital entered to capture value (MAZZUCATO, 2013).

Mazzucato is an "evangelist for good" in the sense that she reorients faith in innovation toward the public sphere. She does not deny the importance of companies, entrepreneurs, and markets, but insists that innovation requires direction, mission, public risk, and social return. In later works, she deepens the idea of

mission-oriented policies inspired by great collective challenges, such as energy transition, health, climate, mobility, and inclusive development (MAZZUCATO, 2018; 2021).

Her contribution is decisive for the Global South. It makes it possible to place the State back at the center of innovation without reducing it to inefficient bureaucracy. More than that, it makes it possible to criticize dispersed public funding, without mission, without industrial policy, and without mechanisms for the social appropriation of results.

The risk, however, is the vulgarization of the entrepreneurial State itself. In impoverished versions, this expression can be confused with generic encouragement of individual entrepreneurship. Nothing could be further from Mazzucato. The entrepreneurial State is not the State that transforms precarious workers into entrepreneurs of themselves. It is the State that assumes strategic risk, creates markets, orients investment, and links innovation to public missions.

4.15 What This Constellation Teaches

The constellation of evangelists teaches something important: innovation does not emerge from nothing. It depends on entrepreneurship, management, institutions, networks, cities, culture, universities, companies, the State, capital, talent, methods, and narratives. Each author illuminates one part of the phenomenon.

Schumpeter shows the capitalist dynamics of rupture. Drucker shows the need for organization. Christensen shows how entrants can challenge incumbents. Chesbrough shows the importance of external networks. Blank and Ries show methods of learning under uncertainty. Kawasaki shows the importance of mobilization. Etzkowitz shows institutional interaction. Florida, Landry, and Howkins show the cultural and urban dimension. Katz and Wagner show the territorial form of districts. Borja and Castells show the city as strategic actor. Mazzucato places the State and mission back at the center.

The problem is not learning from this constellation. The problem is transforming learning into uncritical adherence. For the Global South, the appropriation of these authors must be selective, critical, and territorialized. It is necessary to ask: which concepts help build national capabilities? Which merely reproduce dependency? Which illuminate real processes? Which mask inequalities? Which strengthen the public sphere? Which reinforce private capture?

4.16 What This Constellation Does Not Teach Sufficiently

The constellation also has silences. It often does not teach sufficiently about technological dependence, periphery, coloniality, urban inequality, informality, premature deindustrialization, macroeconomics, wages, productive sovereignty, and distributive conflicts. It speaks a great deal about talent, but little about precarious workers. It speaks a great deal about creativity, but little about income. It speaks a great deal about networks, but little about hierarchy. It speaks a great deal about ecosystems, but little about land ownership. It speaks a great deal about disruption, but little about social protection. It speaks a great deal about collaboration, but little about the private appropriation of value.

This absence is decisive. In Brazil, importing the grammar of innovation without confronting deindustrialization, inequality, technological dependence, and the absence of a national mission may produce only an aesthetic of modernization. The country creates parks, hubs, calls for proposals, startups, events,

and slogans, but does not necessarily build productive capacity, technical sovereignty, or inclusive development.

This is why this book proposes reading the evangelists against themselves. To use their contributions, but dismantle their vulgarizations. To recognize the importance of innovation, but refuse naïve faith in innovation as automatic salvation. To understand districts, but not believe that physical territory replaces industrial policy. To value talent, but not forget wages. To defend entrepreneurial universities, but protect public knowledge. To recognize the creative city, but confront gentrification. To defend the entrepreneurial State, but demand mission and social return.

Table 4 - Authors, Concepts, and Risks of Vulgarization

Author(s)	Central Concept	Contribution	Risk of Vulgarization
Joseph Schumpeter	Creative destruction	Places innovation at the center of capitalist dynamics	Entrepreneur as abstract hero
Peter Drucker	Innovation as discipline	Organizes innovation as managerial practice	Innovation as universal manual
Clayton Christensen	Disruptive innovation	Explains market ruptures produced by entrants	Every change becomes "disruption"
Henry Chesbrough	Open innovation	Values networks and the circulation of knowledge	Collaboration without industrial policy
Steve Blank	Customer development	Continuous validation of problems and markets	Society treated as a startup
Eric Ries	Lean startup	MVP and rapid learning cycles	Public policy as disposable experiment
Guy Kawasaki	Business evangelism	Mobilization of communities and adherence	Passion replaces structural analysis
Henry Etzkowitz	Triple Helix	University-industry-government interaction	Formal agreement becomes ecosystem
Richard Florida	Creative class	Talent, culture, and urban diversity	The Café Myth
Charles Landry	Creative city	Imagination and culture in planning	Creativity as universal solution
John Howkins	Creative economy	Ideas and intellectual property as value	Culture reduced to economic asset
Katz and	Innovation districts	Dense and connected urban	"If you build it, they will

Wagner		form of innovation	come"
Borja and Castells	Strategic urban planning	City as global political actor	City as company
Manuel Castells	Network society	Space of flows and informational capitalism	Connectivity as inevitable destiny
Mariana Mazzucato	Entrepreneurial State and missions	Public risk, direction, and market creation	Vulgarized State entrepreneurship

4.17 Final Remarks

The constellation of evangelists of innovation should not be treated as a homogeneous bloc. It brings together very different authors, with diverse contributions and distinct political positions. Some reinforce the neoliberal grammar of competitiveness; others offer critical instruments to overcome it. Some place the market at the center; others place the State back at the center. Some emphasize talent; others emphasize institutions. Some defend business methods; others analyze urban networks or public policies.

What unites them is not a single doctrine, but their participation in the construction of the contemporary language of innovation. They provided concepts, metaphors, models, methodologies, and promises. They helped governments imagine creative cities, entrepreneurial universities, innovation districts, lean startups, network societies, creative economies, and mission-oriented States. They produced the grammar through which contemporary capitalism began to narrate its own renewal.

The task of this book is to examine this grammar critically. Not to deny innovation, but to liberate it from its myths. Innovation is too important to be reduced to garage, café, pitch, hackathon, ranking, landmark, or wall phrase. It must be reconnected to territory, labor, the State, industrial policy, the public university, technological sovereignty, urban justice, and social missions.

The evangelists of innovation announce the future. But the decisive question remains: **what future, for whom, financed by whom, and built upon which territories?**

5. The Institutional Apparatus of Innovation

Think Tanks, Banks, Rankings, Manuals, and Global Networks

Contemporary innovation is not disseminated only through books, authors, lectures, business gurus, or academic theories. It is also disseminated through institutions. Think tanks, multilateral banks, international organizations, funding agencies, professional associations, foundations, consultancies, universities, applied research institutes, business forums, rankings, and technical manuals form a broad infrastructure for the circulation of ideas about innovation. These institutions do not merely describe the new economy. They help produce it.

If the previous chapter addressed the constellation of intellectual evangelists, this chapter analyzes the **institutional evangelists**. They operate on another level. Rather than merely formulating concepts, they transform concepts into instruments: indicators, methodologies, lines of financing, seals of legitimacy, evaluation criteria, best-practice manuals, training programs, global rankings, international conferences, governance models, and replicable urban projects.

The central thesis of this chapter is simple:

The gospel of innovation does not become public policy only because it is persuasive. It becomes public policy because it is institutionalized in reports, metrics, financing, rankings, consultancies, professional networks, and training programs.

In this sense, institutional evangelists are more than disseminators. They are operators of the global innovation system. They say what innovation is, where it should occur, how it should be measured, how it should be financed, who should be trained to operate it, and which images should represent it.

5.1 From the Author to the Institutional Apparatus

Authors produce concepts. Institutions produce adherence. An idea such as the "creative class," for example, becomes public policy when it is converted into indicators of talent, tolerance, technology, urban diversity, cultural vitality, and territorial attractiveness. The idea of the "Triple Helix" becomes a program when it begins to guide public calls, technology parks, agreements between universities and companies, incubators, and innovation councils. The notion of the "innovation district" becomes an urban model when think tanks, consultancies, and development agencies transform it into diagrams, maps, reports, recommendations, and strategic plans.

This passage from concept to instrument is decisive. A book may influence managers, but a ranking may pressure them. A theory may inspire a policy, but a manual defines its criteria. A conference may disseminate a language, but a funding line creates concrete incentives. A report may reorganize how governments understand their problems.

For this reason, contemporary innovation must be understood as an **institutional regime of interpretation and government**. It is not merely a positive word. It is a grammar administered by organizations that define global standards, classify countries, compare cities, validate strategies, finance projects, and offer implementation models.

Sharon Zukin helps us understand this process by showing that the innovation complex articulates spaces, governments, companies, capital, universities, intermediary organizations, and narratives of the future. The new urban economy is not merely a technological transformation; it is a material and symbolic coalition involving public, private, and nonprofit actors in the production of innovative territories (ZUKIN, 2020).

The institutional apparatus of innovation gives this coalition stability. It produces continuity, legitimacy, measurement, financing, and repetition. It allows the same vocabulary to circulate in very different places: Silicon Valley, Barcelona, Shenzhen, São José dos Campos, Recife, Buenos Aires, Medellín, Lisbon, Singapore, or Nairobi. The words change little: ecosystem, startup, hub, innovation district, talent, creative economy, digital transformation, smart city, venture capital, open innovation, impact.

This global language is not neutral. It carries assumptions about development, territory, labor, technology, and the role of the State.

5.2 The Soul: Theoretical and Ideological Producers

The first layer of the institutional apparatus is the soul: the producers of narratives, concepts, and visions of the future. This includes authors, consultancies, think tanks, global forums, business schools, and organizations that formulate the great interpretive frameworks of innovation.

Institutions such as the Brookings Institution, the World Economic Forum, the Creative Class Group, and numerous management consultancies operate in this field. They produce reports, concepts, maps, rankings, scenarios, diagnoses, and recommendations. Their strength lies in transforming complex transformations into intelligible languages for governments, companies, universities, and investors.

The Brookings Institution, for example, played an important role in disseminating the idea of innovation districts. Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner's report helped consolidate the notion that the geography of innovation was shifting from isolated suburban campuses to dense, mixed, walkable, urban environments located near anchor institutions, universities, companies, and startups (KATZ; WAGNER, 2014).

The World Economic Forum, in turn, helped popularize the language of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, connecting artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, the Internet of Things, automation, platforms, and digital capitalism to a broad narrative of civilizational transformation (SCHWAB, 2016). The WEF functions as an arena for the consecration of technological futures.

This layer offers a worldview. It tells governments and companies that the future will be digital, networked, entrepreneurial, creative, and disruptive. It provides the vocabulary through which societies interpret their own modernization.

The risk is that these narratives may transform innovation into inevitability. The future appears as something already defined, to which territories must adapt. In this movement, political choices are presented as technical necessities.

5.3 The Body: Territory, Parks, Districts, and Areas of Innovation

The second layer is the body of the apparatus: the institutions that translate innovation into physical territory. Here are organizations, networks, and agencies that help define where innovation should happen:

technology parks, science parks, innovation districts, creative neighborhoods, hubs, clusters, areas of innovation, waterfronts, and requalified urban zones.

The **International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation** plays a central role in this process. By defining, connecting, and legitimizing science parks and areas of innovation, IASP helps standardize an international language for these territories. It offers concepts, indicators, events, networks, and references that allow governments, universities, and park managers to recognize themselves as part of a global field.

The **Inter-American Development Bank** has also been important in Latin America, especially through the dissemination of the creative economy and the so-called Orange Economy. Its reports, funding programs, and urban initiatives connect culture, innovation, entrepreneurship, public policy, and territorial development. In this context, historic centers, creative districts, cultural industries, smart cities, and public innovation become objects of financing and planning.

The **Creative Class Group**, linked to Richard Florida's theory, helped transform talent, tolerance, technology, diversity, and lifestyle into diagnostic tools for urban competitiveness. Here, the city is evaluated according to its capacity to offer a cultural environment, diversity, technology, urban quality, and lifestyle compatible with professionals of the new economy.

These institutions help answer the question: **where should innovation happen?** Their answer is spatial: in parks, districts, hubs, clusters, creative neighborhoods, areas of innovation, and requalified territories.

But the critical question is another:

Does the creation of these spaces produce real innovation capabilities, or does it merely organize a recognizable landscape of the new economy?

5.4 The Brain: Metrics, Rankings, and Regulatory Infrastructure

The third group corresponds to the brain of the institutional apparatus of innovation. These are organizations that define what counts as innovation, how it should be measured, compared, legally protected, and converted into evidence for public policy.

The OECD occupies a central role in this layer. The *Frascati Manual* standardized the international measurement of research and development, while the *Oslo Manual*, prepared by the OECD and Eurostat, became a reference for collecting and interpreting data on innovation (OECD, 2015; OECD; EUROSTAT, 2018). These manuals are fundamental because they define categories, indicators, and methodologies. In other words, they help determine what governments and institutions officially recognize as innovation.

WIPO - the World Intellectual Property Organization - operates in another dimension: intellectual property, patents, trademarks, and global rankings. Its *Global Innovation Index* evaluates innovation ecosystems across national economies, following trends in investment patterns, technological progress, adoption, and socioeconomic impacts. The index also presents itself as a reference for governments, companies, and researchers interested in understanding and promoting innovation ecosystems.

UNCTAD contributes to the measurement and interpretation of the creative economy on a global scale, especially by addressing trade flows, creative goods and services, development, and the insertion of

peripheral countries into international markets for culture and creativity. Its role is important because it offers statistical basis and economic legitimacy to sectors previously treated as peripheral in relation to traditional industry.

Nesta, in the United Kingdom, appears as an agile institution in the production of studies, methodologies, and experiments on creative clusters, social innovation, technology, culture, artificial intelligence, and new models of financing. Its relevance lies in its capacity to transform emerging themes into applied research, methodologies, and policy language.

The European Commission, in turn, acts as a major formulator of integrated policies for research, innovation, and knowledge valorization. Its Knowledge Valorisation policy seeks to increase the social value and impact of investments in research and innovation, including academia-industry collaboration, the creation of spin-offs and startups, the management of intellectual assets, standardization, and the participation of users, citizens, and policymakers.

This group is decisive because it produces the invisible infrastructure of innovation. Without metrics, there is no comparison. Without indicators, there is no ranking. Without rankings, there is no reputational pressure. Without intellectual property, there is no global regime for capturing and protecting value. Without manuals, there is no standardization. Without standardization, there is no international governability of innovation.

The risk lies in confusing measurement with development. A country may rise in indicators and still fail to build technological sovereignty. It may increase intellectual property registrations and remain dependent on strategic technologies. It may improve its position in rankings while maintaining deep urban inequalities. It may measure innovation without measuring social return.

5.5 The Blood: Operators of Capital and Funding

The fourth group provides the blood of the system: capital, credit, subsidies, risk investment, public financing, and funding lines. Without money, innovation remains discourse, model, or institutional slide.

The World Bank acts as a major disseminator of agendas related to digital transformation, technological infrastructure, and the knowledge economy for developing countries. Its reports on digital progress emphasize the potential of digital technologies while also identifying widening gaps in digitalization. The central issue is that the digital divide can reinforce poverty and productivity gaps between rich and poor economies.

The World Economic Forum operates in another register. It is not a development bank, but an arena for the global legitimation of business agendas of innovation. Its dissemination of the idea of the Fourth Industrial Revolution helps organize the way corporations, governments, and economic leaders interpret artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things, biotechnology, automation, and digital platforms (SCHWAB, 2016). The WEF functions as a space of encounter, formulation, and consecration of narratives about the technological future of capitalism.

In Brazil, **Finep** and **BNDES** are fundamental institutions. Finep has historically financed science, technology, and innovation through credit, economic subsidies, and support for research and development projects. BNDES, in turn, operates as a public development bank, with an important role in financing

infrastructure, industry, innovation, and productive transformation. Both show that innovation cannot be sustained without the State and without funding.

But here a central problem for this book emerges. Financing innovation is not the same as building a national mission for innovation. A country may have calls for proposals, credit lines, funds, and subsidies, but if these instruments are not articulated with a strategy of productive development, technological sovereignty, public procurement, capability building, and social return, funding becomes dispersed.

This is where Mazzucato becomes indispensable. The entrepreneurial State is not simply the State that finances projects. It is the State that orients investment through missions, assumes strategic risks, creates markets, and negotiates forms of social appropriation of the value produced (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2018).

In the Global South, the decisive question is:

Is innovation funding building national capabilities, or merely financing fragments of modernization?

5.6 The Muscles: Talent Factories and Training

The fifth group corresponds to the muscles of the innovation apparatus: institutions that form talents, competencies, methodologies, and mindsets. If theorists provide the vision, urban modelers provide the space, regulators provide metrics, and funders provide resources, talent factories provide the subjects capable of operating the system.

The **MIT Media Lab** and the **Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship** represent a strand strongly associated with technological entrepreneurship, experimentation, design, prototyping, interdisciplinarity, and the formation of technology-based entrepreneurs. These institutions help disseminate the idea that innovation is also method, organizational culture, attitude, and the capacity to transform research into a product, a company, or a scalable solution.

The **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft**, in Germany, represents another model: applied research articulated with industry. The institution presents itself as oriented toward applied research, with strategic fields such as bioeconomy, digital health, artificial intelligence, next-generation computing, quantum technologies, resource efficiency, climate technologies, and hydrogen. In its institutional formulation, Fraunhofer emphasizes pre-competitive research with commercial potential and social impact across multiple sectors.

Singularity University, in turn, acts as an institution for the dissemination of a mindset linked to exponential technologies: artificial intelligence, biotechnology, robotics, computing, the future of work, and accelerated transformation. Its role is less that of a traditional university and more that of a platform for training, futurist imagination, and technological evangelization for leaders, companies, and governments.

This group is fundamental because it reveals that the gospel of innovation is also a pedagogy. It trains people to think in terms of scale, disruption, opportunity, prototyping, risk, impact, entrepreneurship, and permanent adaptation. It forms not only technical competencies, but subjectivities. It teaches how to speak, present, persuade, raise funds, scale, and transform uncertainty into a narrative of opportunity.

The risk is that this pedagogy may produce permanently adaptable subjects who are not equally trained to question the structures in which they are inserted. Talent is formed to operate the ecosystem, but not always to ask who controls it, who benefits from it, or which public missions it should fulfill.

5.7 The Face: Builders of the Visual Imaginary

Although the following chapter will deal specifically with the builders of the visual imaginary, it is important to situate them here within the broader institutional apparatus. Innovation needs an image. It needs a face, a symbol, a landscape, and a brand.

City branding, landmarks, iconic architecture, towers, bridges, museums, corporate headquarters, and visually recognizable districts fulfill the function of making visible something that is often abstract: the knowledge economy. The tower, the arch, the futuristic campus, or the signature building function as emblems. They say: **the future is here**.

This visual layer is not secondary. Governments need images to communicate transformation. Investors need signs of modernity. Universities need spatial marks of prestige. Companies need symbolic environments. Cities need photographs, maps, and visual identities capable of circulating globally.

The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao became one of the most famous examples of the capacity of an architectural icon to reposition a city in the global imaginary. The 22@ in Barcelona, the Torre Glòries, the Arco da Inovação in São José dos Campos, and numerous technology campuses around the world also show how innovation seeks recognizable forms.

The risk is that the image may replace the strategy. A landmark may suggest innovation without proving it. A tower may create a city brand without building productive capacity. An iconic building may attract attention without producing social return. The face of innovation may be beautiful, while the body remains fragile.

5.8 Institutions as Translators of Global Models

Institutional evangelists perform a translation function. They take experiences from specific places and transform them into global models. Silicon Valley becomes the model of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Barcelona becomes the model of strategic urbanism and the innovation district. Shenzhen becomes the model of accelerated technological development. MIT becomes the model of entrepreneurial university culture. Fraunhofer becomes the model of applied research connected to industry.

This translation is not innocent. When a local experience becomes a global model, many elements are selected, simplified, and reorganized. Conflicts tend to disappear. Historical conditions are reduced. Institutional capacities are assumed. The model circulates cleaner than the reality from which it emerged.

This is why policies travel better than their contradictions. A report on an innovation district often highlights density, mixed uses, talent, connectivity, anchors, startups, and quality of life. It says less about land conflicts, housing prices, labor precarization, public subsidies, political disputes, or failed projects. A success story is easier to export than a contradictory history.

For the Global South, this is especially important. Imported models often arrive as complete answers before local territories have formulated their own questions. A city is told that it needs an innovation district, a

creative hub, a smart city strategy, or a startup ecosystem before asking what its main structural problems are: sanitation, housing, climate risk, industrial decline, youth unemployment, technological dependence, mobility, health, food security, or territorial inequality.

The critical task is not to reject global models, but to provincialize them. To ask where they come from, under what conditions they worked, what they omit, who benefits from their circulation, and how they can be reinterpreted according to local missions.

5.9 The Apparatus and the Production of Legitimacy

The institutional apparatus of innovation produces legitimacy in several ways.

First, it produces **cognitive legitimacy**: it defines what innovation means and how it should be understood. Manuals, reports, and indicators help stabilize categories.

Second, it produces **technical legitimacy**: it offers methodologies, toolkits, benchmarks, and supposedly objective criteria. A policy becomes stronger when it appears to be based on international standards.

Third, it produces **financial legitimacy**: it connects projects to funding lines, credit, subsidies, and investment. What can be financed becomes more likely to be implemented.

Fourth, it produces **symbolic legitimacy**: it associates territories with respected brands, networks, rankings, awards, and global references.

Fifth, it produces **political legitimacy**: it allows local governments to present projects as modern, internationally aligned, evidence-based, and oriented toward the future.

This legitimacy can generate positive results. It can help organize policies, improve indicators, mobilize resources, connect institutions, and strengthen innovation systems. But it can also naturalize inequalities, conceal conflicts, and transform social problems into market opportunities.

The apparatus does not merely say that innovation is good. It defines the authorized ways of being innovative.

5.10 The Global South Before the Apparatus

For the Global South, the institutional apparatus of innovation is both opportunity and risk.

It is an opportunity because it provides access to knowledge, metrics, networks, financing, methodologies, and international cooperation. Countries and cities can learn from global experiences, improve their science and technology policies, strengthen universities, protect intellectual property, create applied research programs, and build more capable innovation systems.

But it is also a risk because it may induce imitation, dependency, and the adoption of imported models. A country may begin to organize its innovation policy according to what is measured internationally, rather than according to its historical needs. A city may pursue rankings while neglecting basic infrastructure. A university may prioritize patents and startups while weakening its public mission. A government may fund innovation projects without constructing a national strategy.

The question, therefore, is not whether the Global South should participate in the global institutional apparatus of innovation. It should. The question is how to participate without surrendering its own agenda.

To participate critically means transforming metrics into diagnosis, not fetish. Financing into mission, not dispersion. Districts into instruments of territorial policy, not showcases. Training into capability building, not only entrepreneurial employability. Intellectual property into a strategy of sovereignty, not only private capture. International networks into cooperation, not dependency.

5.11 The Apparatus as Machine of Faith

The institutional apparatus of innovation is also a machine of faith. It teaches territories to believe that the future is technological, entrepreneurial, creative, measurable, competitive, and urban. It produces rituals, documents, rankings, conferences, certifications, maps, calls for proposals, prizes, indicators, and visual identities.

Like every faith, it has its institutions, doctrines, temples, missionaries, ceremonies, sacred texts, and conversion practices. The sacred texts are manuals and reports. The temples are technology parks, hubs, campuses, and innovation districts. The ceremonies are conferences, demo days, hackathons, award events, and launches. The missionaries are consultants, managers, mentors, speakers, and institutional leaders. The conversion practices are training programs, entrepreneurship courses, acceleration programs, and innovation labs.

This metaphor is useful because it reveals the affective and symbolic dimension of the apparatus. Innovation is not adopted only because it is rational. It is adopted because it promises salvation: from deindustrialization, from fiscal crisis, from youth unemployment, from urban decline, from technological backwardness, from the fear of being left behind.

But faith without critique becomes ideology. The objective is not to abandon the apparatus, but to dispute its meaning.

Table 5 - The Institutional Apparatus of Innovation

Question	Institutions That Answer	Typical Answer
What is innovation?	OECD, WIPO, authors, manuals	A measurable, comparable, knowledge-oriented activity
Where should it happen?	Brookings, IASP, IDB, Creative Class Group	In parks, districts, hubs, areas of innovation, and clusters
How should it be measured?	WIPO, OECD, UNCTAD, Nesta, European Commission	Through rankings, indicators, patents, R&D, and creative flows
How should it be financed?	World Bank, IDB, Finep, BNDES, funds	Through credit, subsidies, public funding, venture capital, and programs
Who should operate it?	MIT, Fraunhofer, Singularity, universities	Talents, entrepreneurs, researchers, managers, and technicians
How should it be made visible?	City branding, architects, local governments	Landmarks, towers, arches, iconic headquarters, and urban images

5.12 Final Remarks

The gospel of innovation has authors, but it also has institutions. Without them, innovation would remain a dispersed discourse. With them, it becomes public policy, metric, financing, architecture, educational program, ranking, consultancy, urban plan, and global image.

The institutional apparatus of innovation operates through multiple layers. The theorists provide the soul. Urban modelers provide the body. Regulators and metric producers provide the brain. Funders provide the blood. Talent factories provide the muscles. Builders of the visual imaginary provide the face.

This machinery explains why innovation has become such a powerful language. It does not merely say that the future will be technological. It teaches governments how to plan, measure, finance, design, narrate, and sell that future. The problem is that, very often, the global machinery of innovation offers answers before territories formulate their own questions.

For the Global South, the critical task is double. On the one hand, it is necessary to learn from these institutions: to measure better, finance better, train talent, build capabilities, strengthen universities, protect knowledge, and articulate territories. On the other hand, it is necessary to refuse the uncritical importation of models. Innovation cannot be merely adherence to global manuals. It must be a historical, territorial, and political project.

The challenge, therefore, is not to stand outside the institutional apparatus of innovation. That would be impossible and undesirable. The challenge is to dispute its meaning. To transform rankings into diagnosis, not fetish. To transform financing into mission, not dispersion. To transform districts into instruments of territorial development, not showcases of modernity. To transform talent training into the construction of collective capacities, not only individual adaptation. To transform the image of innovation into a public project, not a marketing surface.

Innovation needs institutions. But institutions must be subordinated to missions. Without this, the apparatus produces belief, but not necessarily development. It produces metrics, but not necessarily justice. It produces landscapes, but not necessarily capabilities. It produces the language of the future, but not necessarily a future worth sharing.

6. The Builders of the Visual Imaginary

City Branding, Iconic Architecture, and the Landmarks of Innovation

Contemporary innovation needs to be seen. Although much of the knowledge economy is presented as immaterial - made of data, algorithms, networks, patents, platforms, brands, creativity, and informational flows - it requires concrete images in order to become politically convincing. It needs towers, bridges, glass façades, corporate headquarters, museums, arches, walkways, requalified squares, technology campuses, signature buildings, and urban landscapes capable of saying to visitors, investors, residents, and public managers: **the future is happening here**.

This need for image is not secondary. It is constitutive of innovation territories. A technology park or innovation district does not assert itself only through the presence of companies, universities, laboratories, or startups. It must also produce a visual identity. It must be photographable, recognizable, shareable, memorable, and convertible into a brand. Without this aesthetic dimension, it risks appearing merely as an ordinary set of corporate buildings, rehabilitated warehouses, or high-end offices. With an iconic visual landmark, it begins to present itself as the symbol of a new urban era.

This is where the **builders of the visual imaginary** enter: theorists of city branding, promoters of the so-called **Bilbao Effect**, starchitects, public managers, development agencies, urban marketing departments, and local coalitions interested in transforming technical projects into global images. They are a specific class of evangelists of innovation: they do not evangelize only through concepts, metrics, financing, or methodologies, but through images. Their role is to give a physical face to the knowledge economy.

In this register, innovation does not merely need to function. It needs to **look innovative**.

6.1 The Knowledge Economy and the Need for Form

The industrial economy had relatively clear images: factories, chimneys, railways, warehouses, ports, maneuvering yards, sirens, workers, machines, trucks, silos, cooling towers, and assembly lines. The industrial city could be recognized by its material marks. Its landscape immediately revealed what was produced there.

The knowledge economy is more difficult to represent. Where is innovation? In the algorithm? In the code? In the laboratory? In the patent? In the informal conversation? In the database? In venture capital? In the pitch? In the university? In the startup? In the server? In the cloud? In the interface? In design? In talent?

This visual difficulty produces a demand for symbols. The immaterial economy must be materialized. Innovation must be condensed into architectural and urban forms. Thus, towers, arches, bridges, museums, corporate headquarters, and exceptionally designed buildings begin to function as emblems of the passage from the industrial city to the post-Fordist, creative, smart, and technological city.

The Torre Glòries in Barcelona can be read in this key. Located in the symbolic transition between consolidated Barcelona and the Poblenou district restructured by 22@, it became one of the visual landmarks of the knowledge-economy city. Its function is not only architectural. It is communicational. It makes visible a transformation that, without an image, would remain abstract: the conversion of an industrial territory into an innovation district.

In São José dos Campos, the Arco da Inovação performs a similar operation. It is not merely an urban infrastructure element. It is a sign. It translates into visual form the aspiration of a city that seeks to present itself as a national capital of technology, aerospace industry, science, engineering, and innovation.

In both cases, the central question is not whether the object is beautiful or ugly. The critical question is: **what kind of future does it represent, and whose future does it make visible?**

6.2 The Icon Myth

The builders of the visual imaginary operate through what this book calls the **Icon Myth**. This myth is based on the belief that an iconic object - a tower, bridge, museum, arch, corporate headquarters, or spectacular building - can condense the image of a new urban future and reposition a city in the global geography of innovation.

The icon is powerful because it simplifies complexity. Urban plans are technical. Zoning laws are abstract. Innovation policies are difficult to visualize. Productive chains are invisible to most people. Research networks are hard to photograph. But a landmark can be seen, illuminated, filmed, circulated, posted, projected in presentations, printed in reports, and transformed into the visual synthesis of a project.

The icon says what policy struggles to communicate: **this city has changed**.

The danger lies in confusing image with structure. A landmark may signal an innovation strategy, but it does not prove that such a strategy exists. A tower may express modernization, but it does not create technological capability by itself. A museum may attract tourists, but it does not automatically produce urban justice. A bridge may become a brand, but it does not necessarily integrate territories socially. An innovation arch may communicate a technological identity, but it does not replace industrial policy, education, research, wages, infrastructure, and public mission.

The Icon Myth therefore works through a substitution: the visible form stands in for the invisible structure. The city appears innovative because it has the visual signs of innovation.

But the appearance of innovation is not the same as innovation.

6.3 City Branding: The City as Brand

The rise of innovation landmarks is directly linked to the strengthening of **city branding**. The city begins to be treated as a territorial brand: a set of attributes, images, experiences, symbols, and narratives capable of differentiating it in a global market of investments, tourism, events, talent, and reputation.

Simon Anholt is one of the authors most associated with the discussion of nation branding and city branding. His contribution lies in showing that territories also compete for image, trust, reputation, and international recognition (ANHOLT, 2007). In this logic, cities do not compete only for companies or tourists; they compete for attention. And, in an economy saturated with images, attention depends on strong symbols.

City branding transforms urban elements into communicational assets. The illuminated bridge, the glass tower, the spectacular museum, the skyline, the creative neighborhood, the requalified historic center, the technology park, and the innovation district become part of a visual narrative of differentiation. The city

must be quickly recognized, circulate in reports, appear in institutional videos, illustrate investor presentations, and produce local pride.

This logic converges with Charles Landry's idea of the creative city. For Landry, urban creativity is not only an attribute of artists or cultural sectors, but a capacity to mobilize imagination, culture, local resources, and innovative solutions to urban problems (LANDRY, 2000). In its best version, this approach expands urban policy by valuing culture, participation, identity, and social imagination. In its more instrumental version, however, it may reduce creativity to a tool of competitive positioning.

When city branding, the creative city, and the innovation economy converge, the urban landscape becomes a market interface. The city must communicate the future. It must appear open, young, technological, cosmopolitan, and vibrant. The landmark becomes the photographic synthesis of that strategy.

6.4 Starchitects and the Architecture of Spectacle

Starchitects play a decisive role in this production of the visual imaginary. Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel, Santiago Calatrava, Zaha Hadid, Norman Foster, and other names in global architecture have been hired not only for their design capacity, but also for the symbolic value of their signatures. The name of the architect already functions as an international seal of modernity, innovation, and cultural distinction.

This architecture of impact operates on two scales simultaneously. At the local scale, it produces an exceptional urban object, capable of reconfiguring the landscape, creating a new point of reference, and mobilizing civic pride. At the global scale, it produces a circulable image: photographs, magazine covers, promotional videos, news reports, institutional presentations, and tourism material.

Jean Nouvel's Torre Glòries offers an important example. The former Torre Agbar was conceived as a vertical, luminous, and singular object capable of marking Barcelona's landscape. Its form is not limited to function. It produces presence. In the context of 22@, that presence became part of the narrative of transforming industrial Poblenou into a district of the knowledge economy.

Norman Foster participates in another dimension of this innovation aesthetic by designing corporate headquarters and buildings associated with high technology, such as Apple Park in California. The futuristic corporate headquarters does not merely house workers. It materializes a corporate culture. It expresses control, design, precision, scale, exclusivity, technology, and corporate power. It becomes a temple of business innovation.

Santiago Calatrava and Zaha Hadid also exemplify architecture as urban spectacle. Their works often function as marks of rupture with the ordinary landscape. They create recognizable forms, futuristic silhouettes, and images capable of being detached from their specific urban context and circulated globally.

This is why iconic architecture is so attractive to governments and companies: it produces instant legibility. It transforms complex agendas into images. It gives the abstract economy of knowledge a body, a silhouette, a face.

6.5 The Bilbao Effect and the Promise of Urban Salvation

The so-called **Bilbao Effect** became one of the strongest myths in contemporary urban policy. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, designed by Frank Gehry and inaugurated in 1997, came to symbolize the

possibility that a single iconic cultural facility could reposition a formerly industrial city in the global imagination.

The formula became seductive: a city affected by industrial decline invests in spectacular architecture, requalifies urban space, attracts tourism, gains international visibility, changes its image, and enters a new cycle of development. The museum becomes more than a building. It becomes a narrative of salvation.

The problem is that the Bilbao experience is often simplified. The Guggenheim was not an isolated miracle. It was part of a broader process of urban restructuring, infrastructure investment, metropolitan governance, environmental recovery, mobility improvement, cultural policy, and institutional coordination. When exported as a model, however, the visible object tends to overshadow the structural conditions that made the transformation possible.

Many cities learned the wrong lesson. They concluded that a spectacular building could produce urban regeneration by itself. Thus, museums, cultural centers, towers, bridges, arenas, and iconic facilities began to be imagined as engines of transformation, sometimes without the productive, social, institutional, and territorial policies necessary to sustain them.

The Bilbao Effect is, therefore, one of the most powerful forms of the Icon Myth. It teaches that the city can be saved by image. But without strategy, the icon becomes spectacle. Without social policy, it becomes selective valorization. Without productive policy, it becomes tourism. Without democratic planning, it becomes branding.

6.6 The Landmark as Proof of Modernity

The landmark functions politically because it produces proof. For investors, it signals that the city has ambition. For companies, it indicates a modern environment. For residents, it may produce pride and a sense of belonging to a city in transformation. For tourists, it offers a place to visit. For the media, it offers an image. For public managers, it offers a government brand. For consultants, it offers a success story. For rankings and reports, it offers visual evidence of modernity.

But this same capacity for legitimation can conceal conflicts. A landmark may be associated with gentrification, public debt, displacement, elitization of urban space, or the prioritization of investments in already valued areas. It may function as an anchor for real estate appreciation. It may attract resources to strategic territories while peripheries remain deprived of basic infrastructure. It may reorganize the landscape without democratizing its benefits.

For this reason, the critical analysis of innovation icons must ask:

Who financed it?

Who benefited from it?

Which territory was valorized?

Which urban problems were left aside?

What narrative was constructed?

Which conflicts were silenced?

What public mission does the icon serve?

Without these questions, critique risks remaining at the level of aesthetic taste. The problem is not whether one likes or dislikes the tower, the bridge, or the museum. The problem is to understand the political, economic, and ideological function performed by these objects.

6.7 Torre Glòries and the Vertical Face of 22@

Torre Glòries is an exemplary case because it condenses many of the dimensions discussed in this book. It is associated with the transformation of Poblenou, Barcelona's former industrial territory, into a district of the knowledge economy. Its vertical, luminous, and singular form creates a point of reference in the landscape. Its presence helps produce the image of a technological, contemporary, and global Barcelona.

In the context of 22@, the tower functions as the visual face of a broader restructuring. The district involves regulatory changes, the attraction of companies, universities, research centers, cultural facilities, housing, infrastructure, and real estate revalorization. But for the public imaginary, this complexity needs synthesis. Torre Glòries provides that synthesis. It allows the district to be photographed, recognized, and communicated.

This visual function is decisive. An urban plan can be read by specialists; a tower can be seen by everyone. A zoning instrument may be abstract; a landmark is immediately sensible. The icon translates urban technopolitics into landscape.

But Torre Glòries also allows us to ask: to what extent is 22@ a productive innovation project, a real estate project, a city branding project - or all these elements at once? The answer lies precisely in the ambiguity. The tower illuminates the desired future, but it may also cast shadows over the conflicts, exclusions, and valorizations produced by that future.

6.8 The Innovation Arch and the Visual Pedagogy of São José dos Campos

The Arco da Inovação in São José dos Campos operates through another symbolic register, but with a similar logic. It is a piece of infrastructure, but also a visual statement. It connects circulation, engineering, urban design, and identity. It transforms a road structure into a sign of technological modernity.

São José dos Campos is not an arbitrary case. The city has a dense technological history: ITA, CTA/DCTA, Embraer, INPE, the aerospace sector, the defense industry, research institutes, technology companies, and a long trajectory linked to engineering and national projects. Therefore, the Innovation Arch does not emerge in an empty territory. It is inserted in a city that already possesses a significant scientific and technological base.

This makes the icon more complex. It cannot be dismissed simply as empty branding. It may be read as the expression of a real historical trajectory. But it also must be examined as part of a city branding strategy that seeks to consolidate São José dos Campos as a capital of innovation.

The arch is bridge, but also brand. It is infrastructure, but also message. It is engineering, but also visual pedagogy. It teaches residents, visitors, companies, and public managers to read the city as technological.

The critical question is whether this image connects to broad policies of productive development, social inclusion, technical training, mobility, housing, environment, and the reduction of territorial inequalities. A

technological city is not measured only by its icons. It is also measured by its capacity to distribute the benefits of its scientific, industrial, and educational base.

6.9 The Icon and Symbolic Gentrification

Innovation landmarks may participate in processes of **symbolic gentrification**. Even before the material displacement of residents or activities, there is a transformation in the meaning attributed to a territory. An industrial, working-class, or port neighborhood begins to be narrated as a creative area, technology district, opportunity zone, or territory of the future. This renaming changes expectations, prices, investments, and policies.

The icon accelerates this process because it makes the new narrative visible. It marks the symbolic turn. After the tower, the bridge, the museum, or the cultural center, it becomes more difficult to see the territory only as it was before. The landscape begins to announce another vocation.

This operation may produce positive effects, such as the recovery of degraded areas, new uses, improved public spaces, and economic dynamism. But it may also delegitimize existing uses. Workshops, small industries, popular housing, traditional commerce, cultural collectives, and working-class memories may begin to be seen as residues of a past incompatible with the new image.

The landmark, in this sense, may function as a symbolic border between past and future. On one side, the old city: industrial, popular, informal, or obsolete. On the other, the new city: technological, creative, clean, illuminated, and valorized. This division is ideological because it transforms social conflicts into a narrative of modernization.

It is necessary to ask: who is authorized to belong to the innovative landscape? Who appears in official images? Who disappears?

6.10 The Aesthetics of Innovation

The visual imaginary of innovation is not made only of exceptional landmarks. It is also made of everyday aesthetic codes: glass façades, exposed concrete, reused industrial structures, open-plan offices, colorful furniture, informal meeting rooms, whiteboards, plants, bicycles, cafés, murals, motivational phrases, neon signs, digital screens, and spaces designed for interaction.

These elements produce an atmosphere. They communicate flexibility, youth, creativity, openness, collaboration, transparency, informality, and technological modernity. They help distinguish the innovation environment from the bureaucratic office, the old factory, the traditional university building, or the conventional public agency.

This aesthetic has become global. A coworking space in São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Barcelona, Berlin, or Singapore may look surprisingly similar. The same design vocabulary circulates: open tables, shared rooms, glass partitions, event spaces, cafés, informal sofas, wall phrases, startup logos, and colorful graphics.

This standardization is paradoxical. The new economy celebrates originality, creativity, disruption, and local identity, but often produces very similar spaces around the world. The architecture of innovation becomes a recognizable global style. It says "future" through a repeated set of visual signs.

The risk is that the aesthetic of innovation may replace innovation itself. A space may look creative without producing creativity. It may look collaborative without distributing power. It may look open without democratizing access. It may look technological without building technological capability.

6.11 When Image Replaces Strategy

A city can build a landscape of innovation without building real innovation. It can have a hub without a productive base. It can have a tower without innovative companies. It can have an arch without industrial policy. It can have a museum without an inclusive creative economy. It can have a technology campus without local absorption of knowledge. It can have branding without public mission.

This substitution is dangerous because it consumes resources, organizes expectations, and redefines priorities. The image of the future can justify selective investments while structural problems remain. Instead of confronting sanitation, housing, public transportation, climate adaptation, technical training, and reindustrialization, the city invests in symbols of modernity.

This does not mean that symbols do not matter. They do. Cities need shared images, identity landmarks, and forms of collective expression. The problem arises when the image no longer synthesizes a project and begins to replace it.

A landmark can be excellent when it condenses a consistent strategy of urban, scientific, productive, and social development. It can function as the emblem of a real transformation. But in isolation, it becomes scenography.

The critical question is:

Does the icon express an innovation policy, or does it try to compensate for its absence?

Table 6 - The Icon Myth

Element	Promise	Risk
Tower	To make modernization visible	Confusing verticality with development
Iconic bridge	To connect mobility and the image of the future	Transforming infrastructure into branding
Spectacular museum	To reposition an industrial city	Replacing urban policy with tourism
Futuristic corporate headquarters	To materialize a culture of innovation	Naturalizing corporate power
Photographable district	To attract talent and investors	Producing symbolic gentrification
Signature architecture	To grant global prestige	Importing image without building capabilities
Illuminated landmark	To create pride and recognition	Concealing territorial inequalities

6.12 Final Remarks

The builders of the visual imaginary are a fundamental part of the gospel of innovation. They do not necessarily produce theories, metrics, capital, or talent. They produce images. And in contemporary capitalism, images govern expectations, investments, and identities.

The knowledge economy needs physical faces. The innovative city needs to look innovative. Technology parks, creative districts, and areas of innovation must be visually recognized as territories of the future. This is why towers, arches, bridges, museums, corporate headquarters, and signature buildings gain centrality. They materialize the intangible. They transform innovation into landscape.

But this visual power must be analyzed critically. The landmark does not prove that innovation exists; it proves that the city wishes to be recognized as innovative. The icon may express a strategy, but it cannot replace it. Architecture can give a face to the knowledge economy, but it does not guarantee that its benefits will be socially distributed.

The central distinction is between **image as synthesis** and **image as substitution**. When the image synthesizes a real project - with industrial policy, universities, research, productive capacity, social inclusion, public mission, and territorial justice - it can be powerful and legitimate. When it substitutes for the project, it becomes ideology.

The builders of the visual imaginary therefore complete the constellation of evangelists of innovation. Some evangelists write concepts. Others create metrics. Others finance. Others train talent. Others organize rituals. The builders of the visual imaginary construct the face. They teach cities how to be seen as innovative.

The next part of this book will examine the myths, liturgies, and pedagogies that sustain this faith: the garage, the café, the belief that "if you build it, they will come," the phrases written on walls, and the rituals of the innovative community. These are the symbolic mechanisms through which innovation becomes not only policy, but belief.

Part III - Myths, Liturgies, and Pedagogies of the New Economy

7. The Garage Myth

Silicon Valley, the Heroic Entrepreneur, and the Erasure of the State

Among all the myths produced by the contemporary gospel of innovation, few are as powerful as the **garage myth**. Its image is simple, almost biblical: creative young people, working in an improvised space, driven by passion, genius, and entrepreneurial spirit, create a technology capable of transforming the world. The garage appears as a place of humble origins, creative freedom, rejection of corporate hierarchies, and the spontaneous birth of the new economy.

This narrative became one of the founding images of digital capitalism. The Hewlett-Packard garage in Palo Alto and the garage associated with Apple in Los Altos came to function as sacred places of innovation. They are the secular nativity scenes of Silicon Valley. According to the dominant narrative, there would be no State, no industrial policy, no military contracts, no universities, no public infrastructure, no long-term financing, and no geopolitics. There would be only talent, courage, nonconformity, and vision of the future.

The garage myth is seductive because it offers a simple explanation for extremely complex processes. It turns innovation into an individual epic. It reduces sociotechnical systems, institutional networks, public investments, State procurement, universities, laboratories, productive chains, and geopolitical contexts to an origin story based on entrepreneurial genius. Innovation appears as a private miracle, not as a historical construction.

This chapter argues that the garage myth is one of the pillars of the contemporary ideology of innovation. It is not merely a charming story about creative entrepreneurs. It is a way of erasing the collective conditions that make innovation possible. In doing so, it shifts the debate away from public policies, national missions, scientific infrastructure, qualified labor, and State funding toward the individual morality of the entrepreneur.

7.1 The Garage as the Secular Nativity Scene of Innovation

Every religion needs places of origin. Christianity has Bethlehem, the manger, the desert, Jerusalem, the sepulcher. Contemporary innovation has the garage. This small, domestic, improvised space has been converted into the universal symbol of the birth of disruptive technology.

The garage communicates many things at once. It suggests humility, creativity, informality, freedom, and authenticity. It distinguishes itself from the factory, the State laboratory, the corporate office, and the bureaucratic university. In the garage, innovation would seem to be born without permission, without hierarchy, without planning, and without major resources. It is the place where imagination would defeat structure.

For this reason, the garage is so functional to entrepreneurial ideology. It teaches that anyone, provided they are sufficiently creative, disciplined, and passionate, can transform the world from almost nothing. The starting point would not be the economic system, social position, technical training, access to networks, financing, or infrastructure, but attitude.

This narrative fits perfectly into the moral pedagogy of the new economy. If great companies were born in garages, then success depends on initiative. If the entrepreneur began from zero, then lack of resources can

be overcome by passion. If innovation emerges in improvised spaces, then the State and institutions would be secondary. If visionary young people created technology giants, then individual creativity would be the main historical force.

The garage thus ceases to be a physical space and becomes a political metaphor. It affirms that innovation is born outside the State, outside politics, outside planning, and outside history. This is exactly why it must be criticized.

7.2 What the Garage Myth Teaches

The garage myth teaches some true things. It teaches that small spaces can host great ideas. It teaches that innovation can emerge at the margins of established organizations. It teaches that informal environments can favor experimentation. It teaches that rigid hierarchies can suffocate creativity. It teaches that the boldness of young engineers, programmers, and entrepreneurs can play a relevant role in technological transformations.

These lessons should not be dismissed. The problem does not lie in recognizing them. The problem lies in transforming this partial dimension into a total explanation.

The garage teaches about creativity, but not sufficiently about financing. It teaches about initiative, but not about industrial policy. It teaches about informality, but not about universities. It teaches about genius, but not about public contracts. It teaches about private risk, but not about public risk. It teaches about humble origins, but not about networks of privilege, technical training, capital concentration, and geopolitics.

The garage myth is powerful precisely because it tells part of the truth. Its problem is not that it is completely false. Its problem is that it is selective. It illuminates the figure of the entrepreneur and darkens the ecosystem that produced him.

7.3 What the Garage Myth Does Not Teach

The first thing the garage myth does not teach is that Silicon Valley was not born only from entrepreneurs. It was born from universities, the State, military contracts, the Cold War, the electronics industry, semiconductors, public research, venture capital, regional infrastructure, professional networks, and accumulated technical culture.

The second thing it does not teach is that innovation requires demand. Many of the technologies that gave rise to the digital complex were driven by State procurement, especially in the military, aerospace, and communications fields. The State did not merely finance basic research; it created initial markets, absorbed risks, and guaranteed demand for technologies that were still uncertain.

The third thing it does not teach is that innovation depends on territory. Silicon Valley is not merely a collection of garages. It is a specific territorial formation linked to Stanford University, the presence of laboratories, electronics companies, engineering networks, suburban infrastructure, proximity to military institutions, and the circulation of financial capital.

The fourth thing it does not teach is that the entrepreneur does not act in a vacuum. He depends on educational systems, financing circuits, intellectual property, trust networks, suppliers, workers, migration policies, consumer markets, technical standards, and public institutions.

The fifth thing it does not teach is that innovation can produce inequality. Silicon Valley became a symbol of technological creativity, but also of extreme wealth concentration, housing crisis, gentrification, segregation, precarization of service workers, dependence on platforms, and corporate power.

Therefore, the garage myth teaches us to admire the entrepreneur, but not to understand the political economy of innovation.

7.4 Silicon Valley Without DARPA?

One question synthesizes the critique:

What would Silicon Valley have been without DARPA?

The question is provocative because it reaches the core of the myth. If Silicon Valley were merely the result of garages, individual genius, and entrepreneurial spirit, then the role of DARPA, the United States Department of Defense, NASA, universities, and public contracts would be secondary. But history shows the opposite.

The development of computing, microelectronics, digital networks, semiconductors, and the internet was deeply linked to United States State funding, especially in the context of the Cold War. ARPA, later DARPA, played a decisive role in advanced research, the formation of scientific networks, interactive computing, and the development of ARPANET, the precursor to the internet. The Department of Defense and other public agencies created demand for electronic components, communication systems, aerospace technologies, and strategic computing capacities (ABBATE, 1999; LÉCUYER, 2006; MAZZUCATO, 2013).

The point is not to claim that the State did everything. Private companies, entrepreneurs, engineers, investors, and universities played fundamental roles. The point is to show that the market did not create the conditions of innovation by itself. Initial risk, long-term research, strategic demand, and scientific infrastructure were strongly sustained by public resources.

Mazzucato insists on this point by demonstrating that many technologies later incorporated by private companies originated in high-risk public investments. The entrepreneurial State does not merely correct market failures; it creates markets, directs technological trajectories, and assumes risks that private capital avoids in early stages (MAZZUCATO, 2013).

The garage myth erases this history. In doing so, it allows private companies to appear as the sole creators of the future, while the State appears only as a slow, bureaucratic regulator or as an obstacle to innovation. This is an ideological inversion: public risk disappears, and private merit is amplified.

7.5 Stanford, Terman, and the Entrepreneurial University Before It Became Fashionable

Another element erased by the garage myth is the role of the university. Silicon Valley cannot be understood without Stanford, without its laboratories, without its engineering culture, without its relationship with companies, and without the role of figures such as Frederick Terman.

Terman, professor and later dean of Stanford's School of Engineering, was decisive in bringing together university, companies, and defense. He encouraged students and professors to create companies, promoted relations with the military sector, strengthened applied research, and participated in the construction of a

regional culture of technological entrepreneurship. In this case, the university was not merely a place of teaching. It was an active agent in the formation of capabilities, networks, and firms (SAXENIAN, 1994; LÉCUYER, 2006).

This shows that Silicon Valley anticipated, in a certain sense, what would later be theorized as the entrepreneurial university or the Triple Helix. University, industry, and government were not separate. They were deeply articulated through funding, research, engineering education, contracts, laboratories, and the circulation of people.

But there is an important difference between recognizing this articulation and turning it into a simplified recipe. Silicon Valley's Triple Helix was not formed by decree. It was not born because someone gathered university, business, and government around a council table. It was historically constructed through decades of investment, trust, technological demand, technical culture, war, capital, and productive density.

This is a fundamental lesson for countries attempting to replicate the Valley. It is not enough to create a technology park next to a university. It is necessary to build scientific capabilities, firms capable of absorbing knowledge, patient financing, public demand, industrial policies, and strategic missions.

7.6 Semiconductors, Fairchild, and the Industry the Myth Forgets

Another important erasure concerns industry. Silicon Valley was not born only from software, nor only from digital platforms. It was born from a material base: electronics, microwaves, radars, transistors, semiconductors, integrated circuits, precision equipment, and technological manufacturing.

The trajectory of Fairchild Semiconductor and the so-called "Fairchildren" is decisive for understanding this process. After engineers left Shockley Semiconductor and formed Fairchild, a regional culture of professional mobility, new firm creation, knowledge circulation, and technological entrepreneurship was consolidated. Many of Silicon Valley's most important entrepreneurs and investors passed through this industrial genealogy (LÉCUYER, 2006; SAXENIAN, 1994).

This history shows that digital innovation has a factory floor. Before platforms, there were semiconductors. Before applications, there were integrated circuits. Before unicorns, there were laboratories, production lines, suppliers, engineers, materials, machines, and industrial processes.

The garage myth tends to skip this stage. It prefers the clean image of the laptop, the startup, and software. But the digital economy is not immaterial. It depends on rare minerals, chips, servers, cables, electricity, assembly plants, ports, logistics, cooling systems, warehouses, data centers, and industrial workers.

Silicon Valley is a territory of ideas, but also of industry. Forgetting this is one of the reasons why so many innovation policies fail in peripheral countries. They try to replicate software without building the material base. They try to create startups without industry. They try to stimulate applications without technological sovereignty. They try to organize pitches without semiconductors.

7.7 Venture Capital and the Culture of Investment

The garage myth also tends to underestimate the role of capital. Innovation needs financing. It needs investors willing to assume risks, accept losses, wait for uncertain returns, and support companies in their early stages. Venture capital was a decisive component in the formation of Silicon Valley.

But even venture capital did not emerge from nowhere. It developed in articulation with financial markets, universities, technology companies, fiscal policies, pension funds, previous success stories, and expectations of return in strategic sectors. Moreover, it operated upon a base previously constructed by public investment and State demand.

Venture capital often enters after part of the deepest technological risk has already been absorbed by universities, public laboratories, military contracts, or State programs. The entrepreneurial narrative, however, tends to present the private investor as the main courageous agent of innovation. Mazzucato criticizes precisely this asymmetry: the public sector assumes broad risks, while the private sector captures a disproportionate share of the gains (MAZZUCATO, 2013).

This critique is central for the Global South. Many governments want to create venture capital ecosystems without first building a scientific, technological, and industrial base. They try to attract investors to territories that lack high-technology firms, sophisticated markets, institutional protection, macroeconomic stability, public demand, and growth trajectories. The result may be frustration or a superficial financialization of the innovation discourse.

Without capital, there is no innovation at scale. But without mission, capital follows only private opportunities. The question is not only to attract investment; it is to orient investment.

7.8 Garage, Masculinity, and Entrepreneurial Heroism

The garage myth also has a cultural dimension. Its typical protagonist is young, male, technically brilliant, informal, rebellious, obsessed with work, and willing to challenge conventions. This figure organizes a specific entrepreneurial masculinity: genius-like, competitive, resistant to exhaustion, little inclined to rules, capable of transforming isolation into creativity and risk into destiny.

This image had enormous influence on startup culture. The heroic entrepreneur works nights, sacrifices personal life, rejects stability, sleeps little, "loves what he does," fails fast, raises capital, scales, sells, and starts again. His trajectory is presented as a moral adventure.

But this narrative conceals relations of gender, race, class, and labor. Who can take risks? Who can work without income for months? Who has family resources? Who has access to investor networks? Who studied at the right universities? Who has free time to experiment? Who is socially authorized to appear brilliant, eccentric, or visionary?

The garage appears democratic, but not everyone enters it under the same conditions. For many, entrepreneurship is not a creative choice, but an economic necessity. For others, risk is cushioned by family capital, social networks, prestigious degrees, and favorable markets.

The ideology of the garage transforms privileges into individual virtues. It presents as courage what, in part, is invisible social protection. It presents as merit what also depends on position.

7.9 The Garage as Pedagogy for the Global South

When the garage myth reaches the Global South, it produces specific effects. In countries marked by deindustrialization, informality, and inequality, the narrative of heroic entrepreneurship can be used to shift responsibilities from the State and economic policy to individuals.

If Silicon Valley was born in garages, why could young Brazilians, Argentinians, Colombians, Indians, or Africans not do the same? If creativity, code, and willpower are enough, then the absence of industrial policy, financing, infrastructure, wages, well-funded universities, and technological sovereignty ceases to be the center of the problem. Failure begins to be interpreted as a lack of entrepreneurial attitude.

This pedagogy is dangerous. It transforms structural inequality into an individual challenge. It makes it seem that peripheral countries can leap directly into the digital economy without confronting technological dependence, productive fragility, low income, macroeconomic instability, and labor precarization.

The Global South needs innovation, but it cannot base its innovation policy on the garage myth. It needs to train engineers, finance science, strengthen universities, build industry, articulate public procurement, create missions, guarantee infrastructure, expand connectivity, protect workers, reduce inequalities, and develop productive capabilities. Garages may exist. But they do not replace a national project.

7.10 The Garage and the Erasure of Territory

One paradox of the garage myth is that it seems to celebrate a place, but erases territory. The garage is located, but isolated from the geography that made it possible. It appears as a magical micro-space, disconnected from the region, institutions, networks, and policies that sustained it.

Silicon Valley, however, is profoundly territorial. Its formation depended on a specific geography: proximity to Stanford and Berkeley, the presence of electronics firms, military investments in California, availability of suburban land, regional technical culture, networks of engineers, circulation of professionals, venture capital in San Francisco and Menlo Park, a favorable legal and business environment, and strong connections to national and global markets.

AnnaLee Saxenian showed that Silicon Valley's advantage over Route 128 in Boston was not explained merely by individual firms, but by a regional culture of open networks, professional mobility, and collective learning (SAXENIAN, 1994). In other words, innovation was territorial, relational, and institutional.

The garage myth transforms this regional ecology into a domestic scene. It reduces the territory to a scenery of origin, when, in fact, the territory was the innovation system itself.

This critique is central for technology parks and innovation districts. Many try to reproduce the garage without reproducing the region. They create physical spaces, but not networks. They create buildings, but not trust. They create events, but not demand. They create a brand, but not a productive base. They create hubs, but not an innovative territory.

7.11 The Garage and the Erasure of Labor

The garage myth also erases collective labor. Major technological innovations are not produced only by founders. They depend on engineers, technicians, factory workers, designers, researchers, administrators, lawyers, accountants, cleaners, maintenance workers, logistics workers, food workers, transportation workers, educators, and care workers.

In digital capitalism, this erasure has become even more intense. We see founders and CEOs, but not outsourced workers. We see futuristic headquarters, but not drivers, delivery workers, content moderators,

device assemblers, lithium miners, data center operators, warehouse workers, and urban service providers who sustain the platform economy.

The garage personalizes innovation. It attributes origin to a few individuals. But innovation is always accumulated social labor. Even the most brilliant idea depends on programming languages, operating systems, technical standards, devices, electrical networks, schools, universities, families, infrastructure, suppliers, and users.

When labor disappears, the question of distribution also disappears. Who produces value? Who captures value? Who assumes risk? Who receives recognition? Who is precarized?

This question is fundamental for a democratic critique of innovation.

7.12 Garage, State, and the Private Appropriation of Value

The critique of the garage myth converges with Mazzucato's critique of the relationship between public risk and private reward. If fundamental technologies were financed by public resources, if public universities trained talent, if State contracts created demand, if public infrastructure supported companies, then it is legitimate to ask: how does society participate in the gains?

The garage myth prevents this question because it presents innovation as private creation. If the entrepreneur created everything from his garage, then profit appears exclusively deserved. The State appears only as a tax collector, delayed regulator, or threat to creative freedom.

But if innovation is the product of collective investments, the total private appropriation of gains becomes politically questionable. There could be mechanisms of public return: State equity participation, royalties, sovereign funds, reinvestment clauses, affordable prices, conditional public procurement, intellectual property sharing, local production requirements, territorial counterparts, and redistributive policies.

This discussion is crucial for countries such as Brazil. If Finep, BNDES, FAPESP, CNPq, CAPES, public universities, and research institutes finance innovation, it is necessary to discuss not only the success of supported companies, but also the social return on investments. The State should not be merely the invisible financier of someone else's garage.

7.13 The Garage Myth and Technology Parks

The garage myth also influences the way technology parks and innovation districts are imagined. Many of these spaces attempt to reproduce an entrepreneurial culture based on informality, creativity, flexibility, and proximity. They create incubators, coworking spaces, prototyping laboratories, auditoriums for pitches, areas of sociability, and networking events.

These elements can be useful. The problem arises when one believes that creating environments similar to the imaginary of Silicon Valley is enough to produce innovation. It is the attempt to manufacture institutionalized garages. Spontaneity is planned. Informality is architected. Creativity is programmed into an event calendar.

This paradox is revealing. The garage myth celebrates innovation outside institutions, but technology parks attempt to institutionalize that image. They create formal spaces to simulate informal origins. They assemble

ecosystems to produce supposedly spontaneous encounters. They organize hackathons to create quick solutions. They install cafés to stimulate creative conversations.

None of this is necessarily negative. But without a productive base and mission, it can become scenography. A technology park does not fail because it has coworking or pitches. It fails when it believes that coworking and pitches replace industry, university, financing, demand, and public policy.

Table 7 - The Garage Myth

Element of the Myth	What It Claims	What It Conceals
Young entrepreneurs	Innovation is born from individual genius	Technical training, social networks, and privileges
Improvised space	Great companies are born from almost nothing	Regional infrastructure and institutions
Absence of the State	Market and creativity are enough	DARPA, public contracts, universities
Humble origin	Merit explains success	Family capital, elite education, and access to networks
Creative informality	Rules and institutions suffocate innovation	The need for funding, regulation, and public demand
Private risk	The entrepreneur is the main risk-taker	Public risk and long-term State investment
Heroic founder	Innovation is personal adventure	Collective labor and accumulated social knowledge

7.14 Beyond the Garage

Overcoming the garage myth does not mean denying the importance of entrepreneurship, experimentation, or creativity. It means placing these elements back in their proper place. Entrepreneurs matter, but they do not innovate alone. Informal spaces may help, but they do not replace institutions. Risk matters, but it is not only private. Origins matter, but they do not explain the whole system.

Innovation is not born only from willpower. It is born from the articulation among knowledge, capital, the State, territory, labor, institutions, infrastructure, technical culture, demand, and mission. The garage may be a symbolic starting point, but it is not an explanation.

For the Global South, overcoming the garage myth is a condition for building more serious innovation policies. Instead of asking how to create the next unicorn from a garage, it would be better to ask: which

national missions require innovation? Which productive capabilities need to be built? Which technologies are strategic for health, climate, sanitation, energy, food, mobility, and sovereignty? Which institutions must be strengthened? Which forms of public return must be demanded? Which workers will be trained? Which territories will benefit?

Innovation must cease to be an origin legend and become once again a collective project.

7.15 Final Remarks

The garage myth is the first great liturgy of the gospel of innovation. It offers a simple, moving, and mobilizing story: brilliant young people, in an improvised space, transform the world through the force of creativity. This story contains part of the truth, but its ideological force lies in what it leaves untold.

It erases the State, the university, industry, territory, capital, collective labor, geopolitics, industrial policy, public contracts, and inequalities. It erases DARPA, Stanford, semiconductors, the Cold War, venture capital, infrastructure, State demand, and regional networks. Above all, it erases the public dimension of innovation.

In doing so, the garage myth produces a political pedagogy: if innovation is born from exceptional individuals, then society's role is to free entrepreneurs, reduce obstacles, and admire winners. Public policy becomes secondary. Collective mission disappears. Inequality becomes lack of initiative. The State becomes an obstacle.

This book proposes another reading. The garage may be a beautiful image, but it cannot be a theory of development. Silicon Valley was not built by garages; it was built by a historical complex of science, State, territory, capital, and labor. Innovation is not a private miracle. It is social production.

For this reason, the fundamental question is not where the Brazilian, Latin American, or peripheral garage is. The question is: **which public missions can orient the construction of our own technological capabilities?** Without this question, we will continue importing myths instead of building the future.

8. The Café Myth

Creative Class, Urban Amenities, and Innovation Districts

If the garage myth presents innovation as an individual epic, the café myth presents innovation as an urban atmosphere. In the first case, the origin of technological transformation would lie in a domestic, improvised, and heroic space, where young entrepreneurs create global companies from almost nothing. In the second, innovation would depend on the construction of vibrant, dense, walkable, culturally active urban environments filled with cafés, bars, coworking spaces, bike lanes, gyms, galleries, restaurants, compact housing, and spaces of sociability.

The café myth can be defined as the belief that the mere creation of urban amenities and creative environments would be sufficient to attract talent, retain brains, stimulate informal encounters, generate new ideas, form startups, and transform the local economy. It is one of the most influential narratives in contemporary urbanism of innovation. In this narrative, the café ceases to be merely a commercial establishment and begins to function as the symbol of a new productive sociability: young professionals with laptops, informal conversations, open networks, cultural consumption, soft mobility, diversity, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit.

This image is powerful because it appears democratic, light, and desirable. Who would be against a city with cafés, bike lanes, qualified public spaces, cultural diversity, nightlife, meeting places, and walkable neighborhoods? The problem, however, does not lie in the existence of these amenities. Good cities need spaces of sociability, culture, local commerce, active mobility, and urban life. The problem lies in believing that these conditions, by themselves, produce innovation, automatically attract the so-called creative class, and structurally transform the economy of a city or region.

The café myth is, therefore, the urbanistic version of the garage myth. The garage erases the State, the university, industry, and public financing. The café erases macroeconomics, wages, industrial policy, the productive structure, urban inequality, and the real conditions of work. Both simplify complex processes. Both produce attractive narratives. Both orient public and private investments. Both make innovation seem simpler than it really is.

8.1 The Creative Class as Redeeming Subject

Richard Florida became one of the most influential authors of the creative turn in urban policy with the publication of *The Rise of the Creative Class* in 2002. His central thesis was that contemporary economic growth depended on the ability of cities to attract and retain creative workers: scientists, engineers, designers, artists, professors, programmers, cultural workers, media professionals, technology workers, and knowledge-intensive professionals. To do so, cities should combine the so-called "3 Ts": technology, talent, and tolerance (FLORIDA, 2002).

Florida's argument had enormous influence because it offered local governments a new and seductive theory of urban development. Instead of competing only for factories, ports, logistics infrastructure, or large industrial plants, cities should compete for people. More precisely, they should compete for creative,

qualified, mobile, innovative, and culturally demanding people. Urban quality, diversity, nightlife, cafés, culture, tolerance, and lifestyle became central elements of economic strategy.

This formulation was important because it helped recognize the role of culture, diversity, and urban life in contemporary economic dynamics. Cities are not only platforms for production; they are also spaces of sociability, identity, consumption, experimentation, and symbolic exchange. Qualified workers often value urban life. They may prefer cities with cultural offerings, openness, public spaces, good services, mobility, and diversity.

The problem begins when the creative class is transformed into a redeeming subject. In this vulgarized version, the arrival of creative workers would automatically generate economic dynamism, urban revitalization, innovation, entrepreneurship, and social improvement. The city would only need to create the right atmosphere - cafés, bars, bike lanes, galleries, coworking spaces, street art, cultural events - and the talents would come.

This vision ignores that the so-called creative class does not exist outside economic structures. It depends on wages, professional opportunities, institutions, networks, markets, universities, financing, public policies, cost of living, housing, safety, infrastructure, and stability. It is not a magical group that freely moves in search of cafés and bike lanes. It is a qualified fraction of the labor force, with interests, internal inequalities, family ties, career strategies, and objective limits.

8.2 The Café as Metonymy of Innovation

The café became one of the central images of the creative economy because it symbolizes informal encounter. Unlike the corporate meeting room or the bureaucratic office, the café suggests horizontality, casualness, openness, circulation, and conversation. It is the place where ideas could emerge without rigid planning, where talents could meet, where entrepreneurs could present projects, where investors could discover opportunities, and where everyday creativity could become business.

This image is not entirely false. Informal spaces matter. Urban sociability can favor encounters, exchanges, trust, the circulation of information, and collective learning. Cafés, bars, bookstores, cultural centers, squares, and coworking spaces can contribute to richer urban ecosystems. Innovation is not born only in closed laboratories; it also depends on social networks, conversations, circulation, and environments of coexistence.

The problem lies in transforming this accessory condition into the main cause. The café can facilitate encounters, but it does not create technological capacity by itself. It can stimulate conversations, but it does not replace laboratories. It can bring people closer, but it does not produce industrial policy. It can be pleasant, but it does not solve low wages. It can give life to the street, but it does not guarantee markets, financing, public demand, technical training, or productive sovereignty.

The café myth confuses atmosphere with structure. In doing so, it displaces the center of urban policy. Instead of asking how to build productive capabilities, strengthen universities, finance research, articulate industrial chains, and confront inequalities, public debate begins to ask how to create vibrant, attractive, and photographable neighborhoods for talent.

The innovative city begins to be recognized by visual signs: outdoor tables, bicycles, laptops, rehabilitated industrial façades, craft breweries, specialty cafés, urban art, design studios, coworking spaces, galleries, and small creative shops. This aesthetic may be pleasant and even desirable, but it should not be confused with development.

8.3 Urban Amenities and the Politics of Attraction

The café myth is directly associated with the urban politics of attraction. The city begins to formulate strategies to attract talent, companies, tourists, investors, and events. To do so, it invests in amenities: qualified public spaces, bike lanes, green areas, cultural facilities, nightlife, gastronomy, safety, transportation, housing close to work, and neighborhoods with identity.

These policies are not necessarily wrong. Urban quality matters. Hostile, segregated, violent, polluted cities, without public spaces and without cultural life, tend to have greater difficulty retaining qualified people. The problem is causal inversion. Amenities can compose an innovation environment, but they are rarely its origin. They work better when articulated with universities, firms, wages, opportunities, financing, institutions, and productive networks.

When this articulation does not exist, amenities may produce only elitized urban consumption. The neighborhood becomes more beautiful, more expensive, and more interesting for some groups, but not necessarily more productive, inclusive, or innovative. The café appears, rent rises, popular commerce changes, long-time residents are pressured, but the local economy does not undergo structural transformation.

The politics of attraction can also create predatory competition among cities. Each tries to appear more creative than the others, more innovative, younger, more open, more "global." Rankings, campaigns, slogans, and districts are produced. But few cities are able to change the structural factors that truly define the location of firms and qualified workers: economic opportunities, institutional stability, wages, university networks, infrastructure, capital, and markets.

In the Global South, this limitation is even more evident. A city may offer cafés, coworking spaces, and cultural life, but if wages are low, if the currency is unstable, if industry is fragile, if research is underfunded, and if professional opportunities are limited, retaining talent will remain difficult. Brain drain is not solved by pleasant urbanism alone.

8.4 The False Premise of Automatic Talent Migration

The first false premise of the café myth is that talent will automatically migrate to cities or districts that offer good urban amenities. This premise assumes a highly mobile, cosmopolitan, flexible creative class oriented by lifestyle. In part, this exists. Certain qualified professionals may choose cities because of urban quality, diversity, culture, and opportunities for sociability.

But this mobility is selective. Not everyone can move freely. Not everyone has the resources to migrate. Not everyone can work remotely. Not everyone wants to break family networks. Not everyone accepts lower wages in exchange for amenities. Not everyone is attracted by the same lifestyles. Moreover, the expansion of remote work has changed the relationship between housing, employment, and location. In many sectors,

qualified professionals can work for global companies without necessarily living in the districts that local governments planned to attract them.

The location decision of qualified workers depends on multiple factors: salary, career, stability, cost of living, quality of public services, safety, schools, housing, transportation, family networks, opportunities for spouses, political environment, taxation, currency, international connections, and future prospects. Cafés and bike lanes enter this equation, but they do not determine it by themselves.

In the Brazilian case, for example, young engineers, architects, designers, programmers, and researchers often consider not only the urban quality of a city, but the existence of jobs compatible with their training, adequate salaries, public-sector exams, scholarships, companies, universities, research projects, stability, and possibilities of progression. The city may be pleasant, but if it does not offer a professional trajectory, it becomes a place of passage.

Therefore, urban policy should not confuse consumption preference with opportunity structure. The creative class may enjoy cafés, but it lives from work, income, and perspective.

8.5 The False Premise of Automatic Positive Transformation

The second false premise is that, once attracted, the creative class will automatically transform the city for the better. This idea is even more problematic. The arrival of qualified workers, artists, designers, technology professionals, and entrepreneurs may energize urban areas, strengthen cultural circuits, create companies, expand consumption, and stimulate new services. But it may also generate negative effects.

The main one is gentrification. Neighborhoods that were previously popular, industrial, or relatively affordable become attractive to higher-income groups. Commerce changes. Prices rise. Long-time residents are pressured. Workshops, small industries, popular bars, and low-income housing give way to cafés, galleries, restaurants, studios, coworking spaces, and valorized apartments. The diversity that initially made the neighborhood interesting may be destroyed by the process of valorization itself.

Zukin analyzed, in different works, how culture, authenticity, and urban consumption can be mobilized in the restructuring of neighborhoods, often associating creativity with real estate valorization (ZUKIN, 1995; 2010; 2020). Urban culture, when captured by the real estate market, becomes an asset.

This is a central point for the café myth. The café that appears in official discourse as a sign of vitality can function, in certain contexts, as a marker of class change. It signals that the neighborhood has entered another circuit of consumption. The café is not the isolated cause of gentrification, but it can be one of its visible signs.

The arrival of the creative class, therefore, does not automatically improve the city. It can improve it for some and worsen it for others. It can create opportunities and produce displacement. It can activate spaces and destroy local networks. It can bring aesthetic diversity and reduce social diversity. It can transform a neighborhood into a showcase and expel the very life that made it interesting.

8.6 From the Technology Park to the Innovation District

The café myth gains strength with the conceptual transition from isolated technology parks to urban innovation districts. The classical technology park, often located in peripheral areas, near highways or

university campuses, has frequently been criticized for its isolation, low urbanity, dependence on automobiles, functional separation, and weak integration with the daily life of the city.

Innovation districts emerge as a response to these limits. Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner argued that contemporary innovation was moving toward dense, mixed, connected urban areas, close to universities, firms, startups, housing, public transportation, cafés, and services (KATZ; WAGNER, 2014). The district would thus be a spatial form more adequate to the knowledge economy, because it would favor proximity, encounters, collaboration, and the circulation of ideas.

This formulation has merits. Dense and well-connected cities can indeed favor interactions. Proximity among universities, companies, housing, services, and public spaces can expand opportunities for cooperation. Mixed uses can avoid the monotony of technological enclaves. Urban insertion can make innovation less segregated.

But when transformed into a recipe, the innovation district can reproduce another kind of enclave: no longer the walled suburban enclave, but the symbolic enclave of creativity. It is inside the city, but not necessarily for everyone. It may be walkable, but socially selective. It may be open, but economically exclusionary. It may have cafés and squares, but inaccessible rents. It may speak of diversity, but displace popular populations.

The innovation district does not automatically overcome the technology park. It merely displaces its form. The critical question is whether it creates real links with the city or merely uses the city as scenery.

8.7 The City as a Package of Experience

The café myth is also linked to the transformation of the city into a package of experience. The innovative city must offer work, housing, leisure, culture, consumption, mobility, and identity in the same environment. The ideal creative worker does not want only a job; he wants a lifestyle. He wants to live near work, circulate by bicycle, frequent cafés, participate in events, consume culture, meet interesting people, and feel that he lives in a territory of the future.

This logic brings the innovation district closer to other contemporary urban products: planned neighborhoods, open high-income condominiums, creative zones, waterfronts, revitalized centers, gastronomic hubs, and areas of cultural consumption. Innovation becomes a total urban experience.

The risk lies in the commodification of urban life. Elements that could be rights or common goods - public space, mobility, culture, safety, landscape, sociability - are reorganized as competitive differentials to attract certain groups. The city is not improved for everyone; it is curated for some.

This process also reconfigures public policy. Investments are concentrated in areas with attraction potential, while less visible territories remain marked by basic deficits. The bike lane of the innovation district gains priority, while peripheral public transportation remains precarious. The café of the creative economy appears in promotional materials, while the absence of sanitation in popular neighborhoods remains invisible. The showcase city advances over the mission-oriented city.

8.8 Macroeconomics, Wages, and Brain Drain

The café myth tends to underestimate macroeconomics. Cities do not float outside national economies. They depend on monetary stability, income, employment, wages, productive structure, public investment, exchange rates, credit, science and technology policy, inflation, fiscal capacity, and industrial strategy.

A city may be beautiful, vibrant, creative, and walkable, but if the national economy does not generate qualified jobs, if salaries are low, if research grants are precarious, if companies do not innovate, if the exchange rate makes imported technology expensive, if public investment falls, and if universities lose resources, the innovation ecosystem becomes fragile.

Brain drain is not caused only by lack of urban amenities. It is caused by lack of perspective. Young researchers, engineers, programmers, designers, and scientists leave cities, regions, and countries when they do not find conditions to build a life and a career. The café may make staying more pleasant, but it does not solve the absence of income, laboratories, research funding, companies, and professional future.

This is especially important for medium-sized cities in Brazil and other countries of the Global South. Many of them have universities, good quality of life, cultural life, cafés, and attractive urban environments. But they struggle to retain graduates because local labor markets are limited. The young person may participate in the local hackathon and then work for a company in another country, move to a capital city, to São Paulo, abroad, or wherever there is income.

Territorial innovation requires favorable macroeconomics. One does not build an ecosystem with a beautiful neighborhood alone.

8.9 Remote Work and the New Geography of Talent

The expansion of remote work adds complexity to the debate. The classical theory of the creative class assumed a strong relationship between urban location, face-to-face sociability, and professional opportunities. The Covid-19 pandemic and the consolidation of hybrid and remote forms of work altered part of this equation. Many qualified workers gained greater freedom to choose where to live, regardless of the physical location of the company.

This may strengthen medium-sized cities and regions with good quality of life, lower costs, and adequate connectivity. But it also weakens the premise that talent will necessarily migrate to planned innovation districts. If professionals can work remotely, they may choose to live in another neighborhood, another city, another region, or even another country. They may consume amenities without integrating into the local ecosystem. They may use the city as a residential base, not as a productive territory.

Remote work can also create new inequalities. Highly qualified professionals with digital work gain mobility, while service, care, cleaning, transportation, delivery, food, and maintenance workers remain tied to urban materiality. The creative city depends on them, but rarely recognizes them as part of innovation.

Thus, the new geography of talent does not automatically confirm the café myth. It shows that location, work, and urban life are being reorganized in more complex ways. Innovation districts need to offer more than atmosphere. They need to produce real bonds: companies, projects, laboratories, networks, training, financing, affordable housing, and territorial integration.

8.10 The Café and Urban Inequality

The café, as a symbol, also allows us to discuss inequality. In many popular neighborhoods, the arrival of cafés, specialized bars, artisanal bakeries, galleries, and coworking spaces is read as a sign of "improvement." But improvement for whom? Traditional commerce may be replaced by establishments aimed at higher-income consumers. The landscape becomes more attractive to visitors, but less accessible to residents. The street gains vitality, but the cost of living increases.

This process shows that urban amenities are not neutral. They carry codes of class, consumption, taste, and belonging. A specialty café can function as a meeting place for creative workers and, at the same time, as a sign of exclusion for residents who cannot consume there. Creative urbanity may be physically open and economically closed.

Public policy must recognize this ambiguity. Creating spaces of sociability is important, but it must be accompanied by affordable housing, control of real estate valorization, protection of local commerce, community-based cultural policies, public transportation, productive inclusion, and redistributive mechanisms. Otherwise, the creative city becomes an elitized city.

The café myth transforms inequality into a pleasant landscape. Critique must reintroduce conflict where aesthetics presents consensus.

8.11 The Café, Coworking, and the Production of Community

Cafés and coworking spaces also function as devices for producing community. The new economy values networks, encounters, mentoring, events, collaboration, and informality. The tech community is not born spontaneously; it is produced by spaces, calendars, rituals, and narratives.

Zukin shows that meetups, hackathons, accelerators, and networking spaces are fundamental to the formation of innovative communities in cities such as New York (ZUKIN, 2020). They create trust, visibility, circulation of information, belonging, and a common language. The café and the coworking space are part of this social infrastructure.

The critical issue is that "community" can conceal hierarchies. Who participates? Who speaks? Who invests? Who decides? Who is a mentor? Who is mentored? Who has access to events? Who feels comfortable in these environments? Who masters the language? Who has free time to attend them? Who can work without pay while developing an idea?

The innovative community is not necessarily democratic. It can reproduce inequalities of class, gender, race, education, and social networks. It may appear open, but operate through informal codes of exclusion. It may speak of collaboration, but organize competition for resources, visibility, and capital.

The café myth presents community as spontaneous and horizontal. Critical analysis must show its social production and its asymmetries.

8.12 When the Café Replaces the Factory

There is a recurring image in post-industrial urban restructuring: old factories converted into creative spaces. Industrial warehouses become coworking spaces, studios, restaurants, cultural centers, gastronomic markets, technology offices, or innovation hubs. This transformation can preserve buildings, reactivate degraded

areas, and create new uses. But it also symbolizes the replacement of material production by the economy of experience.

The café inside the old factory is a powerful image. It signals that the industrial past has been domesticated, aestheticized, and converted into consumable heritage. Exposed bricks, metal beams, concrete floors, and old machines become scenery for the new economy. The memory of labor is transformed into decoration.

This operation is not necessarily negative. The preservation of industrial heritage can be important. But one must ask whether working-class memory remains alive or whether it is merely used as aesthetics. Who worked there? What was produced? What happened to the workers? What activities replaced the factory? What jobs were created? What wages are paid? Which groups were displaced or incorporated?

When the café replaces the factory without a new productive base, the city runs the risk of exchanging production for consumption, labor for experience, industry for landscape, and economic policy for lifestyle.

8.13 The Café Myth in the Global South

In the Global South, the café myth requires especially careful analysis. Latin American, African, and Asian cities face challenges that cannot be solved only with creative amenities: informality, unemployment, sanitation deficits, segregation, violence, low income, precarious transportation, climate vulnerability, technological dependence, and fiscal fragility.

Importing the creative class agenda without confronting these problems may produce selective urban policies. Historic centers, well-located industrial neighborhoods, and areas close to universities receive investments in requalification, culture, and innovation, while peripheries remain marked by precariousness. The city begins to display creative islands in oceans of inequality.

Moreover, popular creativity already exists in the Global South. It is present in informal economies, peripheral cultures, artistic collectives, social technologies, community arrangements, modes of urban survival, local infrastructure solutions, festivals, street markets, care networks, and practices of self-construction. The problem is that official creative economy policy often recognizes creativity only when it becomes consumable, formalized, aestheticized, and compatible with the market.

The café myth may therefore render popular forms of creativity invisible while celebrating elitized versions of urban culture. The official creative city does not always recognize the real creativity of popular territories.

8.14 Beyond the Café Myth

Criticizing the café myth does not mean defending cities without cafés, culture, urban life, or amenities. On the contrary. Good cities need encounters, public spaces, diversity, leisure, culture, local commerce, active mobility, and lively neighborhoods. What is criticized is the belief that these elements replace the structures of development.

A serious urban innovation policy must articulate amenities with public missions. Cafés and coworking spaces can be part of innovation districts, but they must be connected to universities, technical schools, laboratories, productive firms, financing, affordable housing, public transportation, social inclusion, and talent-retention policies based on real wages and opportunities.

The question should not be only: how can we attract the creative class? It should be: how can we train, remunerate, and root qualified workers in collective development projects? How can innovation be connected to public problems? How can creative districts avoid displacement? How can part of real estate valorization be captured to finance housing and infrastructure? How can popular creativity be recognized? How can an innovative city be produced for everyone, and not only for consumers of specialty coffee?

The café can be part of the city. It cannot be its theory of development.

Table 8 - The Café Myth

Premise	Why It Seduces	What It Conceals
Cafés stimulate creative encounters	It values urban sociability	Encounters do not replace institutions
Amenities attract talent	It offers a simple recipe for managers	Wages, careers, macroeconomics, and networks matter more
The creative class transforms the city	It promises development without conflict	It can generate gentrification and elitization
Mixed districts overcome isolated parks	It values urbanity and proximity	They can create selective enclaves inside the city
Culture generates economy	It recognizes creative sectors	It can commodify identities and territories
Vibrant neighborhoods indicate innovation	It produces a positive image	Atmosphere is not a productive base
Cafés signal vitality	They are visible and communicable	They can mark class change and exclusion

8.15 Final Remarks

The café myth is one of the most seductive forms of the urban ideology of innovation. It claims that the creation of vibrant, walkable, cultural environments endowed with amenities would be capable of attracting talent, generating encounters, stimulating ideas, and transforming the local economy. Its strength lies in combining desirable elements - urban life, diversity, cafés, culture, public spaces - with an apparently simple promise of development.

But innovation is not born only from atmosphere. It is born from structures. Cafés can favor encounters, but they do not replace strong universities, industrial policy, long-term financing, firms capable of absorbing knowledge, competitive wages, infrastructure, public procurement, social protection, and national mission. The creative class can contribute to urban vitality, but it is not a redeeming subject. Its arrival may energize

neighborhoods, but it may also produce gentrification. Innovation districts can be useful instruments, but they do not produce ecosystems automatically.

The critique of the café myth is not a critique of the good city. It is a critique of the reduction of urban development to an aesthetic of creativity. The problem is not that there are cafés in innovation districts. The problem is believing that cafés produce development.

If the garage myth transforms innovation into an individual epic, the café myth transforms it into urban decoration. Both remove innovation from its historical, social, and political complexity. Both must be overcome by a more robust vision: innovation as a collective mission, territorially rooted, socially oriented, and structurally financed.

The innovative city should not be measured only by the number of cafés, coworking spaces, bike lanes, or creative professionals. It should be measured by its capacity to produce knowledge, distribute opportunities, confront inequalities, strengthen its productive base, retain talent through dignified work, and orient technology toward public problems. The café may be present. But the future does not fit in a cup.

9. The "If You Build It, They Will Come" Myth

Wayne's World, Technology Districts, and Convocatory Infrastructure

The garage myth claims that innovation is born from individual genius. The café myth claims that innovation is born from urban atmosphere. The "if you build it, they will come" myth adds a third layer to this ideology: the belief that the mere construction of physical infrastructure - a technology park, innovation district, hub, entrepreneurship center, urban campus, incubator, or event arena - would be sufficient to attract companies, talents, brains, investors, and new economic activities.

This is a powerful belief because it offers local governments a simple operational promise. If the city wants to innovate, it must build the place of innovation. If it wants to attract technology companies, it must create a technology district. If it wants to retain qualified young people, it must inaugurate coworking spaces, cafés, bike lanes, laboratories, auditoriums, pitch spaces, and acceleration programs. If it wants to appear on the global map of the new economy, it must produce a landscape recognizable as innovative. Infrastructure, in this narrative, functions as a summons: it is enough to raise the stage for the actors to come.

The expression "if you build it, they will come" has an almost cinematic force. The phrase was consecrated in popular imagination by the film *Field of Dreams* and reappears comically and parodically in *Wayne's World 2*, when the idea of organizing a major music festival takes the form of an absurd, almost mystical revelation: create the structure, set up the event, prepare the space, and the audience will come. The humor of the scene lies precisely in the disproportionate faith between building the stage and the certainty that the event will happen.

In the field of urban innovation policy, this logic ceases to be a joke and becomes a strategy. Governments build technology districts expecting companies to come. Universities create parks expecting startups to emerge. City governments set up hubs expecting talents to remain. Development agencies organize hackathons expecting complex urban problems to be solved. But innovation is not a festival summoned by infrastructure. It requires much more than a stage, lighting, an auditorium, and a brand.

This chapter calls this belief the **"if you build it, they will come" Myth**. Its critique is central to understanding why so many technology parks and innovation districts fail, remain underused, become sophisticated real estate ventures, or function only as symbolic showcases of the new economy.

9.1 Infrastructure Is Not an Ecosystem

The first necessary distinction is between **infrastructure** and **ecosystem**. Infrastructure is the set of physical and technical conditions: buildings, laboratories, internet networks, meeting rooms, coworking spaces, auditoriums, roads, transportation, energy, urban furniture, equipment, and public spaces.

An ecosystem is something else. It is a historically constructed set of relations among universities, companies, governments, investors, workers, users, suppliers, communities, funding agencies, research laboratories, professional networks, and public missions. It involves trust, demand, knowledge circulation, technical culture, governance, financing, learning, regulation, and the capacity to transform knowledge into social and economic value.

Infrastructure can help produce an ecosystem, but it does not produce one automatically. A laboratory without researchers, companies, projects, and funding is only a laboratory. A coworking space without entrepreneurs, clients, capital, and networks is only a shared office. A district without firms, universities, governance, housing, mobility, and productive density is only an urban fragment. A technology park without technological demand is only a real estate project with a futuristic vocabulary.

The myth begins when the part is confused with the whole. The building is taken for the system. The district is taken for the economy. The hub is taken for the ecosystem. The inauguration is taken for success. The event is taken for transformation.

An ecosystem is not inaugurated. It is cultivated.

9.2 The Innovation District as Convocatory Infrastructure

The innovation district is one of the most sophisticated forms of convocatory infrastructure. Its promise is spatially persuasive. By concentrating universities, companies, startups, housing, cafés, services, public spaces, and mobility in the same territory, the district would generate encounters, collaboration, talent retention, entrepreneurship, and new economic activities.

This promise has part of the truth. Proximity matters. Urbanity matters. Density can matter. The circulation of people and ideas can favor learning. Districts can be useful when they articulate research, firms, services, housing, mobility, culture, and public policy. The problem is when this spatial arrangement is treated as sufficient.

A district does not innovate. Actors innovate. Institutions innovate. Firms innovate. Researchers innovate. Public policies innovate. Workers innovate. Communities innovate. The district can organize, connect, and give visibility to these actors. But it cannot replace them.

This distinction is crucial. Many urban innovation projects are designed as if the territory itself had magical agency. The map is drawn, the blocks are defined, the logo is created, the website is launched, the first event is organized, and the future is announced. But the true question comes later: who will produce knowledge there? Who will finance technological development? Which firms will absorb research? Which public problems will orient innovation? Which workers will be trained? Which communities will benefit? Which productive chains will be strengthened?

Without these answers, the district becomes a promise looking for content.

9.3 The Empty Stage

The metaphor of the stage is useful. Infrastructure can prepare the conditions for something to happen. It organizes space, lighting, circulation, visibility, and audience. But the stage does not create the play. It does not write the script, train the actors, produce the music, finance the production, attract the public, or sustain the performance over time.

Technology parks and innovation districts often function like stages. They offer buildings, spaces, brands, events, and images. But if there is no productive base, no companies, no research, no financing, and no mission, the stage remains empty or hosts only episodic events.

The empty stage is a recurring image in poorly structured innovation policies. Technology parks with vacant lots. Incubators with few companies. Hubs that function more as event spaces than as environments of technological production. Subsidized coworking spaces that do not generate robust firms. Districts announced before they possess economic density. Innovation programs that produce reports, photographs, and inaugurations, but few structural results.

The problem is not building spaces of innovation. The problem is believing that building the space replaces building the system.

9.4 Silicon Valley Without DARPA?

The critique of the "if you build it, they will come" myth becomes stronger when we return to Silicon Valley. Many cities wish to replicate the Valley through parks, districts, incubators, and entrepreneurial culture. But Silicon Valley was not born because someone built a technology district and waited for innovators to come. It emerged from a long historical trajectory that articulated universities, the State, the military industry, public contracts, semiconductors, venture capital, technical networks, regional culture, and global markets.

The unavoidable question is:

What would Silicon Valley have been without DARPA?

ARPA, later DARPA, played a decisive role in financing advanced research, computer networks, and strategic technologies linked to the Cold War. The United States Department of Defense, NASA, and other public agencies created demand for electronics, computing, communications, semiconductors, and aerospace technologies. Stanford and other universities trained engineers and researchers. Companies such as Fairchild Semiconductor created technological and entrepreneurial genealogies. Venture capital found a technological base already partially structured by public investments and State demand (ABBATE, 1999; LÉCUYER, 2006; O'MARA, 2019).

Therefore, Silicon Valley was not a stage built while waiting for actors. It was a territory formed by geopolitical missions, public investments, universities, industry, and capital. Its technological urbanization was the result of a historical ecology, not an isolated real estate operation.

When cities try to replicate the Valley only through form - campus, incubator, hub, startup, café, pitch, angel investor - they import the appearance, but not the structure. The "if you build it, they will come" myth transforms a dense history into a spatial formula.

9.5 China Without the Torch Program?

The Chinese experience reinforces this critique even more. China did not become a global technological power simply by building parks. It built parks within a much broader strategy: economic reform, industrial policy, export orientation, State planning, technological learning, infrastructure, special economic zones, science and technology programs, massive investment in education, and national missions.

The Torch Program, created in 1988, was decisive in the construction of high-technology zones, support for technology-based firms, commercialization of research, and the territorial organization of innovation. Chinese technology parks and science cities were not isolated urban gestures. They were linked to a developmental State, industrial upgrading, national strategy, and global insertion.

This does not mean idealizing the Chinese model, which contains profound contradictions: regional inequalities, political control, displacement, environmental pressure, labor discipline, and strong State centralization. But it does mean recognizing that Chinese territorial innovation cannot be explained by cafés, pitches, or urban design. It is explained by State, industry, planning, and mission.

The comparison is decisive. When the innovation district is separated from mission, it becomes a landscape. When the park is connected to industrial policy, it can become an instrument of national development.

9.6 Brazil and the Importation of Form

In Brazil, the "if you build it, they will come" myth appears recurrently. Many municipalities and states have created technology parks, incubators, innovation centers, and business districts with the expectation of attracting technology-based companies, bringing universities closer to the market, and producing new cycles of regional development. In some cases, there have been important results. In others, projects fell short of their promises.

The Brazilian difficulty is linked to structural factors. Deindustrialization reduced the density of productive chains capable of demanding innovation. The instability of industrial policies hindered continuity. Public funding, although relevant, was often fragmented. The relationship between universities and companies remained unequal and discontinuous. Many national companies invested little in R&D. Macroeconomics, interest rates, exchange-rate appreciation in certain periods, and international competition affected industrial production. In addition, several cities pursued technology parks without possessing a sufficient business, scientific, or productive base.

In this context, the construction of infrastructure can become a symbolic wager. The technology park signals modernity. The incubator shows institutional effort. The hub allows events. The technology district helps build a narrative. But without companies, mission, financing, and demand, these spaces face difficulties in consolidating themselves as real ecosystems.

Brazil does not need to abandon technology parks and districts. It needs to link them to missions. A technology park should not be merely a real estate venture or a university showcase. It should be articulated with national and regional problems: public health, housing, sanitation, energy transition, climate adaptation, defense, mobility, tropical agriculture, aerospace industry, sovereign digital economy, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, food, bioeconomy, and urban infrastructure.

Without mission, the park becomes an address. With mission, it can become an instrument of development.

9.7 The Liturgy of Events: Pitches, Hackathons, and Demo Days

The "if you build it, they will come" myth is not limited to physical infrastructure. It also appears in the ritual infrastructure of innovation: hackathons, pitches, demo days, meetups, innovation weeks, public challenges, and acceleration events. These events fulfill important functions: they connect people, give visibility to problems, mobilize students, bring institutions closer together, create networks, and stimulate experimentation.

But they can also produce an illusion of action. A weekend hackathon appears to solve problems that require years of public investment. A three-minute pitch appears to replace business plans, technical studies,

industrial policy, and territorial analysis. A demo day creates a sensation of ecosystem, even when companies are still fragile. The event becomes proof of vitality.

Zukin shows that hackathons and meetups participate in the construction of tech communities and in the circulation of values of the new urban economy. They are rituals of belonging. They produce common language, trust, visibility, and mobilization (ZUKIN, 2020). But ritual should not be confused with structural transformation.

The problem arises when public policy is satisfied with the event. The city announces an innovation challenge for mobility, but does not invest in public transportation. It organizes a hackathon on floods, but does not carry out drainage, housing, and environmental recovery. It promotes pitches on health, but does not strengthen public health systems, public laboratories, government procurement, and sanitary infrastructure. It creates challenges on education, but does not finance schools, teachers, and connectivity.

The event can be part of a policy. It cannot be the policy.

9.8 The Magic of Proximity

One of the strongest beliefs of innovation districts is the magic of proximity. Placing university, company, startup, café, housing, and public space close to one another would generate encounters, exchanges, collaboration, and innovation. Physical proximity is important. Literature on clusters, industrial districts, and regional innovation systems shows that territorial interactions can favor learning, trust, and knowledge circulation (SAXENIAN, 1994; STORPER, 1997).

But proximity is not sufficient. Actors may be close and not cooperate. Universities may stand next to companies and not transfer knowledge. Firms may occupy the same district and not form local chains. Startups may work in the same coworking space and compete for scarce resources. Workers may circulate in the same cafés and remain socially segregated.

Proximity must be activated by institutions, projects, trust, demand, governance, financing, and shared objectives. Otherwise, it becomes mere spatial contiguity. The district may concentrate actors without producing relevant relations.

This distinction is decisive. Urban innovation policy often bets on proximity as if it were an automatic mechanism. But proximity is a condition, not a guarantee. Cooperation must be built.

9.9 The Role of the State: To Build or to Orient?

The "if you build it, they will come" myth frequently reduces the role of the State to the construction of infrastructure. Local government provides land, carries out works, grants incentives, inaugurates buildings, and creates a brand. Then it waits for the market, talents, and companies to occupy the space.

But the State can do much more than build. It can orient. It can formulate missions, articulate productive chains, use public procurement, finance research, create demand, train workers, regulate markets, support national companies, require counterparts, capture real estate appreciation, protect affordable housing, induce social innovation, and guarantee public return.

Mazzucato is fundamental for this discussion. She argues that the entrepreneurial State is not merely a facilitator of the market, but an agent capable of creating markets and directing investments toward public

missions (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021). This completely changes the meaning of technology parks and innovation districts. They should not be merely containers for innovative companies; they should be instruments of missions.

A mission-oriented innovation district does not ask only: how can we attract startups? It asks: how can we solve public problems on a scientific and productive basis? How can we articulate universities, companies, and the State to confront concrete challenges? How can we ensure that public investment generates social return? How can we distribute the benefits of innovation across the territory?

The State that only builds waits. The State that orients mobilizes.

9.10 The Technology Park as Real Estate Venture

One of the risks of the "if you build it, they will come" myth is the conversion of the technology park or innovation district into a real estate venture. When innovation does not consolidate itself as a productive dynamic, land valorization may become the main result. The technological discourse legitimizes works, zoning changes, infrastructure, incentives, and requalification, but the most immediate gains appear in the real estate market.

This does not mean that every park or district is mere speculation. Many perform relevant functions. The problem is that the discourse of innovation can function as a justification for valorizing specific areas. The promise of technology companies, talents, and the future increases expectations about the territory. Landowners, developers, and investors may capture this appreciation, even if real innovation remains limited.

Zukin shows that the innovation complex articulates technology, capital, and urban land, producing effects on real estate markets and on the habitability of the city (ZUKIN, 2020). This articulation is central. Innovation is an economic narrative, but also a land narrative. It reorganizes expectations about the value of land.

In the Global South, this risk is even more relevant. Public land, deactivated industrial areas, port zones, and urban centralities may be requalified in the name of innovation, but without redistributive mechanisms. If real estate appreciation is not captured to finance housing, transportation, infrastructure, and productive inclusion, the innovation district may deepen inequalities.

9.11 "If You Build It, They Will Come" and the Politics of Inauguration

Contemporary urban politics is often oriented by inauguration. Visible works produce political capital. Buildings, bridges, hubs, innovation centers, and districts can be inaugurated. Structural missions, by contrast, are more difficult to inaugurate. Building technological capacity takes decades. Training engineers takes years. Consolidating firms requires continuity. Creating productive chains requires coordination. Universalizing sanitation does not generate the same futuristic image as launching a hub.

The "if you build it, they will come" myth combines perfectly with the politics of inauguration. It offers visible works and a positive narrative. City government can show the building. The university can show the incubator. The state government can show the park. The development agency can show the map of the district. The media can photograph the space. The opening event can bring together authorities, businesspeople, and students.

But real innovation rarely coincides with the date of inauguration. It requires long time, maintenance, governance, evaluation, course correction, and continuous financing. The inauguration is only the beginning. Yet political logic often treats the work as the final result.

This short temporality is the enemy of mission-oriented innovation. Missions require persistence. The myth requires spectacle.

9.12 How to Distinguish Stage from Ecosystem

A practical question runs through this chapter: how can one distinguish a true innovation ecosystem from an empty convocatory infrastructure?

Some criteria are fundamental. First, the existence of a real scientific and technological base: universities, laboratories, researchers, institutes, and technical training. Second, the presence of companies capable of absorbing knowledge and investing in innovation. Third, sources of financing adequate to the technological cycle, including patient capital and public funding. Fourth, public or private demand for solutions. Fifth, stable institutional governance. Sixth, links with productive chains and territorial problems. Seventh, mechanisms of social inclusion and public return. Eighth, the capacity to retain talent through dignified work, wages, and prospects.

Without these elements, infrastructure may look innovative, but its density will be low. It will have events, but not trajectory. It will have a brand, but not a mission. It will have buildings, but not an ecosystem.

The ecosystem is measured less by aesthetics and more by its capacity to produce lasting links among knowledge, production, financing, and real problems.

Table 9 - The "If You Build It, They Will Come" Myth

Crença	Por que seduz	O que oculta
Construir um distrito atrai empresas	Oferece solução visível e inaugurável	Empresas dependem de mercado, talentos, financiamento e estratégia
Criar um hub gera startups	Parece barato e moderno	Startups precisam de conhecimento, clientes, capital e mentoria real
Hackathons resolvem problemas urbanos	Produzem mobilização rápida	Problemas urbanos exigem política pública contínua
Proximidade física gera cooperação	Valoriza densidade e encontros	Cooperação exige confiança, governança e objetivos
Parque tecnológico cria ecossistema	Dá forma territorial à inovação	Ecossistemas são históricos e institucionais
Landmark atrai investimentos	Produz imagem de futuro	Investimento depende de estrutura econômica
Inauguração prova sucesso	Gera visibilidade política	Inovação exige tempo longo e missão

9.13 Beyond "If You Build It, They Will Come"

Overcoming this myth does not mean abandoning the construction of parks, districts, hubs, or innovation centers. It means placing them back in their proper place. Infrastructures are important. Spaces matter. Proximity matters. Urbanity matters. Laboratories matter. But all these elements must be instruments of a strategy, not substitutes for it.

The correct question is not: what technology district should we build in order to attract innovation?

The correct question is: **which public mission requires innovation, and what territorial infrastructure can help make it happen?**

This inversion changes everything. If the mission is to confront urban floods, the district must articulate hydrology, engineering, sensors, housing, drainage, civil defense, urban planning, companies, universities, and vulnerable communities. If the mission is energy transition, it must connect solar energy, storage, smart grids, industry, technical training, regulation, and financing. If the mission is public health, it must articulate universities, laboratories, pharmaceutical production, equipment, public procurement, data, the health system, and territory. If the mission is climate adaptation, it must connect urban planning, green infrastructure, technology, social vulnerability, housing, mobility, and municipal governance.

In this logic, the district is not the starting point. The mission is. The infrastructure comes after, as a means.

This is the difference between innovation as showcase and innovation as public project.

9.14 Final Remarks

The "if you build it, they will come" myth is one of the central beliefs of contemporary urban innovation policy. It claims that the construction of parks, hubs, districts, incubators, event arenas, coworking spaces, and symbolic infrastructures would be capable of summoning companies, talents, investments, and technological activities. It offers governments a visible, inaugurable, communicable, and politically attractive solution.

But innovation is not summoned by infrastructure alone. It is historically constructed. It depends on universities, firms, financing, demand, public policy, trust, technical culture, productive chains, long-term missions, and social return. The stage matters, but it does not create the play.

The critique of this myth is not a critique of technology parks or innovation districts in themselves. They can be important instruments. The problem is treating them as causes rather than conditions. A park can support innovation, but it does not produce it automatically. A district can favor cooperation, but it does not guarantee it. A hub can mobilize people, but it does not replace a productive system. A hackathon can generate ideas, but it does not solve structural problems. An inauguration can mark the beginning, but it cannot be confused with success.

For the Global South, this critique is urgent. Countries marked by inequality, deindustrialization, fiscal fragility, technological dependence, and incomplete urban infrastructures cannot afford to convert innovation policy into scenography. They need parks, districts, hubs, laboratories, and networks - but oriented by public missions, connected to productive capabilities, financed over the long term, and committed to social return.

Without mission, the park becomes an address. Without demand, the hub becomes an event space. Without firms, the district becomes a real estate narrative. Without public return, innovation becomes private capture. Without justice, the future becomes a showcase.

The challenge, therefore, is not merely to build places of innovation. It is to build the historical, institutional, productive, and social conditions that make innovation possible. The future does not come because the stage was built. It comes when society decides what must be transformed - and organizes knowledge, territory, capital, labor, and the State around that mission.

10. Phrases on the Walls

Business Self-Help and the Moral Pedagogy of Innovation

In innovation environments, walls speak. They speak in coworking spaces, accelerators, incubators, technology parks, startup headquarters, university innovation centers, entrepreneurship laboratories, corporate campuses, and event spaces. They speak through short phrases, motivational slogans, inspirational quotes, and commands disguised as advice: innovate, take risks, love what you do, think differently, fail fast, leave your comfort zone, change the world, make an impact.

These phrases may seem harmless. At first glance, they are merely decorative elements, part of the visual identity of contemporary workspaces. They make environments more informal, colorful, youthful, dynamic, and creative. They replace the coldness of bureaucratic offices with a language of enthusiasm, movement, and possibility. Yet they perform a deeper function: they teach.

They teach how the subject of the new economy should think, feel, work, fail, desire, and interpret their own trajectory. They form what this book calls the **wall pedagogy of innovation**: a moral and visual pedagogy that translates complex economic, political, and technological processes into imperatives of individual attitude.

The phrase on the wall is not only decoration. It is doctrine.

10.1 The Wall as Pedagogical Device

The wall of innovation environments functions as a pedagogical device because it permanently exposes workers, students, entrepreneurs, managers, and visitors to a normative language. It does not explain innovation; it commands innovation. It does not analyze failure; it orders one to accept it. It does not discuss work; it moralizes passion. It does not debate public policy; it celebrates attitude.

The traditional classroom teaches through curriculum, books, lectures, exercises, and evaluation. The innovation environment teaches through atmosphere, design, events, rituals, furniture, clothing, coffee, open spaces, informal language, and wall phrases. Learning occurs not only through content, but through immersion in a culture.

This culture is based on a few recurring values: speed, flexibility, resilience, autonomy, creativity, risk, passion, collaboration, disruption, purpose, and impact. These values are not necessarily negative. Creativity matters. Collaboration matters. Purpose matters. The problem is that, when detached from social structures, they become moral imperatives directed at individuals.

The phrase "get out of your comfort zone," for example, may encourage experimentation. But it may also conceal the fact that many people never had a comfort zone. The phrase "fail fast" may help reduce fear of experimentation in entrepreneurial environments. But it may also trivialize failure in societies marked by inequality, debt, unemployment, informality, and lack of social protection. The phrase "love what you do" may express the search for meaningful work. But it may also justify overwork, unpaid labor, and the emotional exploitation of workers.

The wall transforms social contradictions into personal challenges.

10.2 Steve Jobs as Secular Saint

Few figures are as present in the iconography of innovation as Steve Jobs. His image, biography, speeches, phrases, product launches, and aesthetic sensibility became part of the global mythology of the new economy. Jobs appears as visionary entrepreneur, artist of technology, rebel against bureaucracy, master of design, founder expelled and redeemed, creative genius capable of transforming devices into objects of desire.

In innovation environments, phrases attributed to Jobs often appear as secular commandments. They suggest that innovation depends on passion, focus, refusal of mediocrity, courage, intuition, and the ability to say no. This symbolic use transforms Jobs into a kind of business saint: someone whose life story and words seem to offer guidance for those who wish to innovate.

The problem is not recognizing the importance of Jobs or Apple in the history of digital capitalism. The problem is converting a complex trajectory - involving design, engineering, global supply chains, public technologies, intellectual property, marketing, labor, finance, manufacturing, and platform power - into a moral lesson about individual genius.

When Jobs becomes only an inspirational figure, Apple's historical and material conditions disappear. The role of public investments in foundational technologies disappears. The industrial organization of global production disappears. The labor conditions in supply chains disappear. The strategies of design, branding, closed ecosystems, and corporate control disappear. What remains is the heroic subject and his phrases.

The saint replaces the system.

10.3 From Public Policy to Individual Voluntarism

One of the central effects of the wall pedagogy of innovation is the displacement of public policy toward individual voluntarism. Structural problems are reinterpreted as problems of attitude. Lack of investment becomes lack of initiative. Unemployment becomes lack of entrepreneurship. Institutional fragility becomes lack of agility. Technological dependence becomes lack of boldness. Urban inequality becomes lack of creativity. Failure becomes lack of resilience.

This displacement is deeply political. If innovation depends mainly on attitude, then the solution is to motivate individuals. If the worker fails, he did not adapt. If the entrepreneur fails, he did not pivot in time. If the city fails, it did not become creative enough. If the university fails, it was too bureaucratic. If the State fails, it did not adopt agile methods.

The debate moves away from industrial policy, public funding, wages, rights, macroeconomics, infrastructure, education, science and technology policy, technological sovereignty, and social protection. It moves toward mindset.

This movement is compatible with the broader logic of neoliberalism, in which individuals are increasingly called upon to behave as enterprises of themselves. Dardot and Laval analyze precisely this transformation: neoliberal rationality does not only reorganize markets and States; it produces subjects who must govern themselves according to the logic of competition, performance, and permanent self-improvement (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2013).

The wall phrase is one of the smallest units of this rationality. It condenses neoliberal subjectivation into a sentence.

10.4 "Fail Fast" and the Privilege of Failure

Among the most repeated expressions in innovation environments is "fail fast." The phrase comes from entrepreneurial methodologies that value rapid testing, learning from errors, and avoiding the waste of time and resources in products that do not respond to real market needs. In the context of startups, especially in the logic of the lean startup, the idea has methodological coherence: build, measure, learn, test hypotheses, and pivot when necessary (RIES, 2011).

The problem begins when "fail fast" becomes a universal philosophy. Failure is not the same for everyone. For a well-funded startup founder, failure may be part of a learning trajectory, a line in a résumé, a story for investors, or an experience that increases symbolic capital. For a poor worker, a small entrepreneur in debt, a young person without family support, or a precarious professional, failure may mean hunger, indebtedness, humiliation, loss of housing, interruption of studies, or exit from the market.

Failure is socially distributed. Some can fail and start again. Others cannot. Some are protected by family wealth, elite universities, investor networks, and social prestige. Others are punished immediately by the absence of savings, credit, rights, and protection.

The phrase "fail fast" erases these differences. It treats failure as an individual experience of learning, not as a socially unequal event. It transforms risk into a moral virtue while ignoring that risk is borne differently according to class, race, gender, territory, and access to networks.

A serious innovation policy must learn from error. But it cannot romanticize failure. Public experimentation requires responsibility, accountability, protection, and social learning. Failure cannot be celebrated when its costs are transferred to the most vulnerable.

10.5 "Love What You Do" and the Moralization of Work

Another recurring phrase in innovation environments is "love what you do." It expresses a legitimate desire: work should not be merely suffering, repetition, alienation, or obligation. People should be able to find meaning, creativity, recognition, and purpose in what they do.

But under contemporary capitalism, this phrase acquires another function. It can become a device for intensifying work. If you love what you do, working too much becomes proof of passion. Accepting low pay becomes proof of commitment. Working nights and weekends becomes proof of purpose. Not demanding rights becomes proof of belonging. Enduring uncertainty becomes proof of resilience.

Boltanski and Chiapello showed how the new spirit of capitalism incorporated values once associated with critique - autonomy, creativity, flexibility, authenticity - and transformed them into productive forces of the new managerial order (BOLTANSKI; CHIAPELLO, 1999). The demand for meaningful work can thus be captured by organizations that require permanent availability, emotional engagement, and self-exploitation.

In innovation environments, this moralization is especially strong. The entrepreneur must love the problem. The startup team must love the mission. The researcher must love impact. The public servant must love transformation. The student must love entrepreneurship. Passion becomes a management technology.

The phrase "love what you do" can therefore hide a dangerous inversion: instead of work being organized to respect life, life is reorganized around work.

10.6 Self-Help and Business Theology

The wall pedagogy of innovation is deeply connected to the language of self-help. It promises that individual transformation precedes structural transformation. Change your mindset. Believe in yourself. Take risks. Reinvent yourself. Be resilient. Think outside the box. Be the protagonist of your journey. Turn problems into opportunities.

This language is powerful because it offers meaning in uncertain contexts. In a world of unstable jobs, technological change, urban competition, precarious careers, and weakened collective protections, self-help provides psychological orientation. It tells individuals that they still have agency.

But it also produces guilt. If everything depends on mindset, failure becomes personal. If opportunity is everywhere, poverty becomes lack of initiative. If change is always possible, exhaustion becomes weakness. If innovation depends on courage, fear becomes moral defect.

Business self-help operates as a theology without transcendence. It has commandments, saints, rituals, testimonies, conversion narratives, and promises of salvation. The salvation is no longer spiritual, but entrepreneurial: success, impact, scale, autonomy, wealth, recognition, purpose, and belonging to the future.

This theology is especially visible in innovation events, where founders tell stories of difficulty, risk, failure, perseverance, and victory. The narrative follows a recognizable structure: crisis, revelation, effort, pivot, investment, scaling, redemption. The startup pitch often resembles a testimony of conversion.

10.7 The Simplification of Complex Theories

Another function of wall phrases is the simplification of complex theories. Concepts such as innovation, disruption, lean startup, open innovation, design thinking, agility, impact, and mission are reduced to short, motivational commands.

The problem is not synthesis. Synthesis is necessary. The problem is reduction. A complex theory becomes a phrase. A phrase becomes a behavior. A behavior becomes an organizational culture. An organizational culture becomes a moral code.

For example, Mazzucato's argument about the entrepreneurial State involves public risk, market creation, mission-oriented policy, social return, and the direction of innovation (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021). In a vulgarized environment, this can become a generic celebration of entrepreneurship, as if the point were to make everyone more entrepreneurial. The political economy of innovation disappears.

The same occurs with the idea of disruption. Christensen's theory addressed specific processes through which entrants challenge incumbent firms under certain market conditions (CHRISTENSEN, 1997). In wall language, disruption becomes a universal virtue: disrupt everything, break rules, reinvent the world.

The phrase detaches the concept from its analytical context. It preserves the energy of the word, but removes its complexity.

10.8 Responsibility Without Power

Wall pedagogy gives individuals responsibility, but not necessarily power. It tells workers, students, entrepreneurs, and managers that they must innovate, adapt, risk, create, reinvent, collaborate, and deliver impact. But it often does not give them control over financing, ownership, strategic decisions, wages, working conditions, intellectual property, or institutional direction.

This is one of the central contradictions of the new economy. Subjects are called upon to behave as protagonists in systems they do not control. They must be creative inside predefined business models. They must innovate within precarious contracts. They must take risks without owning capital. They must produce impact without defining the mission. They must be flexible in institutions marked by asymmetrical power.

The worker becomes responsible for adaptation, but the structure remains protected from critique. The student becomes responsible for employability, but the labor market remains precarious. The professor becomes responsible for innovation, but the university remains underfunded. The public servant becomes responsible for agility, but the State remains fiscally constrained. The city becomes responsible for competitiveness, but macroeconomic policy remains outside its control.

Responsibility is individualized. Power remains concentrated.

10.9 The Wall and the University

The wall pedagogy has also entered universities. Innovation centers, entrepreneurship laboratories, incubators, and technology transfer offices often adopt the aesthetics and language of startups. They encourage students to pitch, prototype, validate, fail fast, build minimum viable products, create impact, and transform research into business.

This can be positive when it expands students' ability to connect knowledge with real problems, develop projects, work collaboratively, and understand the social and economic uses of research. Universities should not be isolated from society. They should contribute to innovation, public policy, industry, culture, and territorial development.

But the university cannot be reduced to an entrepreneurship factory. Its mission is broader: critical knowledge, scientific formation, public debate, basic research, cultural production, professional education, democratic imagination, and social transformation. When the university internalizes the wall pedagogy uncritically, it risks replacing critical formation with motivational training.

The student is encouraged to become a founder, but not always to understand capitalism. The researcher is encouraged to patent, but not always to debate public appropriation of knowledge. The professor is encouraged to connect with companies, but not always to defend the autonomy of the university. The innovation center celebrates impact, but not always the political meaning of public value.

A public university must innovate, but it must not abandon critique. It must teach entrepreneurship, but also political economy. It must support startups, but also defend the commons. It must transfer technology, but also ask who benefits from that transfer.

10.10 The Wall and the Public Sector

The language of innovation has also entered the public sector. Government innovation laboratories, digital transformation programs, public challenges, agile methodologies, design thinking, hackathons, and open government initiatives seek to make the State more responsive, efficient, transparent, and user-centered.

Many of these initiatives are valuable. Public administration needs experimentation, digitalization, participation, intersectoral work, simplification, and better services. The State must learn, adapt, listen to users, use data, and improve implementation.

The problem arises when public innovation adopts the language of startup culture without considering the specificity of the State. Public policy cannot be governed only by agility, experimentation, and user experience. It must also be governed by rights, legality, universality, equity, accountability, transparency, territorial justice, and democratic deliberation.

A public service is not a product in the usual sense. A citizen is not merely a user. A vulnerable population is not a market segment. A policy failure is not only a learning opportunity. Public innovation requires caution because its errors can affect those who already suffer the most.

The wall phrase in the public sector must therefore be rewritten. It is not enough to "move fast." It is necessary to move responsibly. It is not enough to "break things." The State cannot break rights. It is not enough to "think outside the box." It is necessary to understand who built the box, who benefits from it, and who is trapped inside it.

10.11 Phrases as Instruments of Depoliticization

The most important effect of wall pedagogy is depoliticization. The phrase condenses a world into a moral command and removes conflict from the scene.

"Be resilient" may conceal precariousness.

"Take risks" may conceal the absence of protection.

"Be disruptive" may conceal the destruction of rights.

"Think big" may conceal the lack of financing.

"Love what you do" may conceal exploitation.

"Fail fast" may conceal unequal exposure to failure.

"Change the world" may conceal the absence of democratic debate about which world should be changed and for whom.

This depoliticization does not happen through censorship, but through enthusiasm. People are not forbidden to think structurally; they are invited to think motivationally. The atmosphere is positive, energetic, hopeful, and future-oriented. Critique appears negative, old, resistant, or bureaucratic.

This is the subtle strength of the ideology of innovation. It does not always impose itself through repression. It often operates through optimism.

10.12 Rewriting the Phrases

A critical pedagogy of innovation would not abolish phrases. It would rewrite them.

Instead of "fail fast," one might say: **learn collectively, protect the vulnerable, and do not transfer the cost of experimentation to those without power.**

Instead of "love what you do," one might say: **work should have meaning, but also rights, time, wages, and dignity.**

Instead of "think outside the box," one might say: **understand the historical structures that produced the box.**

Instead of "be disruptive," one might say: **transform what reproduces inequality and preserve what guarantees rights.**

Instead of "move fast," one might say: **move with responsibility, evidence, participation, and public mission.**

Instead of "change the world," one might say: **decide democratically which world must be changed, by whom, with which resources, and with what social return.**

These rewritings shift the focus from individual attitude to collective structure. They do not deny creativity, experimentation, or courage. They place these elements within an ethics of public responsibility.

Table 10 - Wall Pedagogy of Innovation

Wall Phrase	Immediate Message	What It Conceals
Fail fast	Error generates learning	Failure is socially unequal
Love what you do	Passion produces excellence	Overwork and self-exploitation
Take risks	Courage leads to innovation	Some risks are cushioned by privilege
Think outside the box	Creativity breaks limits	The box has historical structures
Be disruptive	Rupture is positive	Rupture can destroy rights
Change the world	Innovation creates impact	Who defines impact?
Be resilient	Endure difficulties	Precariousness becomes individual challenge
Move fast	Speed is virtue	Public policy requires responsibility
Wall Phrase	Immediate Message	What It Conceals
Fail fast	Error generates learning	Failure is socially unequal

10.13 Final Remarks

Phrases on the walls are small, but they reveal a large ideological operation. They show how the gospel of innovation enters everyday life through design, language, emotion, and moral exhortation. They transform walls into pedagogical surfaces and workspaces into environments of subject formation.

Their strength lies in simplicity. A phrase can condense a worldview. It can teach individuals how to interpret work, failure, risk, creativity, purpose, and success. It can mobilize enthusiasm. It can create belonging. It can make the new economy appear desirable and morally superior to the old bureaucratic, industrial, or public world.

But this simplicity is also its danger. Wall phrases reduce complex social processes to individual attitudes. They transform structural problems into psychological challenges. They make inequality appear as lack of resilience, precariousness as flexibility, overwork as passion, and public policy as mindset.

The critique of wall pedagogy does not mean rejecting motivation, creativity, or hope. Societies need all of them. But hope must not be used to conceal exploitation. Creativity must not replace rights. Motivation must not substitute for public policy. Innovation must not become business self-help.

The wall of innovation must be read as a text. And, like every text, it must be interpreted critically. The central question is not whether phrases inspire. The question is what they teach, what they silence, and whom they ask to bear the burden of the future.

Innovation worthy of the name cannot be reduced to motivational commands. It requires institutions, rights, financing, territory, science, labor, public mission, and democratic dispute over the meaning of the future.

11. The Liturgy of the Innovative Community

Hackathons, Meetups, Pitches, and Demo Days

The new economy does not produce only companies, technologies, applications, platforms, technology parks, and innovation districts. It also produces communities. The word appears in almost every entrepreneurship environment: startup community, tech community, maker community, innovation community, creative community, developer community, impact community, entrepreneurial community. At first glance, it suggests spontaneity, belonging, collaboration, and horizontality. But the innovative community does not emerge naturally. It is constructed, summoned, organized, ritualized, and continuously performed.

The innovative community has its spaces, its times, its ceremonies, and its codes. Its spaces are hubs, coworking spaces, incubators, accelerators, auditoriums, cafés, universities, technology parks, and innovation districts. Its times are evening meetings, hackathon weekends, innovation weeks, acceleration programs, mentoring cycles, and demo days. Its ceremonies are pitches, presentations, awards, investment rounds, panels, meetups, public challenges, and networking events. Its codes are words such as traction, scale, impact, MVP, disruption, pivoting, community, ecosystem, customer pain, validation, and purpose.

This chapter analyzes this ritual dimension of the new economy. If the previous chapter discussed phrases on the walls as a moral pedagogy of innovation, here the focus shifts to the collective rites that produce the feeling of belonging to the innovative community. The central hypothesis is that hackathons, meetups, pitches, and demo days are not merely technical instruments of innovation. They are also social liturgies: repeated practices that build belief, legitimize subjects, consecrate projects, and transform economic, urban, and social problems into innovation opportunities.

11.1 Community as a Social Construction

The word "community" has enormous political and affective force. It suggests bonds, trust, solidarity, belonging, and shared objectives. In the world of innovation, speaking of community is a way of differentiating oneself both from the bureaucratic State and from the hierarchical corporation. The tech community appears as open, informal, collaborative, young, horizontal, and future-oriented.

But no community is completely spontaneous. Communities are produced through encounters, languages, institutions, spaces, leaderships, explicit rules, and implicit codes. In the case of innovation, community is often mobilized by intermediary organizations: accelerators, incubators, corporate foundations, universities, public agencies, sectoral associations, investment funds, consultancies, and ecosystem managers.

Sharon Zukin shows that the so-called tech community is built through face-to-face encounters, networks of trust, public demonstrations, events, and shared spaces. In her analysis of New York, meetups, hackathons, accelerators, and hubs are not accessories of the new economy; they are part of the very process of producing the innovation complex, since they articulate capital, talent, government, universities, urban culture, and community narrative (ZUKIN, 2020).

This reading is fundamental because it prevents us from treating community as a natural given. The innovative community is a social technology. It brings people together, creates a common language, produces reputation, organizes expectations, selects leaders, and defines who belongs - and who does not -

to the ecosystem. Community, therefore, does not only connect subjects. It also hierarchizes, filters, and legitimizes.

11.2 Meetups: The Rite of Belonging

Meetups are one of the most important forms through which the innovative community is produced. They may take place in auditoriums, coworking spaces, universities, cafés, corporate headquarters, or hubs.

The apparent function of the meetup is simple: to bring together people interested in a given topic, share experiences, present projects, and expand networks. But its symbolic function is deeper. The meetup produces belonging. Those who attend begin to recognize faces, words, references, opportunities, and codes. They learn how one speaks, how one presents an idea, which topics are trending, which companies matter, which investors circulate, and which institutions lead the ecosystem.

The meetup has a discreet liturgical structure. There is a call, an opening, a few talks, short presentations, questions, networking, photos, and later dissemination on social networks. The repetition of these encounters creates a sense of continuity. The community appears to exist because it meets regularly. Physical presence confirms the narrative: there is an ecosystem in motion.

This dimension is especially important in cities that wish to affirm themselves as innovative. Even before there is great density of companies, investments, or patents, there may be events. And events produce the impression of vitality. The community becomes visible. Participants feel they are part of something larger. Public and private managers can point to these meetings as evidence that the city is innovating.

However, one must ask: who participates in meetups? Who has the time, repertoire, confidence, transportation, and cultural capital to attend them? Who masters the language? Who is invited to speak? Who merely watches? Who transforms presence into real opportunity? The community may appear open, while operating through selective codes.

11.3 Hackathons: The Rite of the Quick Solution

The hackathon is perhaps the most emblematic ritual of the new economy. In general, it brings together students, programmers, designers, entrepreneurs, public managers, and mentors around a challenge to be solved in a short period of time, often over a weekend. The format is seductive: multidisciplinary teams, limited time, collective energy, prototypes, final presentations, awards, and the promise of continuity.

The hackathon perfectly translates the ethics of contemporary innovation: speed, collaboration, experimentation, informality, creativity, prototyping, competition, and impact. Complex problems are converted into challenges. Citizens become users. Public policies become solutions. Territory becomes a database. Social suffering becomes a project opportunity.

In its best version, the hackathon can have positive effects. It can bring people together, stimulate learning, make problems visible, test ideas, mobilize students, and approximate universities, governments, companies, and communities. It can function as an entry point for young people interested in technology and public problems. It can produce useful prototypes or open new conversations.

But the hackathon also carries a strong risk of simplification. Public problems are rarely solved in forty-eight hours. Floods, mobility, housing, health, education, climate adaptation, food security, urban violence,

sanitation, and inequality require institutions, budgets, long-term planning, political negotiation, maintenance, legal frameworks, and social participation. They cannot be reduced to a weekend challenge.

The hackathon transforms structural problems into technical tasks. This operation can be useful if it is part of a broader policy. But it becomes dangerous when it replaces policy. A prototype may illuminate a path, but it does not replace public investment. An application may organize information, but it does not build infrastructure. A dashboard may visualize inequality, but it does not reduce it by itself.

The central question is therefore not whether hackathons should exist. They can exist and be valuable. The question is whether they are connected to institutions capable of carrying forward what they initiate.

11.4 The Pitch: The Rite of Selection

The pitch is one of the central rituals of the startup universe. In a few minutes, an entrepreneur or team must present a problem, a solution, a market, a business model, a technology, a team, traction, impact, and the request for investment or support. The pitch is a condensed narrative of the future.

Its apparent function is communication. A project must be explained clearly, quickly, and persuasively. In environments with many ideas and little time, the pitch helps organize attention. It allows investors, mentors, public agencies, and partners to compare proposals and make decisions.

But the pitch also has a symbolic function: it selects subjects and narratives. It defines who knows how to speak the language of the ecosystem. It rewards those who master concision, confidence, English terms, business vocabulary, bodily performance, slides, storytelling, and the ability to convert uncertainty into conviction.

This produces an important inequality. Those with fluency, repertoire, business language, physical confidence, and experience in elite environments tend to perform better. Those with good ideas but less mastery of performance may be undervalued.

The critique of the pitch should not deny the importance of communication. Projects need to be explained. The issue is to prevent the form of presentation from becoming more important than the density of the solution. A well-performed pitch is not necessarily a good project. A fragile presentation may conceal a socially important idea. A charismatic founder may attract attention without offering a robust solution.

The pitch converts innovation into performance. That is why it must be evaluated critically.

11.5 Demo Day: The Rite of Consecration

The demo day is the closing ceremony of many acceleration programs. In it, startups present their results to investors, mentors, companies, partners, the press, and public authorities. It is the moment of public consecration. After weeks or months of training, mentoring, and validation, projects take the stage to demonstrate that they have matured.

The structure of the demo day has a strong ritual dimension. There is a stage, lighting, a selected audience, an order of presentations, judges or investors, applause, networking, and photographic records. Startups are presented as promises. The ecosystem recognizes itself in its own ceremony. The accelerator demonstrates its ability to form companies. Investors observe opportunities. Public managers show support for innovation. The media records the event.

The demo day produces a narrative of passage: teams that were once beginners become ventures ready to grow. It is a kind of rite of initiation. At the end, some startups receive investment, awards, or visibility. Others do not. But all participate in the liturgy of acceleration.

The problem is that ritual consecration may be confused with economic, technological, or social success. Performing well on demo day does not mean having a robust product, a real market, consistent social impact, or productive capacity. The event marks a stage, not final proof.

Moreover, the demo day may reinforce the spectacularization of innovation. The ecosystem appears vibrant because there is a stage, presentations, investors, and enthusiasm. But the vitality of an ecosystem should also be measured by less spectacular indicators: firm survival, quality of jobs, technological density, links with universities, social return on public funding, territorial impact, diversity of founders, and capacity to solve relevant problems.

11.6 The Substitution of Planning by Events

One of the central critiques of this chapter is that, in many contexts, the event replaces planning. Municipal governments, universities, innovation agencies, and companies organize hackathons, meetups, innovation weeks, fairs, and challenges as if holding the event were itself an innovation policy.

Events are important. They mobilize people, create agendas, produce visibility, and generate encounters. But they are not enough. A city does not become innovative because it holds an innovation week. A university does not become entrepreneurial because it organizes a startup competition. A technology park does not become an ecosystem because it hosts a demo day. A public policy does not become modern because it launches a hackathon.

Planning requires diagnosis, objectives, institutions, resources, responsibilities, schedules, evaluation, and continuity. Events can help animate planning, but they cannot replace it. When events become substitutes for strategy, innovation policy becomes calendar management.

This substitution is attractive because events are visible, fast, photographable, and politically communicable. They produce the sensation that something is happening. They generate images, posts, news, speeches, and institutional pride. But they may leave little behind.

A serious innovation policy must ask, after every event: what changed? Which projects continued? Which institutions committed themselves? Which resources were allocated? Which public problems were addressed? Which participants gained real opportunities? Which inequalities were reduced? Without these questions, the event becomes self-justifying.

11.7 Public Problems as Technical Challenges

The ritual language of innovation tends to translate public problems into technical challenges. Floods become a challenge for data visualization. Mobility becomes an app challenge. Health becomes a challenge for digital scheduling. Education becomes a platform challenge. Waste becomes a logistics challenge. Social vulnerability becomes a mapping challenge.

This translation can be useful, because many public problems do require technical, digital, organizational, and informational solutions. Data, sensors, algorithms, platforms, prototypes, and applications can help

public policy. The issue is not to reject technology. The issue is to avoid reducing political problems to technical problems.

Floods are not only data problems. They are also problems of land use, housing, drainage, environmental degradation, social vulnerability, climate change, public works, maintenance, and governance. Mobility is not only an app problem. It is also a problem of urban form, public transportation financing, labor, land use, infrastructure, and inequality. Health is not only scheduling. It is funding, professionals, equipment, territorial coverage, public laboratories, prevention, and care.

When the hackathon or innovation challenge isolates the technical dimension, it may produce elegant prototypes that do not confront the structural causes of problems. In this sense, the ritual can depoliticize. It makes the problem solvable within the time and language of the event.

The democratic challenge is to reconnect technical invention with political complexity.

11.8 Community or Market?

The innovative community presents itself as open, collaborative, generous, and horizontal. But it often operates within a market logic. Participants compete for visibility, investment, mentors, acceleration slots, prizes, clients, and institutional recognition. Collaboration and competition coexist.

This coexistence is not necessarily negative. Networks can combine cooperation and rivalry. The issue is to recognize that the word "community" may conceal market relations. A startup event is not only a meeting of people interested in innovation; it is also a space for accumulating social capital, identifying opportunities, selecting projects, attracting investors, and building reputations.

The community may also function as a low-cost infrastructure for the ecosystem. People mentor voluntarily, students work for visibility, researchers present ideas without compensation, public institutions provide spaces, and entrepreneurs circulate in events hoping for future opportunities. The affective language of community can make unequal exchanges appear natural.

It is therefore necessary to ask: who benefits from the community? Who profits from the networks? Who organizes them? Who has access to the opportunities generated? Who works for free? Who becomes visible? Who remains peripheral?

Community is not the opposite of market. In many innovation environments, it is one of the ways through which the market is socially organized.

11.9 Language as a Code of Belonging

Every community has language. The innovative community has its own vocabulary: MVP, traction, scale, pivot, validation, customer pain, ecosystem, impact, disruption, lean, pitch, deck, burn rate, seed, angel, unicorn, founder, mentor, acceleration, product-market fit.

Mastering this language is a form of belonging. Those who speak it appear updated, connected, and legitimate. Those who do not speak it may be perceived as outsiders, bureaucratic, old-fashioned, or not entrepreneurial enough.

Language is not neutral. It organizes perception. When a public problem becomes "customer pain," the citizen becomes a client. When a policy becomes a "solution," politics becomes service design. When social impact becomes a metric, the complexity of transformation may be reduced to measurable indicators. When the city becomes an "ecosystem," conflict may be softened into the vocabulary of interdependence.

Democratizing innovation therefore requires democratizing its language. Not every relevant solution needs to sound like a startup. Not every impact fits a traction metric. Not every public problem has a customer. Not every community is a market.

11.10 Community Evangelists

Every innovative community has evangelists. They are people who organize meetings, connect actors, animate networks, publicize opportunities, introduce new participants, create narratives, celebrate successes, and keep alive the idea that there is an ecosystem there. They may be startup founders, professors, hub managers, public servants, investors, journalists, consultants, student leaders, or directors of technology parks.

These evangelists play a real role. Without people who connect, networks do not form. Without leaders who organize encounters, communities disperse. Without narrators, local experiences do not gain visibility. The problem is not their existence, but the lack of critique regarding their function.

The community evangelist transforms dispersed relations into a narrative of ecosystem. He says: "there is a community here," "there is talent here," "there is a future here," "there is innovation here." This statement can help construct reality, because it attracts attention, resources, and participants. But it can also anticipate a density that does not yet exist. The ecosystem may be more narrated than practiced.

The innovative community therefore lives in a delicate balance between construction and illusion. Every community must be imagined in order to exist. But if imagination distances itself too much from material conditions, it becomes marketing.

11.11 Rituals and the Production of Legitimacy

Hackathons, meetups, pitches, and demo days produce legitimacy. They legitimize people, projects, institutions, and territories. A startup that wins a challenge gains recognition. A university that organizes hackathons shows modernity. A municipal government that promotes innovation weeks demonstrates openness. A technology park that hosts events appears active. An investor who participates in judging panels becomes a reference. A mentor who circulates through programs accumulates authority.

This production of legitimacy is part of the symbolic economy of innovation. Not everything is immediately measured by revenue, patents, or jobs. Often, the first asset of a startup or ecosystem is reputation. Events produce reputation.

But reputation can become detached from results. An ecosystem may appear dynamic without generating sustainable companies. A startup may appear promising without solving a real problem. A program may appear innovative without continuity. A manager may appear modern without transforming public policies.

For this reason, ritual legitimacy must be confronted with substantive evaluation. How many projects survived? What jobs did they create? What problems did they solve? What public resources did they receive?

What return did they provide? Who participated? Who was left out? Which inequalities were reduced or expanded?

Without evaluation, liturgy legitimizes itself.

11.12 The Innovative Community and Territory

The innovative community also produces territory. By meeting repeatedly in certain places, it transforms cafés, coworking spaces, auditoriums, universities, and neighborhoods into symbolic addresses of innovation. Certain streets, buildings, or districts become places "where things happen." The geography of innovation is built through repeated social practices.

Zukin discusses the importance of "innovation addresses" in the new urban economy, showing how certain places gain symbolic value by concentrating companies, events, talent, investors, and narratives (ZUKIN, 2020). The address is not only location; it is reputation. Being there communicates belonging to the future.

This territorial dimension is decisive for technology parks and innovation districts. The innovative territory must be used, narrated, and frequented. It is not enough for it to exist in the urban plan. It must host events, circulate on networks, appear in the media, and be recognized by students, investors, and companies. The community gives life to space. Without community, the district is only infrastructure.

But the community can also restrict the territory. If only certain groups feel invited, the district will be socially narrow. If events are inaccessible, innovation will be selective. If the language is exclusionary, the community will be homogeneous. If real estate appreciation expels residents and popular uses, the innovative territory loses real diversity.

Democratic territorial innovation requires open, plural communities connected to the city's problems, not only to the interests of the ecosystem.

11.13 The Cult of Speed

The rituals of innovation are crossed by the cult of speed. Hackathons last a few hours or days. Pitches last a few minutes. Startups are expected to grow rapidly. Acceleration programs promise to mature companies in a few months. Products must be launched, tested, measured, and adjusted in short cycles.

Speed can be useful in uncertain environments. But not all problems obey this temporality. Science requires time. Urban policy requires time. Institutional trust requires time. Infrastructure requires time. Worker training requires time. Regional development requires time. National missions require decades.

The cult of speed can come into conflict with the patience required by deep innovation. Strategic technologies, such as semiconductors, vaccines, aircraft, clean energy, biotechnology, sovereign digital infrastructure, and medical equipment, are not born from a weekend hackathon. They require continuous investment, laboratories, teams, errors, prototypes, regulation, testing, production, and markets.

The liturgy of speed is seductive because it produces a sensation of action. But the Global South needs patient innovation. It needs policies that survive electoral calendars, managerial fashions, and event cycles.

11.14 Toward a Democratic Liturgy of Innovation

The critique of innovation rituals should not lead to the refusal of encounters. Every transformative policy needs rites, meeting spaces, common language, and moments of mobilization. The question is to dispute the content of these rituals.

A democratic hackathon should not merely generate applications; it should bring together communities, technicians, public managers, and researchers around real problems, with continuity and budget. A public meetup should not merely gather entrepreneurs; it should include workers, residents, social movements, schools, universities, and public managers. A public policy pitch should not value only scale and market; it should evaluate social justice, institutional feasibility, territorial impact, and public return. A demo day for social innovation should not celebrate only winners; it should build lasting alliances.

The liturgy of innovation must cease to be merely a celebration of entrepreneurship and become a public pedagogy of transformation. Its rituals can teach cooperation, democracy, responsibility, evaluation, mission, care, and territorial justice.

The question is not how to eliminate liturgy. It is how to reorient it.

Table 11 - The Liturgy of the Innovative Community

Ritual	Apparent Function	Symbolic Function	Risk
Meetup	Gather interested people	Produce belonging	Selective community
Hackathon	Generate quick solutions	Transform problems into technical challenges	Replacing public policy with prototypes
Pitch	Present projects	Select subjects and narratives	Valuing performance more than substance
Demo day	Show results	Consecrate startups and accelerators	Confusing presentation with impact
Networking	Connect people	Accumulate social capital	Reproducing inequalities of access
Mentoring	Support projects	Reinforce ecosystem authority	Standardizing trajectories
Innovation week	Mobilize institutions	Create a sense of movement	Replacing strategy with events
Award	Recognize initiatives	Produce legitimacy	Celebrating cases without continuity

11.15 Final Remarks

The new economy has a liturgy. Hackathons, meetups, pitches, demo days, and networking events are not merely technical formats. They are rituals that produce belonging, belief, legitimacy, and narrative. They make the innovative community appear to itself and to the city. They gather subjects, organize languages, select projects, consecrate leaderships, and transform territories into symbolic addresses of innovation.

These rituals can be useful. They can train people, stimulate creativity, bring institutions closer together, open opportunities, and give visibility to problems. But they can also depoliticize, simplify, and spectacularize. They can transform public problems into technical challenges, planning into events, participation into performance, and community into market.

The central issue is that innovation cannot live only from liturgy. Events do not replace institutions. Pitches do not replace industrial policy. Hackathons do not replace budgets. Meetups do not replace wages. Demo days do not replace social impact. Networking does not replace territorial justice.

If the gospel of innovation has its rituals, a democratic politics of innovation must dispute them. It must preserve encounter, collaboration, and experimentation, but connect them to public mission, institutional continuity, social inclusion, and substantive evaluation.

A truly innovative community is not one that merely celebrates itself. It is one that transforms its territory, expands rights, builds capabilities, distributes opportunities, and turns knowledge into public value.

Part IV - Four Territories of Innovation

12. Silicon Valley

Innovation, Territory, and Power in Digital Capitalism

Silicon Valley is the territorial matrix of the contemporary imagination of innovation. No other place has been so widely mobilized as example, metaphor, myth, and promise. Governments, universities, business leaders, investors, mayors, consultants, and managers of technology parks around the world look to the Valley as if it condensed the secret formula of the new economy: world-class universities, venture capital, entrepreneurial culture, tolerance of failure, circulation of talent, startups, garages, major technology companies, and a permanent capacity to create markets.

But Silicon Valley is not only an innovative territory. It is also a narrative machine. It does not produce only semiconductors, computers, software, platforms, social networks, operating systems, artificial intelligence, and global companies. It also produces stories about itself: stories of garages, rebellious geniuses, young visionaries, courageous investors, entrepreneurs who dropped out of universities, and companies that began small and transformed the world.

The central question of this chapter is to show that Silicon Valley cannot be reduced to the myth it helped produce. It was not born only from entrepreneurial culture, nor only from market freedom, nor only from individual creativity. The Valley is the result of a long territorial, State-led, military, university-based, financial, industrial, and cultural construction. Its strength lies precisely in the articulation of factors that the evangelists of innovation frequently separate: State and market, university and industry, war and consumption, science and capital, territory and culture, public infrastructure and private appropriation.

Silicon Valley is, therefore, less a replicable recipe than a singular historical formation. Studying it critically is essential for understanding both the power and the limits of the global gospel of innovation.

12.1 The Territorial Matrix of Innovation Mythology

Silicon Valley became the great sacred place of the new economy. Just as Detroit symbolized Fordist automobile industry and Manchester symbolized the textile Industrial Revolution, the Valley came to symbolize digital innovation, platform capitalism, and technological entrepreneurship. Its name no longer designates only a region in California; it designates an imaginary.

In this imaginary, the Valley appears as a space of creative freedom, experimentation, rupture, and the future. Its companies are presented as organizations that change the world. Its founders appear as visionaries. Its corporate headquarters function as technological temples. Its garages are treated as places of origin. Its investors are celebrated as agents of risk. Its products reorganize everyday life on a planetary scale.

This mythology is so powerful that countless cities have tried to build their own "Valleys": Silicon Alley, Silicon Roundabout, Silicon Wadi, Porto Digital, technology parks, innovation districts, high-technology zones, hubs, and entrepreneurial ecosystems. In many cases, the word "Silicon" became a symbolic seal of belonging to the digital economy, as if associating a territory with the image of the Valley were enough to activate its promise.

But this global circulation of the model often ignores the historical conditions that produced Silicon Valley itself. The Californian territory did not emerge as the spontaneous consequence of individual genius. It was built over decades of public investment, university research, military contracts, technical culture, electronics industry, venture capital, professional networks, and expanding markets.

The critical question is not: **how can Silicon Valley be copied?** The critical question is: **which historical, institutional, and territorial conditions made Silicon Valley possible?** This change of question is decisive for the Global South.

12.2 Before Platforms: Electronics, War, and Semiconductors

Silicon Valley is today associated with software, applications, social networks, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence. But its origins are deeply connected to electronics, microelectronics, semiconductors, and the military demands of the twentieth century. Before the Valley of platforms, there was the Valley of radars, transistors, integrated circuits, and electronic components.

During the Second World War and, above all, during the Cold War, the United States invested massively in scientific and technological research. Universities, laboratories, private firms, and military agencies were articulated around strategic missions: defense, communication, computing, aerospace, surveillance, missiles, satellites, and information systems. In this context, California became a fundamental territory for the defense industry and technological research (LÉCUYER, 2006; O'MARA, 2019).

The development of semiconductors was decisive. Companies such as Shockley Semiconductor and Fairchild Semiconductor created a technical, business, and organizational base that enabled the later emergence of many high-technology firms. The genealogy of the so-called "Fairchildren" shows how the circulation of engineers, technicians, entrepreneurs, and investors was central to the regional formation of the ecosystem (SAXENIAN, 1994; LÉCUYER, 2006).

This history is fundamental because it dismantles the idea that the digital economy was born immaterial. The digital has materiality. It depends on chips, laboratories, equipment, minerals, energy, factories, productive chains, engineering, technical standards, machines, and labor. Software only becomes dominant upon a material base built by decades of electronics industry.

The contemporary mythology of the Valley frequently forgets this base. It prefers the clean image of the application, the interface, and the visionary founder. But without semiconductors, there would be no platforms. Without industry, there would be no cloud.

12.3 The Entrepreneurial State Before Private Entrepreneurship

Silicon Valley also demonstrates the centrality of the State in innovation. The dominant narrative presents the Valley as the triumph of private entrepreneurship, risk-taking investors, agile companies, and market culture. But much of its technological infrastructure was made possible by public investment, military demand, research funding, and public procurement.

The United States State, especially through the Department of Defense, ARPA/DARPA, NASA, and other agencies, created technological demand and financed risky research in computing, communication systems, aerospace, microelectronics, and digital networks. ARPANET, precursor to the internet, is one of the

clearest examples of how public funding, universities, and military networks participated in the origin of technologies later appropriated and expanded by private companies (ABBATE, 1999; MAZZUCATO, 2013).

This does not mean denying the role of entrepreneurs, engineers, and private firms. It means placing innovation back within its real chain of production. The private sector was fundamental in developing products, creating mass markets, organizing companies, and scaling technologies. But it acted upon a public base of knowledge, infrastructure, demand, and risk.

The myth of the Valley as the exclusive triumph of private entrepreneurship is therefore an ideological operation. It symbolically privatizes a history of collective risk. The State appears only as an obstacle after having been a condition of possibility.

12.4 Stanford, Frederick Terman, and the Entrepreneurial University

Stanford University occupies a decisive place in the formation of Silicon Valley. Its importance is not limited to the training of engineers. Stanford acted as an institution articulating research, firms, financing, and military demands. Frederick Terman, professor and university administrator, was a central figure in this process, encouraging students and professors to create companies, strengthening engineering, and bringing university, industry, and defense closer together (SAXENIAN, 1994; LÉCUYER, 2006).

This trajectory shows that the so-called entrepreneurial university was not born only from recent innovation manuals. It has historical roots in specific contexts in which universities were mobilized by technological missions, public funding, and industrial demands. In the case of Stanford, the relationship with the State and industry was decisive in creating a regional ecology of knowledge.

This point is important for discussing technology parks in other countries. Many universities attempt to create incubators, science parks, and innovation agencies inspired by the North American model. But the Stanford experience cannot be reduced to the existence of an incubator or an entrepreneurial culture. It involved financing, applied research, contracts, laboratories, alumni networks, local companies, venture capital, and a national economy capable of absorbing technologies.

The university can be an engine of innovation, but not alone. It must be articulated with firms, the State, markets, missions, and productive capabilities. Without this, the entrepreneurial university risks becoming merely a funding-seeking university: pressured to seek resources, produce startups, and register patents, but without structurally transforming regional development.

12.5 Venture Capital and the Financialization of the Future

Venture capital is another central element of the Valley. The proximity between technological entrepreneurs and investors willing to finance uncertain companies made it possible to transform technical knowledge into scalable businesses. Venture capital did not merely provide resources. It also offered networks, governance, mentoring, financial discipline, access to markets, and expectations of accelerated growth.

But venture capital also changed the meaning of innovation. It privileged companies capable of growing rapidly, capturing markets, scaling platforms, generating extraordinary returns, and often operating at a loss for long periods until consolidating monopolistic or quasi-monopolistic positions. Innovation began to be

evaluated not only by its technological or social relevance, but by its capacity to produce future financial valorization.

This logic is central to contemporary digital capitalism. Startups become speculative assets. The future is priced. User growth may be worth more than immediate profit. Data capture, network formation, and platform dominance become fundamental strategies. Innovation becomes articulated with financialization.

Zukin shows that the innovation complex involves financial capital, real estate markets, universities, governments, and urban culture in the production of the new economy (ZUKIN, 2020). In the Valley, this articulation reaches an extreme form: venture capital, large companies, the global talent market, and real estate valorization reinforce one another.

The problem is that this logic is hardly replicable in contexts without abundant capital, global markets, institutional protection, strong currency, highly funded universities, and companies capable of scaling rapidly. In the Global South, the attempt to reproduce venture capital ecosystems without scientific, industrial, and institutional bases may produce only the financialization of the innovation discourse.

12.6 Startup Culture, Counterculture, and the New Spirit of Capitalism

Silicon Valley also became associated with a specific culture: informality, flexibility, rejection of rigid hierarchies, creativity, experimentation, tolerance of failure, permanent work, technical enthusiasm, and the belief that technology can change the world. This culture has roots in multiple sources: engineering communities, Cold War laboratories, university environments, hacker culture, countercultural imaginaries, personal computing, libertarian individualism, and managerial capitalism.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Valley is precisely this combination between counterculture and capital. The language of autonomy, freedom, creativity, horizontal collaboration, rebellion against bureaucracy, and personal transformation was gradually incorporated into entrepreneurial culture. What once appeared as critique of rigid organizations became a productive force of flexible capitalism.

Boltanski and Chiapello help interpret this movement by showing how the new spirit of capitalism incorporated values associated with autonomy, creativity, networks, mobility, and flexibility (BOLTANSKI; CHIAPELLO, 1999). In Silicon Valley, this incorporation reached one of its most powerful expressions. The entrepreneur became both rebel and capitalist; the startup became both community and firm; technology became both instrument of liberation and infrastructure of accumulation.

This contradiction is central. The Valley sells freedom, but builds platforms of dependence. It celebrates openness, but creates closed ecosystems. It speaks of community, but concentrates power. It praises disruption, but produces new monopolies. It defends flexibility, but transfers risks to workers. It promises democratization, but controls infrastructures of daily life.

The startup culture that circulates globally is therefore not a neutral culture of creativity. It is a specific moral and organizational form of contemporary capitalism.

12.7 Platform Capitalism and the Expansion of Corporate Power

The recent phase of Silicon Valley is marked by the rise of platform capitalism. Companies such as Google, Apple, Meta, Amazon, Uber, Airbnb, and others have transformed digital infrastructures into systems for

the extraction, organization, prediction, and monetization of social life. Platforms do not merely offer services. They mediate relations, collect data, organize markets, define rules, classify behavior, and create new dependencies.

Nick Srnicek defines platforms as digital infrastructures that enable interaction among different groups and extract value from data, users, and transactions (SRNICEK, 2017). Shoshana Zuboff, in turn, analyzes surveillance capitalism as a regime based on the extraction of behavioral data and the prediction and modification of conduct (ZUBOFF, 2019).

This phase expands the territorial power of Silicon Valley beyond California. The Valley's companies reorganize transport systems, housing markets, food delivery, advertising, communication, work, entertainment, education, urban management, and political debate across the world. Their technologies operate inside cities, households, schools, cars, cell phones, public agencies, and bodies.

The Valley thus ceases to be only a place. It becomes an infrastructure of global mediation. Its power lies not only in producing companies, but in producing platforms through which other territories function. Cities and countries become users of foreign platforms, data suppliers, consumer markets, and territories of value extraction, without controlling codes, algorithms, infrastructures, and strategic decisions.

This point is crucial for the Global South. Digital dependence is not only the importation of technology. It is the dependence on infrastructures that mediate everyday life, extract data, organize markets, and impose rules from outside local democratic control.

12.8 Google Buses, Housing, and Technological Gentrification

The success of the Valley also produced deep urban contradictions. The concentration of technology companies, highly paid workers, and capital generated strong pressure on the real estate market of the Bay Area. Cities such as San Francisco, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Cupertino, and San José faced rising prices, housing crisis, inequality, displacement of residents, and conflicts around the presence of major companies.

The so-called Google buses became a symbol of this tension. Private buses transporting technology workers between San Francisco and corporate headquarters in the Valley were criticized as expressions of a city reorganized to serve a technological elite, while low- and middle-income residents faced rising rents and difficulties remaining in place. The private infrastructure of technological labor began to coexist with the precariousness of public infrastructure and affordable housing.

This phenomenon reveals a central contradiction of the innovation complex: the more successful it is in attracting capital and talent, the more it can make the city inaccessible. Zukin observes that the new urban economy can produce concentrated gains, real estate valorization, and reduced habitability for workers who do not belong to high-income sectors (ZUKIN, 2020).

The Valley, therefore, is not only a model of innovation. It is also a warning. Innovation without housing policy, public transportation, redistribution, and regulation can produce extremely unequal cities. Technological success can coexist with displaced residents, precarious workers, congestion, environmental crisis, and social fragmentation.

This point is fundamental for cities that wish to replicate innovation districts. Attracting talent and companies is not enough. It is necessary to ask: where will workers live? Who will have access to jobs? What effects will there be on rents? What mechanisms will capture real estate valorization? How can vulnerable populations be protected? How can one prevent the innovative city from also becoming an exclusionary city?

12.9 The Platform City and App-Based Urbanism

Silicon Valley also exported a new way of thinking the city: the city as platform. Mobility, lodging, delivery, food, domestic services, logistics, surveillance, and urban management applications began to mediate relations that were previously organized by public regulations, local markets, or face-to-face interactions.

Uber, Airbnb, DoorDash, Lyft, Instacart, and other platforms reorganized urban markets. They promised efficiency, convenience, flexibility, and innovation. But they also generated conflicts: labor precarization, competition with regulated services, pressure on housing, data extraction, algorithmic asymmetry, regulatory evasion, and the subordination of cities to global companies.

The platform city is one of the strongest expressions of the territorial power of the Valley. It shows that digital innovation does not remain confined to software. It reorganizes streets, houses, cars, restaurants, hotels, workers, tourists, deliveries, and municipal policies. The platform transforms the city into an interface for value extraction.

In the Global South, this dynamic combines with informality and precarization. App-based workers are frequently presented as entrepreneurs, autonomous workers, or partners. But in many cases, they assume risks, costs, and long working hours without adequate social protection. In this register, innovation can mean the transfer of risks to individuals and the private capture of urban infrastructures.

The critique of Silicon Valley must therefore go beyond the origin of its companies. It must analyze their global territorial effects. The Valley produces technologies that reorganize other cities. Its innovation is exported as a private infrastructure of everyday governance.

12.10 Why Silicon Valley Is Not Replicable

Silicon Valley is not replicable because it is not a formula. It is a historical formation. It resulted from a specific articulation among universities, the State, defense, semiconductors, military contracts, venture capital, suburban land, migration, culture, companies, intellectual property, financial markets, technical networks, and global demand.

Many territories try to copy visible elements: startups, garages, venture capital, accelerators, coworking spaces, demo days, pitch events, cafés, university parks, innovation districts, and corporate campuses. But these are the most visible elements of a much deeper system. Copying them without reconstructing the historical conditions that gave them meaning produces scenography.

The Valley is not replicable also because its success depended on geopolitical conditions. The Cold War, the military-industrial complex, United States hegemony, public procurement, the dollar, global markets, migration policies, and the concentration of financial power are not easily reproduced elsewhere. Its innovation was not only local; it was embedded in a national and global architecture of power.

This does not mean that other countries cannot innovate. It means that they should not imitate the Valley as a recipe. China did not simply copy the Valley; it created its own strategy, articulating State, economic opening, special zones, industrial policy, and productive scale. Embraer was not born in a Californian garage; it was born from territorial mission, the State, aeronautical engineering, ITA, CTA, and national demand.

The mistake of the global gospel of innovation is to transform singular trajectories into universal recipes.

12.11 Lessons for the Global South

Silicon Valley teaches the Global South a great deal, but not what its mythology most frequently repeats. The first lesson is not "create garages," but **build capabilities**. The second is not "attract investors," but **assume public missions capable of orienting investments**. The third is not "make pitches," but **train people, laboratories, firms, and productive chains**. The fourth is not "copy startup culture," but **create ecosystems rooted in national and territorial problems**.

The Global South needs to innovate in order to confront its own challenges: sanitation, public health, climate adaptation, mobility, housing, food security, energy transition, green industry, digital sovereignty, infrastructure, education, inequality, and technological dependence. These missions will not be solved only by imported platforms or convenience applications.

The Valley also teaches that State and innovation are not opposites. On the contrary, major innovations depended on the State, financing, and public demand. This is a central lesson for countries that often internalize the narrative that the State is incapable of innovating. The problem is not the presence of the State, but its orientation, capacity, continuity, and public commitment.

Finally, the Valley teaches that innovation without urban justice can produce exclusionary cities. Technological success does not guarantee collective well-being. Without housing policy, transportation, labor rights, platform regulation, redistribution, and democratic participation, innovation can expand inequalities.

Table 12 - Silicon Valley Beyond the Myth

Mythical Narrative	Critical Reading
Innovation was born in garages	It was born from universities, the State, industry, capital, and territory
The market created the Valley	The State financed research, demand, and technological risk
Entrepreneurs changed everything alone	Entrepreneurs acted upon public infrastructure and collective networks
Software made the economy immaterial	The digital depends on semiconductors, energy, servers, minerals, and labor
Silicon Valley is replicable	The Valley is a singular historical trajectory
Innovation automatically improves the city	It can produce housing crisis, gentrification, and inequality
Platforms generate freedom	They can generate dependence, precarization, and data extraction
The State should get out of the way	The State must orient missions and capture public return

12.12 Final Remarks

Silicon Valley is both a real territory and a global myth. As a real territory, it produced decisive innovations, powerful companies, transformative technologies, and new forms of economic organization. As a myth, it simplified its own history, presenting innovation as the result of garages, visionary entrepreneurs, venture capital, and market culture.

A critical reading allows us to see what the myth conceals: DARPA, the Department of Defense, NASA, Stanford, Berkeley, Fairchild, semiconductors, public contracts, the Cold War, financial capital, migration policies, industry, infrastructure, collective labor, and the private appropriation of socially assumed risks. The Valley is not less important because of this. On the contrary, it becomes more important when seen in its complexity.

For this book, Silicon Valley occupies a central place because it is the first great territorial gospel of innovation. From it derive the garage myth, startup culture, the celebration of disruption, the cult of the entrepreneur, the language of venture capital, the pedagogy of failure, and the belief that ecosystems can be replicated. But from it also derive warnings: concentration of power, urban inequality, platform dependence, precarization, and the private capture of public value.

The lesson, therefore, is not to worship the Valley, nor to reject it. It is to read it historically. Silicon Valley should not be treated as a model to be copied, but as a complex formation from which lessons, contradictions, and warnings can be extracted.

For the Global South, the most important lesson is clear: innovation requires territory, State, university, industry, capital, labor, public mission, and social return. Without these elements, the Valley becomes only an imported myth. With them, other territories can build their own paths.

13. 22@ Barcelona

Creative City, Innovation District, and Productive Gentrification

22@ Barcelona is one of the most emblematic cases of the transformation of the industrial city into the city of the knowledge economy. Implemented in Poblenou, the former manufacturing territory of the Catalan capital, the project was conceived as a strategy of urban and productive renewal aimed at attracting knowledge-intensive activities, technology companies, universities, research centers, housing, urban facilities, and new public spaces (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA, 2000; PAREJA-EASTAWAY; PIQUÉ, 2011). Its importance goes beyond the local scale because 22@ came to circulate internationally as a reference for innovation districts, articulating strategic planning, the knowledge economy, city branding, productive restructuring, and the transformation of former industrial areas (KATZ; WAGNER, 2014; CHARNOCK; PURCELL; RIBERA-FUMAZ, 2014).

Few projects express so clearly the passage from industrial urban policy to the urbanism of the new economy. 22@ is not only an urban operation. It is a narrative of the future. It rewrites an industrial neighborhood as a knowledge district. It reinterprets factory memory as creative heritage. It transforms former productive areas into real estate, cultural, and technological assets. It converts territory into a global urban brand. In this sense, 22@ can be read as a privileged laboratory for the central themes of this book: evangelists of innovation, the Café Myth, the Icon Myth, strategic planning, the creative city, the technology district, and productive gentrification.

The point is not to deny the importance of 22@. The project produced relevant urban transformations, attracted companies and institutions, recovered areas, expanded public spaces, and repositioned Poblenou within the global imaginary of innovation. The problem is to understand its contradictions. 22@ shows that urban innovation is never only innovation. It is also a dispute over land, memory, rent, image, labor, and power.

13.1 Poblenou: From the Catalan Manchester to the Knowledge District

Poblenou was historically one of Barcelona's main industrial territories. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it concentrated textile, metallurgical, chemical, food, printing, and workshop activities. Because of its manufacturing density, it became known as the "Catalan Manchester." The expression refers not only to the number of industries, but also to the neighborhood's role in the formation of modern Barcelona: working-class labor, material production, social conflicts, associational life, unionism, popular culture, and industrial urbanization.

The restructuring of Poblenou through 22@ must therefore be understood not as the occupation of an urban void, but as the transformation of a territory marked by working-class memory, industrial heritage, social conflicts, and preexisting productive uses. Marrero-Guillamón (2008) shows that the urban renewal associated with 22@ was linked to the production of a new neoliberal space in Barcelona, in which the rhetoric of innovation and urban modernization was articulated with real estate valorization and the reconfiguration of neighborhood uses. Charnock, Purcell, and Ribera-Fumaz (2014), in turn, interpret Barcelona through the limits of the model of urban competitiveness, emphasizing how the production of urban rent became central to the city's restructuring.

This memory is decisive. 22@ was not implemented in an empty area. It was built upon a territory dense with productive and social history. The transformation of Poblenou into an innovation district implied a change in territorial regime: from factory to office, from worker to talent, from chimney to landmark, from warehouse to startup, from industrial neighborhood to asset of the creative economy.

In the vocabulary of innovation, this passage is often narrated as regeneration. The old industrial neighborhood would be obsolete, degraded, underused, or incapable of responding to the demands of the new economy. Urban requalification would then appear as a historical necessity: modernizing the economic base, attracting knowledge-intensive activities, recovering public spaces, and reinserting Barcelona into global networks of technology, culture, and creativity.

But every narrative of regeneration must be questioned. Regeneration for whom? Based on which memory? With which activities replaced? With what permanence for former residents, workers, and productive uses? With what capture of real estate appreciation? The word "regeneration" may indicate urban recovery, but it may also conceal social and economic substitution.

22@ is born precisely within this ambiguity. It is an innovation project and a real estate project. It is knowledge policy and land policy. It is both a continuation of the Barcelona model and its post-industrial reconfiguration.

13.2 The Barcelona Model and the Strategic City

To understand 22@, it is necessary to situate it within the broader trajectory of the so-called Barcelona model. Since the 1980s and13.2 The Barcelona Model and the Strategic City**

To understand 22@, it is necessary to situate it within the broader trajectory especially after the 1992 Olympic Games, Barcelona consolidated an international reputation based on the requalification of public space, high-quality architecture, the opening of the city to the sea, strategic planning, and global projection (MONCLÚS, 2003; MARSHALL, 2004). The city came to be presented as an example of the capacity to articulate major urban projects, local identity, international competitiveness, and quality urban design.

This trajectory dialogues with Borja and Castells's formulation of the city as a political actor in globalization. For these authors, local governments should act strategically, articulate actors, define city projects, and insert themselves into global networks of economic, cultural, and technological flows (BORJA; CASTELLS, 1997). Barcelona became, in this sense, one of the most influential showcases of strategic urban planning.

22@ can be interpreted as a second generation of this model. If Olympic Barcelona projected itself through urban requalification, public space, and cultural image, the Barcelona of 22@ sought to project itself as a knowledge city. The former industrial territory of Poblenou would be the laboratory of this new stage: no longer only a tourist, cultural, and cosmopolitan city, but an innovative, technological, entrepreneurial, and connected city.

This passage is fundamental for this book. It shows how strategic urban planning incorporated the gospel of innovation. The competitive city of the 1990s became the creative and innovative city of the 2000s. The attraction of tourists, events, and investments began to coexist with the attraction of talent, technology companies, universities, and research centers.

22@ is therefore a territorial translation of the city-as-actor. Barcelona did not passively wait for the new roduce it through zoning, infrastructure, branding, partnerships, requalification, and strategic planning.

13.3 The Creation of 22@: Zoning, Knowledge, and the New Economy

The creation of 22@, formalized by the modification of the Metropolitan General Plan in 2000, replaced the former industrial zone 22a with a new category oriented toward knowledge-intensive activities, symbolized by the "@" (AJUNTAMENT DE BARCELONA, 2000). This change was not merely technical or regulatory. It produced a symbolic reinterpretation of the territory: the old industrial neighborhood came to be presented as a district of the knowledge economy, articulating urban infrastructure, technological activities, universities, companies, housing, and public spaces (PAREJA-EASTAWAY; PIQUÉ, 2011).

The name 22@ is itself a discursive operation. The "@" reinscribes the old manufacturing city into digital language. Industrial territory is renamed as informational territory. The change in urban code also becomes a change in urban imaginary.

The proposal combined urban restructuring, increased density, selective preservation of industrial heritage, opening of streets, creation of public spaces, advanced infrastructure, and attraction of qualified economic activities. From the perspective of innovation urbanism, 22@ anticipated many elements that would later be disseminated by the literature on innovation districts: mixed uses, proximity between universities and firms, requalification of industrial areas, urban density, connectivity, the presence of cultural facilities, spaces of sociability, and integration with the urban fabric (KATZ; WAGNER, 2014).

However, 22@ also expresses a European and specifically Barcelonan specificity. It is not simply a technology park, but an operation of neighborhood restructuring. Its object is not only to create buildings for firms, but to transform urban form itself, reprogramming land, uses, densities, images, and meanings of the territory.

This is its power and its risk. By acting upon a living neighborhood, with history, residents, workshops, small businesses, and working-class memory, the project does not reorganize only the economy. It reorganizes urban life.

13.4 The Innovation District as Territorial Promise

The innovation district presents itself as an overcoming of the isolated technology park. While the traditional park tends to appear as a monofunctional enclave, often removed from the city and dependent on the automobile, the district promises urbanity: streets, cafés, housing, transportation, universities, companies, culture, leisure, and public spaces.

Katz and Wagner (2014) describe innovation districts as a new geography of innovation, marked by the spatial concentration of anchor institutions, firms, startups, incubators, accelerators, and urban spaces that are connected, dense, and mixed. This formulation contrasts with the suburban model of technology parks and reinforces the idea that proximity, density, and diversity of uses could favor encounters, cooperation, and the circulation of knowledge.

22@ became one of the most frequently cited examples of this logic. Its promise is triple. First, economic: to attract technology companies, research centers, universities, and knowledge-intensive activities. Second,

urban: to requalify Poblenou, recover degraded spaces, create new public spaces, and modernize infrastructure. Third, symbolic: to project Barcelona as an innovative and global city.

These three promises reinforce one another. Urban requalification makes the territory more attractive to companies. The presence of companies legitimizes urban transformation. The image of innovation strengthens the city's brand. The brand attracts new investments. The district thus becomes a feedback device among space, economy, and narrative.

But this machinery also produces contradictions. Territorial valorization may expel less profitable economic activities. The arrival of companies and qualified workers may raise prices. Industrial heritage may be preserved selectively, more as aesthetics than as social memory. The neighborhood may become more global and less popular. Innovation may function as a language that legitimizes real estate restructuring.

It is in this sense that 22@ must be analyzed as an innovation complex, in the sense proposed by Zukin (2020): an articulation among land, labor, culture, capital, government, universities, companies, and narratives of the future.

13.5 The Café Myth in 22@

22@ is an exemplary case of the Café Myth. The transformation of Poblenou into an innovation district depended not only on the attraction of firms and universities, but also on the production of an urban atmosphere. Cafés, restaurants, cultural spaces, coworking spaces, housing, squares, rehabilitated buildings, and neighborhood life were incorporated into the district's image as an environment favorable to creativity and the circulation of ideas.

The implicit thesis is well known: talent wants to work and live in vibrant, walkable, culturally interesting, and connected places. Therefore, the city must create these environments in order to attract the creative class. This reading dialogues directly with Florida's influence, according to which competitive cities would be those capable of attracting qualified workers through the combination of technology, talent, and tolerance (FLORIDA, 2002).

However, as discussed in Chapter 8, the café does not create innovation by itself. It may favor encounters, but it does not replace economic structure. It may communicate creativity, but it does not guarantee social inclusion. It may make the territory more attractive, but it can also signal class change and real estate appreciation. Peck (2005) criticized precisely the circulation of creative class theory as urban policy, arguing that it often converts lifestyles, amenities, and cultural consumption into competitiveness strategies without confronting the structural bases of urban inequality.

In the case of Poblenou, the creative atmosphere is directly linked to the revalorization of the neighborhood. Former industrial heritage, once associated with production and labor, becomes scenery for the creative economy. Warehouses and industrial façades may be converted into offices, studios, restaurants, or cultural spaces. Factory memory is reused as aesthetics. The industrial past becomes symbolic raw material for the new economy.

This process is not necessarily negative. Heritage rehabilitation can avoid demolitions and recover spaces. But it is necessary to ask whether the social memory of labor remains or whether it is converted merely into decoration for the creative class. As Zukin (1995) argues, urban culture can be mobilized as an economic

and symbolic resource in the production of new spaces of consumption, distinction, and real estate valorization.

13.6 Torre Glòries and the Icon Myth

Torre Glòries, formerly Torre Agbar, designed by Jean Nouvel, is one of the most recognizable images of the urban transformation associated with 22@. Its vertical, luminous, and singular presence contributes to visually materializing the symbolic transition from industrial Poblenou to the district of the knowledge economy.

In the context of this book, Torre Glòries expresses the Icon Myth. The landmark functions as the public face of innovation. It makes visible something abstract: the knowledge economy, technology, creativity, flows, modernity. The tower does not merely occupy the territory; it communicates a narrative. It says that Poblenou has changed, that Barcelona has entered another stage, that the industrial city has been replaced by a technological and global city.

This visual role is fundamental. Urban plans are difficult to communicate. Zoning is technical. Economic strategies are abstract. But a tower can be photographed, illuminated, recognized, and repeated in institutional materials. The icon translates the project into image.

The literature on city branding and iconic architecture helps to understand this process. For Anholt (2007), cities and countries also compete for reputation, image, and recognition. Jencks (2005), in discussing the iconic building, shows how certain architectures come to condense meanings, enigmas, and collective expectations. Evans (2003), in turn, analyzes how culture and urban facilities can be mobilized in branding strategies, often associated with interurban competition.

The risk lies in confusing image with structure. The presence of the tower does not prove, by itself, the existence of a robust innovation ecosystem. It signals an intention, a brand, an aspiration. It may synthesize a real transformation, but it may also conceal conflicts. The landmark is always ambiguous: it illuminates the desired future and casts shadow over what the official narrative prefers to forget.

In the case of 22@, Torre Glòries helps consolidate the district's global image. But critical analysis must ask what this image conceals: housing disputes, memory conflicts, substitution of uses, real estate appreciation, inequalities among areas of the neighborhood, and tensions between innovation and everyday life.

13.7 Industrial Heritage: Memory or Scenery?

One of the most delicate themes of 22@ is its relationship with industrial heritage. Poblenou was not merely an available area for requalification. It was a territory of factory, working-class, and popular memory. Its factories, chimneys, workshops, and warehouses carried histories of labor, conflict, social organization, and material production.

The transformation of the neighborhood placed the meaning of this heritage in dispute. It could be preserved as active memory of the industrial city, integrated into public, cultural, and community uses. But it could also be converted into aesthetics for the creative economy, functioning as sophisticated scenery for offices, restaurants, lofts, coworking spaces, and technology companies.

This tension is common in former industrial areas undergoing requalification. Industrial aesthetics has become one of the preferred styles of the new economy: exposed brick, metal structures, high ceilings, large spans, concrete, old machines preserved as decoration, warm lighting, informal furniture. The productive past becomes atmosphere. The factory becomes brand.

Zukin (1995) shows that the culture of cities can be appropriated as a symbolic and economic resource. In the case of Poblenou, Marrero-Guillamón (2008) highlights how urban renewal associated with 22@ also produced a new framing of the neighborhood, displacing previous uses and meanings. The old factory materiality is resignified as creative atmosphere, often pushing into the background the workers, conflicts, and productive activities that gave rise to that territory.

The risk is the depoliticization of memory. The chimney remains, but the worker disappears. The warehouse is preserved, but the history of social conflict is erased. The industrial building remains standing, but its meaning changes: from place of production to place of consumption, office, or branding.

In 22@, the selective preservation of industrial heritage must be read within this ambiguity. It may protect fragments of urban memory, but it may also aestheticize deindustrialization. The critical question is: which memory is preserved, and for whom?

13.8 Productive Gentrification

22@ allows us to work with the idea of **productive gentrification**. Unlike classic residential gentrification, centered on the replacement of low-income residents by higher-income groups, productive gentrification involves the replacement of economic activities, forms of work, and territorial uses. Workshops, small industries, warehouses, popular commerce, and traditional productive uses are displaced or pressured by offices, advanced services, technology companies, universities, hotels, restaurants, and valorized housing.

This form of gentrification is not only residential. It is also economic and symbolic. The territory ceases to be recognized for its industrial productive function and becomes valued for its capacity to attract activities of the knowledge economy. Former material production loses legitimacy; immaterial production gains prestige.

Critical literature on gentrification is fundamental for interpreting this process. Smith (1996) analyzes gentrification as part of the production of a new urban frontier, in which land valorization and the restructuring of space are central. Zukin (1995; 2010) shows how culture, authenticity, and urban consumption can be mobilized in the reconfiguration of neighborhoods, often producing social and symbolic displacements. In the case of Barcelona, Charnock, Purcell, and Ribera-Fumaz (2014) point to the limits of the model of urban competitiveness, emphasizing how urban rent and real estate appreciation are at the center of recent transformations.

Productive gentrification is particularly relevant for countries seeking to transform industrial areas into innovation districts. It is necessary to ask: which activities will be expelled? Which jobs will be replaced? Will the new jobs be accessible to former workers? Will small local firms be incorporated or discarded? Will innovation create productive linkages or only new high-value services for qualified groups?

In the case of Poblenou, the dispute is not only between past and future. It is between different possible futures. One future of innovation could include industrial memory, local production, affordable housing,

popular culture, universities, and technology. Another future may transform the neighborhood into a valorized enclave of the global economy.

13.9 The University and the Production of the District

The presence of universities, research centers, and knowledge institutions is a central component of innovation districts. In 22@, academic and training institutions play a relevant role in the construction of the image and dynamics of the district. They offer legitimacy, talent, research, student circulation, and connections with international networks.

This dialogues with Etzkowitz's theory of the Triple Helix, according to which innovation depends on interaction among university, industry, and government (ETZKOWITZ, 2008). In 22@, this interaction is territorialized: universities and knowledge centers become part of an urban environment planned to bring research, companies, and the city closer together.

But the presence of the university in innovation districts also requires critical caution. The university can contribute to urban development, social innovation, worker training, and the solution of public problems. But it can also be instrumentalized as an asset of territorial valorization. Its presence makes the neighborhood more attractive to companies and investors. Students and researchers help produce a creative atmosphere. Public knowledge can be converted into private competitive advantage.

The point is not to deny university participation, but to define its orientation. Should the university in the district serve only to attract companies, or also the city? Should it produce startups, or also confront inequalities? Should it train talent for the global market, or also professionals committed to public missions? Should it be a real estate anchor, or a democratic institution of knowledge?

13.10 22@ and the "If You Build It, They Will Come" Myth

22@ also allows us to discuss the "If You Build It, They Will Come" Myth. The project begins with a strong intervention by public authorities upon the territory: regulatory change, infrastructure, planning, incentives, urban requalification, and the construction of a narrative. The expectation was that, by creating the spatial and institutional conditions, companies, universities, talents, and investments would settle in the district.

In Barcelona, this strategy produced expressive results in terms of attracting activities and transforming the urban fabric. But the case should not be generalized simplistically. 22@ benefits from Barcelona's position as a global city: tourist, culturally recognized, endowed with universities, infrastructure, urban qualityd, and a history of strategic planning. It is not only the district that attracts; it is the entire city. □ filecite□ turn30file12□

This distinction is fundamental for other cities. Building a district inspired by 22@ does not guarantee the same results. Spatial form needs context: market, attractive city, institutions, scale, networks, investments, governance, and time. "If you build it, they will come" is more likely when many other elements are already present. Even so, its social effects remain contradictory.

As Storper (1997) argues, territorial development depends on conventions, institutions, economic relations, learning, and regional capabilities. Spatial proximity may be important, but it is not enough. Cooperation and innovation depend on institutional density, productive networks, and historical trajectories.

22@ shows that infrastructure can induce processes, but it should not be confused with the single cause of innovation. The district is one piece within a larger machinery. When exported as a model, it risks becoming a scenographic recipe.

13.11 The Barcelona Brand and the International Circulation of the Model

22@ gained international circulation as an exemplary case of the reconversion of an industrial area into an innovation district. Delegations, consultants, academics, and urban managers began to observe the project as an example of the combination of planning, the knowledge economy, industrial heritage, technology, urbanity, and city branding.

Its global strength depends on the Barcelona brand, built over decades of planning, architecture, urban culture, tourism, and international events. The Barcelona brand functions as symbolic certification. What Barcelona does tends to gain legitimacy. 22@, in turn, reinforces this brand by presenting the city as innovative, and not merely tourist or cultural. There is a feedback loop: Barcelona legitimizes 22@; 22@ updates Barcelona.

This process is typical of the urban gospel of innovation. Local cases become global models. Singular experiences are transformed into best practices. Reports, lectures, consultancies, and technical visits disseminate general principles: density, mixed uses, innovation, knowledge, creativity, heritage, connectivity, and urban quality.

The literature on policy mobility helps to understand this process. Peck (2011) shows that urban policies do not circulate as neutral copies, but undergo adaptations, mutations, and translations. Ward (2011) also emphasizes that circulating urban models are appropriated selectively, often highlighting their most marketable elements while silencing local conflicts.

The problem is that models travel better than conflicts. The 22@ that circulates globally is often cleaner, more coherent, and more successful than the real territory. The exported version emphasizes innovation, design, planning, and firm attraction. The lived version includes disputes over housing, heritage, uses, memory, prices, and belonging.

It is necessary to study not only the Barcelona model, but also its backstage.

13.12 22@ as an Innovation Complex

Sharon Zukin's reading allows us to understand 22@ as an innovation complex. The district articulates land, labor, culture, and capital. Land appears in the restructuring and valorization of Poblenou. Labor appears in the replacement of industrial activities by advanced services and technological sectors. Culture appears in the mobilization of industrial heritage, creativity, and urban image. Capital appears in the articulation among local government, companies, universities, developers, and investors (ZUKIN, 2020).

This articulation shows that 22@ cannot be analyzed only as innovation policy. It is an urban coalition. It involves local government, landowners, developers, companies, universities, architects, consultants, residents, social movements, and cultural institutions. Each actor participates differently and captures different benefits.

The innovation complex is therefore a field of disputes. Innovation is the common language that allows interests to be aligned, but these interests are not identical. For the city government, 22@ may represent economic modernization. For developers, land valorization. For companies, strategic location. For universities, urban insertion and connection with the market. For residents, it may represent improvement, threat, or both. For former workers and small businesses, it may mean displacement.

The concept of the complex helps avoid simplistic readings. 22@ is simultaneously public policy, urban project, economic strategy, territorial brand, and real estate frontier.

13.13 What 22@ Teaches

22@ teaches that innovation is territorial. It needs space, infrastructure, connectivity, density, institutions, and image. It teaches that former industrial areas can be reprogrammed for new economic activities. It teaches that universities, companies, and governments can be brought closer together through urban projects. It teaches that industrial heritage can be incorporated into strategies for the future. It teaches that city and technology are not separate dimensions.

It also teaches that urban quality matters. Public spaces, mobility, mixed uses, culture, and neighborhood life can favor richer environments than isolated technology parks. The innovation district is, in this sense, a critique of the suburban technology enclave.

But 22@ also teaches that urban innovation can deepen inequalities. Requalification can generate real estate appreciation. The knowledge economy can replace jobs and activities. Industrial memory can become aesthetics. The creative class can pressure residents and popular uses. The landmark can conceal conflicts. The global city can distance itself from the everyday city.

Therefore, the main lesson of 22@ is not "copy the model." The main lesson is: every territorial innovation policy must be accompanied by housing policy, protection of local uses, social memory, productive inclusion, capture of real estate valorization, democratization of access to knowledge, and articulation with public missions.

13.14 22@ and the Global South

For cities in the Global South, 22@ exerts great attraction. It offers a narrative of reconversion: transforming degraded industrial areas into innovation districts, attracting technology companies, revitalizing neighborhoods, preserving heritage, stimulating the creative economy, and projecting the city internationally. Many Latin American cities would like to produce their own 22@.

But the importation of this model requires caution. Barcelona has specific conditions: a strong international brand, an urbanistic tradition, consolidated infrastructure, global tourism, universities, a dynamic real estate market, European insertion, and institutional capacity. Cities in the Global South face deeper urban inequalities, informality, fiscal fragility, sanitation and housing deficits, lower financing capacity, and technological dependence.

Importing the form of 22@ without building the structure may produce only gentrification with the language of innovation. Former industrial or central areas may be requalified to attract creative middle

classes, firms, and tourism, while peripheries remain without basic infrastructure. The innovative district becomes an island of modernity in an unequal city.

For this reason, the question for the Global South should not be "how can we create a local 22@?", but rather "which urban and productive missions require innovation districts?" A district may be oriented toward climate adaptation, sanitation, housing, public health, the solidarity economy, social technologies, popular mobility, green reindustrialization, or digital sovereignty. Spatial form must respond to public problems, rather than merely to the pursuit of a global image.

Table 13 - 22@ as a Laboratory of the Myths of Innovation

Dimension	How It Appears in 22@	Critical Question
Café Myth	Cafés, urbanity, creative life, and innovation atmosphere	Whom do amenities attract, and whom do they exclude?
Icon Myth	Torre Glòries as a landmark of the new economy	Does the icon express innovation or substitute for its complexity?
"If You Build It, They Will Come"	A district planned to attract companies and talent	Which prior conditions make attraction possible?
Creative City	Culture, heritage, and the knowledge economy	Does culture become a right or a real estate asset?
Triple Helix	Government, universities, and companies in the territory	Does cooperation produce public value?
Productive Gentrification	Replacement of industrial activities by advanced services	Who loses work, space, and memory?
City Branding	Barcelona as a global innovation brand	Does the exported image conceal local conflicts?

13.15 Final Remarks

22@ Barcelona is one of the most important cases for understanding the urbanization of innovation. It shows how the knowledge economy territorializes itself, how former industrial areas are reprogrammed, how strategic planning articulates with city branding, how universities and companies are brought closer together, how landmarks produce images of the future, and how innovation can reorganize urban land.

But 22@ also shows the limits of the gospel of innovation. The promise of regeneration can produce gentrification. Heritage can become scenery. The creative class can pressure residents and popular uses. The

district can function as a laboratory of innovation and as a frontier of real estate valorization. The knowledge city can coexist with exclusion.

A critical reading of 22@ allows us to overcome both celebration and simplistic rejection. The project is not only a success and not only a failure. It is a field of contradictions. Its analytical value lies precisely in this. It reveals the power and the dangers of innovation districts.

Thus, 22@ confirms the central thesis of this book: territories of innovation are not only built; they are narrated, symbolized, sold, disputed, and appropriated. The transformation of Poblenou shows that urban innovation is simultaneously economic policy, land intervention, branding strategy, productive restructuring, and dispute over memory (ZUKIN, 2020; CHARNOCK; PURCELL; RIBERA-FUMAZ, 2014; MARRERO-GUILLAMÓN, 2008).

The challenge is not to reject innovation districts. It is to democratize them. To connect them to real urban missions. To prevent them from being merely showcases of competitiveness. To make innovation, heritage, housing, labor, and territorial justice move together. 22@ teaches that the knowledge city must be more than a brand. It must be a city.

14. China

Developmental State, Industrial Missions, and Technology Parks

China occupies a singular place in this book because it directly challenges the main myths of the contemporary gospel of innovation. Its experience shows that technology parks, high-tech zones, science cities, universities, digital firms, and advanced productive chains do not emerge merely from creative atmosphere, startup culture, cafés, pitches, hackathons, or the physical construction of innovation districts. The Chinese case reveals, with great clarity, that territorial innovation depends on the State, planning, industrial policy, selective openness, infrastructure, technical training, productive scale, financing, national missions, and strategic insertion into global value chains.

China did not build its technological capacity simply by copying Silicon Valley. Nor did it create technology parks while passively waiting for companies, talent, and investors to appear. Its trajectory resulted from a combination of economic reform, controlled opening, territorial experimentation, attraction of foreign investment, productive learning, technology transfer, massive training of engineers, creation of special zones, State support for national firms, and the definition of strategic sectors (NAUGHTON, 2007; BREZNITZ; MURPHREE, 2011; KROEBER, 2020).

For this reason, the Chinese case is decisive for criticizing the **"if you build it, they will come" Myth**. China built parks, zones, districts, and science cities, but these spaces were articulated with national programs such as the Four Modernizations, the 863 Program, the Torch Program, the National Medium- and Long-Term Program for Science and Technology Development, and later Made in China 2025 (SEGAL, 2003; NAUGHTON, 2021; APPELBAUM et al., 2018). Territorial form did not precede strategy. It was one of the spatial expressions of a broader strategy.

The central question of this chapter is: **what do Chinese technology parks teach countries of the Global South?** The main answer is that innovation is not urban decoration, nor merely individual entrepreneurship. Innovation is the historical construction of capabilities.

14.1 China as a Counterpoint to the Gospel of Innovation

China is uncomfortable for the neoliberal gospel of innovation because it does not fit easily into its preferred narrative. It cannot be explained by the garage myth, because its technological rise was not the work of isolated founders. It cannot be explained by the café myth, because its innovation territories did not emerge primarily from urban amenities aimed at attracting the creative class. It cannot be explained by the icon myth, because futuristic landscapes alone do not account for its productive transformation. Nor can it be explained by the belief that building parks automatically attracts firms, because Chinese parks were embedded in national strategies, State coordination, industrial policies, and productive chains.

This does not mean that China should be idealized. Its trajectory contains profound contradictions: authoritarianism, social control, environmental pressure, regional inequality, labor exploitation, displacement, surveillance, and geopolitical tension. The point is not to replace the myth of Silicon Valley with the myth of China. The point is to understand why the Chinese experience reveals dimensions that the

Western gospel of innovation often hides: industrial policy, State capacity, productive learning, scale, long-term planning, and technological sovereignty.

China thus operates in this book as a double critique. It criticizes the neoliberal illusion that innovation emerges spontaneously from markets, entrepreneurs, cafés, and ecosystems. But it also warns against the technonationalist illusion that State planning, technological growth, and national sovereignty automatically produce social justice.

14.2 Reform, Opening, and Territorial Experimentation

The Chinese technological trajectory must be understood from the reforms initiated at the end of the 1970s. The policy of reform and opening did not represent a simple transition to the free market. It involved gradual experimentation, territorial selectivity, institutional learning, attraction of foreign investment, and the construction of hybrid arrangements between State direction and market mechanisms.

Special Economic Zones played a fundamental role in this process. Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, Xiamen, and later other development zones functioned as laboratories for industrialization, export orientation, foreign investment, infrastructure construction, and new forms of economic governance (YEUNG; LEE; KEE, 2009). These territories allowed China to test policies, attract capital, learn from external firms, and build productive capabilities without immediately liberalizing the entire national economy.

This is one of the great lessons of the Chinese case: territory was used as an instrument of experimentation. Zones, parks, and districts were not merely real estate projects or urban images. They were devices for industrial learning, export insertion, technological upgrading, and institutional testing.

The contrast with many experiences in the Global South is evident. In several countries, technology parks are created as isolated projects, disconnected from national industrial policy. In China, territorial experimentation was linked to broader economic transformation. The zone was not the strategy itself; it was one of the tools of the strategy.

14.3 The Four Modernizations and the Developmental Horizon

The Chinese reform process was framed by the broader agenda of the **Four Modernizations**: agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology. This formulation is important because it placed scientific and technological modernization at the center of national development. Innovation was not treated as an isolated entrepreneurial agenda, but as part of a project of national transformation.

Unlike many contemporary innovation policies that emphasize startups, creative environments, pitches, and urban branding, the Chinese trajectory associated technological development with industrial upgrading, defense, agriculture, infrastructure, and national sovereignty. Science and technology were understood as productive and strategic capacities.

This orientation helps explain why Chinese innovation territories were linked to industrial and technological missions. Technology parks, science zones, and high-tech development areas were not conceived merely as pleasant places for creative workers. They were designed to strengthen firms, commercialize research, absorb technology, attract investment, connect universities and industry, and accelerate productive modernization.

In this sense, China offers a lesson that is especially relevant for the Global South: innovation policy cannot be separated from development policy. Without industry, infrastructure, public procurement, technical training, and strategic sectors, innovation becomes a vocabulary rather than a transformation.

14.4 High-Tech Zones and the Torch Program

The **Torch Program**, launched in 1988, is one of the most important instruments for understanding Chinese technology parks. It sought to promote the commercialization of high technology, support technology-based enterprises, and organize high-tech industrial development zones. These zones became key territorial instruments for connecting research institutions, universities, firms, local governments, and national technological objectives (SEGAL, 2003; ZHOU, 2008; NAUGHTON, 2021).

The Torch Program reveals that China did not simply build parks and wait. It created a policy framework that linked territory to industrial development. Parks were connected to firms, funding mechanisms, technological sectors, local governments, universities, and national priorities. They were not only places; they were institutional instruments.

This is one of the strongest critiques of the "if you build it, they will come" myth. A technology park only becomes relevant when it is connected to demand, finance, firms, research, workers, markets, and policy direction. The Chinese high-tech zones were part of a broader architecture of State-led technological upgrading.

Of course, not all Chinese parks succeeded equally. There were regional inequalities, local competition, duplication of efforts, real estate pressures, and uneven technological outcomes. But the general orientation was clear: parks were part of a national strategy for moving from assembly and imitation toward learning, adaptation, and technological autonomy.

14.5 Programs 863, 973, and Homegrown Innovation

The **863 Program**, launched in 1986, sought to promote research in strategic high-technology areas such as biotechnology, space technology, information technology, automation, energy, and new materials (SEGAL, 2003; APPELBAUM et al., 2018). The **973 Program**, initiated in 1997, focused on basic research, strengthening long-term scientific foundations (APPELBAUM et al., 2018).

In 2006, China launched the **National Medium- and Long-Term Program for Science and Technology Development**, with a horizon extending to 2020. This plan emphasized the idea of **indigenous** or **homegrown innovation**, seeking to reduce external technological dependence and strengthen national capabilities in strategic sectors (STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2006; CAO; SUTTMEIER; SIMON, 2006).

This agenda is crucial. It indicates that China did not want to remain merely the "factory of the world" or a platform for assembly. The objective became to move up value chains, master key technologies, create national brands, strengthen Chinese firms, and reduce vulnerabilities in strategic areas (NAUGHTON, 2021; APPELBAUM et al., 2018).

Here, an important difference appears in relation to many peripheral countries. It is not enough to attract foreign firms and install industrial zones. It is necessary to transform the presence of these firms into

learning, technology transfer, local supplier development, the strengthening of national companies, and the construction of domestic capabilities. China sought, with tensions and contradictions, to carry out precisely this movement (BREZNITZ; MURPHREE, 2011; KROEBER, 2020).

14.6 Made in China 2025 and Technonationalism

The launch of **Made in China 2025** marked a new stage in the Chinese strategy. Inspired by international debates on Industry 4.0, advanced manufacturing, and digital transformation, the plan sought to raise Chinese industry to higher levels of technological complexity, focusing on sectors such as robotics, new energy vehicles, aerospace equipment, information technology, numerical control machinery, new materials, maritime equipment, biomedicine, medical devices, and advanced agriculture (STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2015; KENNEDY, 2015).

Made in China 2025 expresses a form of **technonationalism**. It affirms that technological development is not only an economic issue, but also a matter of sovereignty, geopolitical power, industrial security, and national autonomy. It reflects China's perception that dependence on foreign technologies creates strategic vulnerability.

This strategy generated strong international reactions, especially from the United States and other advanced economies, because it signaled China's intention to move from low-cost manufacturing to leadership in strategic sectors. Technological competition thus became a central axis of twenty-first-century geopolitics.

For the purposes of this book, Made in China 2025 is important because it shows the limits of innovation understood only as entrepreneurship. The Chinese State did not merely encourage individuals to create startups. It identified sectors, mobilized institutions, directed investment, supported firms, and sought to transform the structure of national industry.

But technonationalism also carries risks. The pursuit of sovereignty can justify excessive State control, protectionism without accountability, bureaucratic capture, geopolitical conflict, and the subordination of social rights to national technological objectives. Therefore, the critical lesson is not to copy technonationalism, but to recognize that no country builds technological autonomy without strategy.

14.7 Science Cities, High-Tech Landscapes, and the Territorialization of Strategy

Chinese innovation is also expressed in a vast geography of science cities, high-tech development zones, university districts, industrial parks, and digital urban regions. Beijing's Zhongguancun, often called China's Silicon Valley, Shenzhen's electronics and maker ecosystem, Shanghai's Zhangjiang, and numerous national high-tech zones show how innovation has been territorialized across the country.

These spaces are not identical. Some are linked to universities and research institutes; others to manufacturing, electronics, software, biotechnology, or digital services. Some operate as corporate and financial environments; others as prototyping and manufacturing territories. Their diversity reveals that Chinese innovation cannot be reduced to one model.

The important point is that these territories give spatial form to strategic objectives. They concentrate firms, laboratories, universities, infrastructure, talent, government support, and capital. They also create visual

landscapes of modernity: towers, campuses, research centers, transport infrastructure, large avenues, exhibition centers, corporate headquarters, and futuristic urban images.

Here the Icon Myth reappears, but in a different way. Chinese innovation territories often produce spectacular landscapes. However, unlike purely symbolic landmarks, many of these landscapes are connected to massive productive systems, manufacturing capacity, logistics, public investment, and national strategy. The image is not sufficient, but it is often accompanied by material density.

This distinction is crucial. A futuristic landscape without productive base is scenography. A futuristic landscape linked to industrial missions may become an instrument of development. China shows that the problem is not the image itself, but the absence or presence of structure behind the image.

14.8 Shenzhen: Manufacturing, Prototyping, and the Maker Imaginary

Shenzhen is one of the most important cases for understanding Chinese innovation. It began as a Special Economic Zone and became one of the world's major centers of electronics, manufacturing, hardware production, telecommunications, digital platforms, and technological experimentation.

Silvia Lindtner, in *Prototype Nation*, shows how Shenzhen became associated with a specific promise of innovation: rapid prototyping, maker culture, hardware entrepreneurship, manufacturing flexibility, and proximity between design, production, and markets (LINDTNER, 2020). Unlike the Silicon Valley imaginary, centered strongly on software, venture capital, and platforms, Shenzhen demonstrates the centrality of manufacturing for innovation.

This point is fundamental. Innovation is not only ideation, coding, pitching, or branding. It is also the capacity to prototype, test, manufacture, adapt, scale, and improve products. The proximity between designers, engineers, component suppliers, factories, logistics networks, and markets creates a powerful environment for technological learning.

For the Global South, Shenzhen teaches something that the café myth does not teach: cafés do not replace factories. Coworking spaces do not replace suppliers. Pitches do not replace prototyping. Design thinking does not replace manufacturing capacity. A country that wants to innovate must know how to produce.

At the same time, Shenzhen should not be romanticized. Its development involved intense labor regimes, migration, urban pressure, environmental challenges, State control, and integration into global capitalist chains. The maker imaginary can conceal hard work, industrial discipline, and uneven power relations.

14.9 Talent, Diaspora, and the Formation of Capabilities

China's technological rise also depended on massive investment in human capital. The country expanded higher education, trained engineers, sent students abroad, attracted returnees, invested in research institutions, and sought to connect domestic talent with global scientific networks (SIMON; CAO, 2009).

Talent, in the Chinese case, was not treated only as a lifestyle issue. It was linked to national strategy. The problem was not merely how to attract creative workers to cafés and vibrant neighborhoods, but how to train, retain, and mobilize scientists, engineers, technicians, and managers for industrial and technological missions.

This is another important lesson for the Global South. Talent needs horizon. Countries that train students but do not offer laboratories, companies, wages, research funding, industrial projects, and national missions often produce brain drain. Talent leaves not because there are no cafés, but because there is no future.

China's policies for talent formation and return were imperfect and unequal, but they were part of a broader attempt to build technological capabilities. Talent was connected to industry, universities, State projects, and strategic sectors.

The key lesson is clear: talent is not attracted only by urban amenities. It is formed by educational systems and retained by missions, opportunities, institutions, and material conditions.

14.10 Copying, Learning, and Technological Upgrading

A common Western interpretation presents Chinese innovation as imitation or copying. This reading is simplistic. Copying can be a form of learning. Late industrializing countries often begin by imitating, adapting, reverse engineering, absorbing, and improving existing technologies. The issue is whether imitation becomes a permanent dependency or a stage in building capabilities.

Developmental literature has long shown that latecomer countries rarely begin at the technological frontier. They learn through protected markets, technology transfer, industrial policy, State support, and local adaptation (AMSDEN, 2001; CHANG, 2002; WADE, 1990). China's experience belongs to this broader history of late development.

There are sectors in which Chinese firms remained dependent for a long time. But there are others in which they became highly competitive, such as telecommunications, solar energy, batteries, electric vehicles, e-commerce, drones, and digital payments (NAUGHTON, 2021; KROEBER, 2020).

This trajectory contrasts with countries that import technologies without creating local capacity. The difference lies in the politics of learning. China used openness, markets, and foreign investment as instruments to build national capabilities. Copying, in this sense, was not an endpoint, but a stage of strategy.

For the Global South, this lesson is decisive. The problem is not whether a country begins by learning from others. Every late developer does. The problem is whether it builds institutions, firms, skills, and policies capable of transforming learning into autonomy.

14.11 Contradictions: Inequality, Displacement, and Control

A critical analysis of China should not transform its model into a new gospel. The country built impressive capabilities, but it also produced profound contradictions. Accelerated urbanization generated displacement, regional inequality, environmental pressure, real estate expansion, local government debt, and work intensification (NAUGHTON, 2007; KROEBER, 2020).

The **hukou** system, which regulates household registration, produced inequalities between formal urban residents and internal migrants, affecting access to services, education, health, and social rights in cities. Export-oriented industrialization relied on large numbers of migrant workers subjected to harsh working and living conditions (SOLINGER, 1999; PUN, 2005).

Moreover, Chinese digital innovation developed in a context of strong State control, surveillance, censorship, and intensive use of data. The same State capable of coordinating technological missions can also expand mechanisms of social and political control. Therefore, the critique of Western neoliberalism should not lead to an uncritical celebration of technological authoritarianism.

The Chinese experience teaches lessons about State capacity, industrial policy, and mission, but it also warns of the risks of innovation without democracy, without robust labor rights, and without social participation. The question is not whether the Chinese model should be copied. The question is what can be critically learned from its trajectory.

14.12 China and Mazzucato: Mission, State, and Market Creation

The Chinese experience strongly dialogues with Mariana Mazzucato's theory of the entrepreneurial State and mission-oriented policies. For Mazzucato, the State should not act only as a corrector of market failures, but as an agent capable of creating markets, assuming risks, directing investments, and orienting innovation toward major collective challenges (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021).

China offers an extreme example of an orienting State. It defines strategic sectors, mobilizes financing, supports companies, builds infrastructure, directs universities, coordinates local governments, protects national interests, and seeks technological autonomy. It shows that innovation is not only a spontaneous market process, but a politically oriented transformation.

At the same time, the Chinese experience raises questions that go beyond Mazzucato: how can social return be guaranteed? How can bureaucratic capture be avoided? How can the definition of missions be democratized? How can innovation be prevented from becoming surveillance or control? How can national strategy be balanced with individual rights?

The dialogue between China and Mazzucato is productive because it allows us to distinguish **public mission** from **State authoritarianism**. Defending mission-oriented policies does not require copying the Chinese political structure. It requires recognizing that innovation cannot depend only on markets and individual entrepreneurship. But it also requires democratic mechanisms of control, participation, transparency, and social appropriation of the value produced.

For the Global South, this distinction is fundamental. It is possible to learn from China's capacity for planning, coordination, and investment without adopting its political model. The challenge is to build States capable of orienting missions in democratic contexts.

14.13 China Against the Myths of Innovation

The Chinese experience dismantles, one by one, the myths discussed in this book.

Against the **Garage Myth**, it shows that innovation is not born only from brilliant individuals, but from national systems of science, technology, industry, and infrastructure. Against the **Café Myth**, it shows that talent is not attracted only by urban amenities, but by productive opportunities, financing, firms, universities, and missions. Against the **"if you build it, they will come" Myth**, it shows that technology parks only make sense when articulated with industrial policies and national programs. Against the **Icon Myth**, it shows that futuristic landscapes are insufficient without a productive base. Against the **wall**

pedagogy of innovation, it shows that individual slogans do not replace State coordination, scale, and strategy.

But China can also produce its own myths. The first is the myth of the absolute efficiency of the State. The second is the myth that central planning solves everything. The third is the myth that technological growth automatically equals just social development. The fourth is the myth that technological sovereignty justifies any form of social control. These myths must also be refused.

The critical reading of China must therefore be double: against the neoliberal gospel of innovation and against the technonationalist idealization of the authoritarian State.

14.14 Lessons for Brazil and the Global South

For Brazil, China offers uncomfortable lessons. The first is that there is no innovation without industry. Countries that abandon their productive base become consumers of technologies developed elsewhere. The second is that there is no strategic innovation without the State. Markets can innovate, but they rarely build complex long-term sectors alone. The third is that there is no sovereignty without mission. Dispersed calls for proposals, isolated technology parks, and startup events do not replace a national development policy.

The fourth lesson is that territorial infrastructure must be linked to productive chains. Technology parks should respond to missions: health, climate, energy, sanitation, mobility, defense, agriculture, bioeconomy, semiconductors, medical equipment, housing, and resilient cities. The fifth lesson is that talent needs a horizon. Training students without offering laboratories, firms, wages, and national projects results in brain drain. The sixth lesson is that innovation must produce social return. Public investment must generate collective capabilities, not only private gains.

But the Chinese experience also alerts Brazil to risks. A national innovation project cannot dispense with democracy, social rights, environmental protection, territorial participation, and public control. The objective should not be to copy China, but to recover the idea that technological development is a political project.

Brazil has already had experiences of mission-oriented innovation, such as Embraer, tropical agriculture associated with Embrapa, public health in certain technological fronts, Petrobras in deep waters, and the aerospace complex of São José dos Campos. These experiences show that the country does not need to passively import models. It needs to reconstruct innovation as a democratic, productive, and territorial mission.

Table 14 - What China Teaches Against the Myths of Innovation

Myth	What the Myth Claims	What China Shows
Garage Myth	Innovation is born from individual genius	Innovation depends on the State, universities, industry, and scale
Café Myth	Amenities attract talent and create innovation	Talent depends on missions, wages, laboratories, and firms
"If You Build It, They Will Come"	Physical infrastructure summons firms and brains	Parks work when articulated with industrial policy
Icon Myth	Futuristic landscapes reposition cities	Image without productive base is insufficient
Wall Phrases	Individual attitude produces success	Strategy, financing, and coordination matter more
Ranking Myth	Rising in indicators equals capability development	Real capability depends on technological and productive mastery
Copying-as-Backwardness Myth	Copying is the opposite of innovation	Latecomer learning may begin with imitation and adaptation

14.15 Final Remarks

China is an unavoidable case for any reflection on innovation, territory, and power in the twenty-first century. Its experience shows that technology parks, science cities, and innovation zones cannot be explained by creative urbanism, startup culture, or individual entrepreneurship. They are spatial expressions of a national project of modernization, productive learning, industrial policy, and technological sovereignty.

The Chinese trajectory demonstrates that innovation requires the State, mission, scale, industry, universities, financing, infrastructure, and time. It also shows that manufacturing matters, that copying can be a stage of learning, that talent needs a horizon, and that territorial form only gains meaning when articulated with a productive strategy.

But China also reveals contradictions. Its model produced inequalities, displacement, environmental pressure, social control, and geopolitical tensions. Therefore, it should not be converted into a new gospel. The objective is not to replace the myth of Silicon Valley with the myth of China. The objective is to learn critically.

For the Global South, the main lesson is clear: it is not enough to build technology parks, create hubs, organize hackathons, or paint motivational phrases on walls. Innovation must be part of a national and territorial project. It must respond to collective missions. It must build productive capabilities. It must train people, finance science, articulate universities and firms, and generate public return.

Without industry, innovation becomes dependence. Without the State, it becomes fragmented. Without mission, it becomes a slogan. Without democracy, it can become control. The challenge is to build another path: a democratic, mission-oriented, socially just, and territorially rooted innovation policy.

15. Brazil

Technology Parks, the Technical-Scientific-Informational Milieu, and the Contradictions of Innovation

Brazil occupies a strategic place in this book because it reveals, perhaps more clearly than any other case, the tension between the global language of innovation and the structural conditions of a peripheral, unequal, and partially deindustrialized country. Unlike the United States, Brazil did not consolidate a Silicon Valley-type digital capitalism. Unlike China, it did not build a long-term developmental strategy capable of articulating technology parks, industrial policy, public procurement, national firms, scale, and technological sovereignty. Unlike Barcelona, it did not transform innovation districts into a globally consolidated urban brand. Yet Brazil is not absent from innovation.

This combination makes the Brazilian case especially interesting. The country is not devoid of innovation; it is marked by innovation that is fragmented, unequal, sectorally concentrated, and frequently disconnected from a national development project. Brazil has Embraer, Embrapa, Petrobras in deep waters, Fiocruz, Butantan, public universities, a graduate education system, FAPESP, Finep, BNDES, Senai, technology parks, and relevant regional ecosystems. At the same time, it lives with deindustrialization, technological dependence, low average private investment in research and development, regional inequalities, macroeconomic instability, labor precarization, and the absence of durable national missions (CANO, 2012; SUZIGAN; ALBUQUERQUE, 2011; DE NEGRI, 2017).

The Brazilian case therefore allows us to formulate a central question: what happens when the global language of innovation - technology parks, hubs, startups, creative districts, knowledge economy, smart cities, hackathons, and pitches - reaches a country that has not yet fully resolved its industrial, urban, social, and technological deficits?

The hypothesis of this chapter is that, in Brazil, many innovation projects import the form, vocabulary, and aesthetics of global ecosystems, but face structural limits linked to deindustrialization, territorial inequality, fragile industrial policy, and fragmented public funding.

15.1 The Technical-Scientific-Informational Milieu and Brazilian Innovation

To understand innovation in Brazil, it is indispensable to return to Milton Santos's category of the **technical-scientific-informational milieu**. For Santos, the contemporary period is marked by the integration of technique, science, and information, so that territory is reorganized by increasingly dense technical systems connected to the logics of globalization (SANTOS, 1996; SANTOS, 2000).

This category is very important because it prevents us from thinking of innovation only as a business or technological product. Innovation is territorial. It depends on transportation networks, energy, telecommunications, universities, laboratories, firms, information, finance, norms, logistics systems, urban infrastructure, and command capacity. The technical-scientific-informational milieu is not distributed homogeneously across territory. On the contrary, it is selective, concentrated, and unequal (SANTOS; SILVEIRA, 2001).

In Brazil, this selectivity is evident. Technical and scientific density is concentrated in certain regions, especially in the Southeast and in some specific poles in the South, Northeast, and Center-West. Universities, research centers, innovative firms, logistics infrastructure, and advanced services are not distributed equally across the national territory. This territorial inequality strongly conditions the location of technology parks, incubators, startups, and innovation districts.

Therefore, before asking why certain cities are able or unable to create innovative ecosystems, it is necessary to ask what position they occupy within the Brazilian technical-scientific-informational milieu. Are there universities? Are there firms capable of absorbing knowledge? Is there infrastructure? Is there financing? Are there qualified workers? Is there public or private demand? Is there regional articulation? Is there industrial policy?

Without these conditions, innovation tends to remain a vocabulary rather than a territorial capacity.

Milton Santos's contribution thus allows us to criticize the fetish of form. A technology park does not, by itself, create a technical-scientific-informational milieu. It may express, intensify, or organize already existing relations, but it can hardly replace the absence of territorial density. The park is infrastructure; the technical-scientific-informational milieu is a system.

15.2 Deindustrialization and the Promise of Technological Reconversion

The rise of technology parks and discourses of innovation in Brazil must be analyzed in the context of deindustrialization. Since the 1980s, and more intensely from the 1990s onward, the country underwent deep changes associated with trade liberalization, productive restructuring, financialization, macroeconomic instability, exchange-rate appreciation in different periods, relative loss of industrial participation in output and employment, and the weakening of complex productive chains (CANO, 2012; BRESSER-PEREIRA; MARCONI; OREIRO, 2016).

Brazilian deindustrialization did not mean the complete disappearance of industry, but a loss of dynamism, sophistication, and capacity to induce the rest of the economy. This process is particularly serious because peripheral or semi-peripheral countries that lose industrial density before consolidating advanced technological sectors tend to face greater external dependence and lower capacity to generate qualified employment at scale (CANO, 2012; DE NEGRI, 2017).

In this context, innovation begins to appear as a promise of reconversion. If traditional industry loses strength, it would be necessary to invest in technology, startups, the creative economy, advanced services, technology parks, and entrepreneurship. This wager has some rationality. Brazil does need to increase its technological capacity, expand productivity, create new sectors, strengthen science, and bring universities and firms closer together.

The problem arises when innovation is presented as a substitute for industrial policy. Technology parks cannot compensate for the dismantling of productive chains. Startups cannot replace the absence of national firms in strategic sectors. Hackathons cannot replace long-term financing. Incubators cannot substitute for public procurement. Coworking spaces cannot rebuild technological sovereignty. Innovation, without industrial density, risks becoming a surface of modernization upon a fragile productive structure.

Therefore, the Brazilian challenge is not to move from industry to innovation, as if one replaced the other. The challenge is to reconstruct innovation through industry, science, public policy, infrastructure, and national missions.

15.3 Technology Parks and the Importation of the Global Form

Technology parks in Brazil were often inspired by international models that associate universities, firms, research centers, incubators, and specialized infrastructure. In theory, they should create favorable environments for technology-based firms, knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, and regional development. The model dialogues with the literature on science parks, innovation systems, clusters, and Triple Helix arrangements.

In Brazil, the diffusion of technology parks expressed both real aspirations and symbolic needs. On the one hand, universities and governments sought to create spaces capable of bringing research closer to production, retaining talent, attracting companies, and diversifying regional economies. On the other, technology parks also functioned as visible signs of modernity. They allowed cities and universities to state that they were entering the knowledge economy.

This ambiguity is central. The technology park may be an instrument of development, but it may also become a landscape of innovation. It may host firms, laboratories, and projects, but it may also function mainly as an institutional showcase. It may organize networks, but it may also remain dependent on public funding, isolated from industry, and weakly connected to regional demand.

The Brazilian case confirms one of the central theses of this book: it is not enough to import the form. The existence of a park does not guarantee an ecosystem. The construction of buildings does not guarantee knowledge circulation. The proximity between university and companies does not guarantee technological absorption. A brand of innovation does not guarantee innovation.

The decisive question is not whether the park exists, but what system sustains it.

15.4 The Incomplete Triple Helix

The Triple Helix model, formulated by Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, became one of the main references for innovation policy by emphasizing the interaction among university, industry, and government. In theory, these three spheres should interact continuously, producing knowledge, firms, patents, technological solutions, and regional development (ETZKOWITZ; LEYDESDORFF, 2000; ETZKOWITZ, 2008).

In Brazil, however, this helix often turns incompletely. The public university is strong in scientific production, human-resource training, and research, but faces budget restrictions, bureaucracies, funding instability, and contradictory pressures between public mission and market demands. Government acts through agencies such as Finep, CNPq, CAPES, FAPESP, BNDES, and state foundations, but often in a discontinuous, fragmented way, vulnerable to fiscal and political cycles. Industry, in turn, shows low average intensity of R&D investment, strong sectoral heterogeneity, and, in many cases, limited capacity to absorb scientific knowledge (SUZIGAN; ALBUQUERQUE, 2011; DE NEGRI, 2017).

This situation produces an asymmetric Triple Helix. The university often pushes the innovation agenda; the State partially finances it; but business demand is insufficient or concentrated in a few sectors. Without

innovative firms at scale, technology transfer finds limits. Without industrial policy, academic research may generate knowledge without finding national productive trajectories capable of incorporating it. Without continuous financing, promising projects do not cross the so-called "valley of death" between research and market.

The incomplete helix also manifests itself territorially. A technology park may have university and government, but few firms. It may have firms, but weak connection with research. It may have incubators, but little capital. It may have physical spaces, but no regional technological demand. It may have events, but little production.

In this sense, Brazil reveals the limits of vulgarizing the Triple Helix. It is not enough to place university, industry, and government at the same table. It is necessary to build institutional density, trust, financing, markets, productive capacity, and missions.

15.5 São José dos Campos: Territorial Mission, Aeronautics, and Innovation

São José dos Campos is one of the most strategic cases for understanding Brazilian innovation. Its trajectory was not born from the simple importation of the contemporary vocabulary of technology parks, startups, hubs, or innovation districts. It is rooted in a national mission: building aeronautical and aerospace capacity in Brazil.

The presence of ITA, CTA/DCTA, INPE, Embraer, the defense industry, engineering training, research institutes, and technology-based companies created a technical-scientific-industrial density that distinguishes São José dos Campos from many other Brazilian territories. In this case, innovation was not simply urban branding. It was associated with State action, technical training, public demand, research, engineering, and industrial construction.

The creation of Embraer in 1969, linked to the trajectory of the Bandeirante aircraft and to the formation of aeronautical capacity around ITA and CTA, is one of the clearest examples of mission-oriented innovation in Brazil. It shows that national capability does not emerge spontaneously from the market. It requires institutions, engineers, laboratories, State demand, public procurement, risk, and long-term vision.

São José dos Campos also shows that the territory of innovation is historical. The city did not become technological because it inaugurated an innovation arch or a technology park. These later symbols communicate a trajectory whose roots are deeper. The territorial identity of innovation is built upon decades of institutional accumulation.

This makes the case powerful, but also contradictory. The city may use its technological history for branding, real estate valorization, and urban image. The challenge is to ensure that the symbolic capital of innovation remains connected to public mission, productive capacity, social inclusion, and territorial justice. A city can be technologically advanced and socially unequal. Innovation history does not automatically guarantee democratic development.

15.6 Porto Digital: Originality and Contradiction

Porto Digital, in Recife, is one of the most important Brazilian experiences of urban innovation. Unlike many technology parks located in peripheral areas or university campuses, Porto Digital was structured in

the historic center of Recife, especially in the Bairro do Recife. Instead of creating a distant enclave, the project invested in the reactivation of a historical territory.

In this sense, it approaches the logic of urban innovation districts, although it has its own trajectory strongly rooted in the Pernambuco context. Porto Digital demonstrates that Brazil can produce original experiences, not merely copies of Silicon Valley. Its institutional arrangement sought to articulate public authorities, universities, firms, and support organizations, creating a favorable environment for information and communication technology. This confirms that innovation ecosystems depend on institutional mediation, not only physical infrastructure (ETZKOWITZ, 2008; LACERDA; FERNANDES, 2015).

At the same time, the case raises critical questions. Urban requalification associated with innovation can produce real estate appreciation, territorial selectivity, and tension between the technological economy and popular uses of the historic center. The question is similar to that of 22@ Barcelona: how can one ensure that a technology district in a central area contributes to the city as a whole, and not only to specific segments of the creative and digital economy?

Porto Digital is therefore a positive and contradictory case. It shows that Brazil can construct innovation environments rooted in local history, governance, and urban territory. But it also shows that urban innovation must be accompanied by policies of inclusion, housing, permanence, social diversity, and articulation with public missions.

15.7 Campinas, São Carlos, and University Density

Campinas and São Carlos are important examples of territories with strong university and scientific density. Campinas has Unicamp, CPqD, technology firms, research centers, and a trajectory linked to telecommunications, computing, biotechnology, health, and industry. São Carlos, in turn, brings together public universities, research centers, technology-based firms, incubators, and strong training in engineering, computing, materials, physics, chemistry, and related fields (SUZIGAN; ALBUQUERQUE, 2011; ANPROTEC, 2019).

These cases show that territorial innovation in Brazil is frequently associated with the presence of public universities and scientific institutions. The university functions as an anchor for talent formation, knowledge production, firm creation, and investment attraction. This confirms the importance of the scientific base within the Brazilian technical-scientific-informational milieu.

However, these territories also reveal limits. University presence does not, by itself, guarantee regional productive transformation. Often, there is strong scientific production, but low absorption capacity by local firms. Researchers trained in university cities may migrate to other markets. Firms may remain small and dependent on public calls. Articulation with national productive chains may be fragile.

Thus, Campinas and São Carlos show the importance of not confusing academic density with a complete ecosystem. The university is a fundamental condition, but it must be accompanied by firms, financing, markets, public policies, infrastructure, and missions. Otherwise, the city may train talents who will be captured by other territories or countries.

15.8 Technology Parks and Real Estate Rent

One of the recurring risks of technology parks is the conversion of innovation into real estate rent. The language of innovation valorizes territory. Land, buildings, neighborhoods, former industrial areas, and zones close to universities begin to be seen as strategic assets. The promise of attracting companies, talents, and investments raises expectations about land value.

This dynamic is not exclusive to Brazil. Zukin shows that the innovation complex articulates technology, capital, and urban land, producing effects on real estate markets and urban transformations (ZUKIN, 2020). Harvey, when discussing urban entrepreneurialism, also shows how local governments began to act in the promotion of urban projects oriented toward competitiveness and territorial valorization (HARVEY, 1989).

In Brazil, this risk is particularly relevant because many technology parks involve public land, university areas, State investments, infrastructure works, and incentives. When these investments produce territorial valorization, it becomes necessary to ask who captures the gains. Does the public investment return to society? Are there mechanisms to capture real estate appreciation? Are local communities included? Are jobs created at scale? Are productive capabilities strengthened? Or does the innovation discourse mainly legitimate land valorization?

Norma Lacerda's work on technology parks and real estate rent is important precisely because it reveals this tension. Innovation can be a productive strategy, but it can also become a language for legitimizing territorial valorization (LACERDA, 2015). The technology park, in this case, must be analyzed not only as science and technology policy, but also as urban and land policy.

The critical issue is not to reject the real estate dimension. Every park occupies land and requires buildings. The issue is to subordinate land valorization to public mission. If public investment increases land value, part of that value should finance infrastructure, housing, training, research, and social return. Otherwise, society finances the innovation landscape while private actors capture the rent.

15.9 Startups, Precarization, and the Entrepreneurial Subject

The Brazilian discourse on innovation has also strongly incorporated the language of startups. Young entrepreneurs, pitch competitions, acceleration programs, venture capital, incubators, university challenges, and innovation events became central elements of the national ecosystem.

This movement has positive aspects. It can stimulate initiative, connect students with real problems, create companies, diversify the economy, and bring scientific knowledge closer to society. Many startups develop relevant solutions in health, education, agriculture, logistics, finance, urban management, climate, and social impact.

But the startup discourse also carries risks, especially in a country marked by unemployment, informality, and precarization. Not every entrepreneur is a Schumpeterian innovator. Many so-called entrepreneurs are workers pushed into self-employment by necessity. The language of entrepreneurship may conceal the transfer of risks to individuals. The app driver, delivery worker, precarious service provider, indebted small business owner, or informal worker may be celebrated as an entrepreneur, while the loss of labor rights is hidden.

This is especially serious when the entrepreneurial vocabulary replaces debates on employment, wages, industrial policy, and social protection. Innovation policy cannot be confused with the moralization of self-employment. A country does not become innovative by calling precarious workers entrepreneurs.

A democratic innovation policy must distinguish between technology-based entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, survival entrepreneurship, and labor precarization. Each requires different public policies. To treat them all under the same label is ideological confusion.

15.10 Funding Without Mission

Brazil has important funding institutions. Finep, BNDES, FAPESP, CNPq, CAPES, state research foundations, public universities, and sectoral funds have played relevant roles in science, technology, innovation, and productive development. The problem is not the absence of institutions, but the discontinuity, fragmentation, and insufficient articulation among them.

Public funding often appears in the form of calls, programs, scholarships, credit lines, subsidies, and isolated projects. These instruments are necessary, but they do not automatically constitute a mission-oriented innovation policy. Without strategic direction, funding may become dispersed. It supports good projects, but does not necessarily build national capabilities.

Mazzucato's contribution is central here. Mission-oriented innovation requires the State to define major problems, mobilize actors, coordinate instruments, take risks, and negotiate forms of social return (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021). Funding should not merely respond to spontaneous project demand; it should help construct trajectories.

In Brazil, this means asking: which missions should guide innovation? Climate adaptation? Public health? Sanitation? Green reindustrialization? Digital sovereignty? Semiconductors? Medical equipment? Social housing? Urban mobility? Food security? Bioeconomy? Amazon protection? Energy transition? Aerospace? Defense? Public education?

Without mission, the State finances fragments. With mission, it builds capabilities.

15.11 Brazil Against the Myths of Innovation

The Brazilian case allows us to revisit the myths discussed in this book.

Against the **Garage Myth**, Brazil shows that isolated entrepreneurial heroism is insufficient in a country with deep inequalities, technological dependence, and fragile productive chains. Entrepreneurs matter, but they need universities, financing, markets, infrastructure, and public policy.

Against the **Café Myth**, Brazil shows that urban amenities do not replace wages, careers, macroeconomic stability, and industrial strategy. A city may have cafés and coworking spaces, but still lose talent because it lacks professional opportunities.

Against the **"If You Build It, They Will Come" Myth**, Brazil shows that technology parks and innovation districts cannot consolidate themselves without firms, demand, funding, governance, and missions. Physical infrastructure is not enough.

Against the **Icon Myth**, Brazil shows that arches, towers, buildings, and landmarks can communicate innovation, but they do not create it. They must express a real trajectory, not compensate for its absence.

Against the **wall pedagogy of innovation**, Brazil shows that individual motivation cannot replace collective structures. "Be resilient" is not an industrial policy. "Fail fast" is not social protection. "Think different" is not technological sovereignty.

15.12 Mission-Oriented Innovation for Brazil

Brazil does not need less innovation. It needs more serious innovation. Innovation connected to territory, public problems, productive capacity, and social justice. Innovation able to confront the country's historical challenges: sanitation, housing, public health, education, mobility, climate adaptation, food security, energy transition, Amazon protection, technological sovereignty, and regional inequality.

The Brazilian tradition offers important references. Embraer shows the importance of State, engineering, public demand, and territorial mission. Embrapa shows the role of scientific research in transforming tropical agriculture. Petrobras in deep waters shows the relevance of technological capability in strategic sectors. Fiocruz and Butantan show the importance of public institutions in health. Public universities and FAPESP show the strength of long-term scientific investment.

These examples indicate that Brazil has already produced mission-oriented innovation. The problem is that these experiences have often been fragmented, discontinued, or disconnected from a broader national strategy.

A Brazilian innovation policy for the twenty-first century should articulate technology parks, universities, firms, municipalities, funding agencies, public procurement, and social missions. Parks and districts should not be abandoned, but reoriented. They should serve as territorial instruments for missions, not as showcases of global vocabulary.

15.13 Toward a Brazilian Path

A Brazilian path to innovation cannot be based on imitation. It should learn from Silicon Valley, Barcelona, and China, but without copying them. From Silicon Valley, it can learn the importance of universities, networks, venture capital, and entrepreneurial culture - but also the centrality of the State and the risks of inequality. From Barcelona, it can learn the importance of urban integration, heritage, and innovation districts - but also the dangers of gentrification and branding. From China, it can learn the importance of industrial policy, scale, and mission - but without adopting authoritarianism or suppressing democratic debate.

The Brazilian path must begin from its own territory. It must ask what problems require innovation in a country marked by continental scale, deep regional inequalities, urban deficits, environmental vulnerability, industrial fragility, and rich scientific institutions. It must begin not from the question "how can we become the next Silicon Valley?", but from another: **which technologies does Brazil need in order to become a more just, sovereign, productive, and sustainable country?**

This inversion changes everything. It shifts the focus from imitation to mission. From branding to capability. From ecosystem aesthetics to productive systems. From startup events to public problems. From imported models to territorial intelligence.

Table 15 - Brazilian Technology Parks: Potentials and Limits

Dimension	Potential	Limit
Public universities	Talent formation, research, scientific density	Low absorption by firms and underfunding
Technology parks	Territorial organization of innovation	Risk of becoming real estate showcases
Public funding	Support for research and technological development	Fragmentation and discontinuity
Triple Helix	Articulation among university, industry, and government	Asymmetry and weak business demand
São José dos Campos	Mission-oriented aeronautical innovation	Risk of branding disconnected from inclusion
Porto Digital	Original urban innovation district	Risk of real estate appreciation and selectivity
Campinas and São Carlos	Scientific and university density	Talent leakage and fragile productive absorption
Startup ecosystem	Entrepreneurship and new solutions	Confusion between innovation and precarization

15.14 Final Remarks

Brazil is a country of incomplete innovation. It has scientific institutions, technological islands, public universities, strategic firms, funding agencies, and important historical experiences. But it also has deindustrialization, inequality, dependence, fragmented funding, low private R&D intensity, and an unstable national project.

This contradiction makes the Brazilian case central for the critique of the evangelists of innovation. The country cannot afford to treat innovation as slogan, aesthetic, event, or real estate strategy. It cannot believe that parks, hubs, cafés, pitchs, hackathons, and motivational phrases will solve structural problems. It cannot import the visible forms of global ecosystems while neglecting the invisible infrastructures that sustain them.

Brazil needs innovation, but innovation with mission. Innovation rooted in the technical-scientific-informational milieu, aware of territorial inequalities, connected to industrial policy, supported by public universities, financed over the long term, oriented toward social problems, and committed to public return.

The Brazilian question is not whether to innovate. It is whether innovation will be reduced to a global vocabulary of modernization or transformed into a democratic project of development.

Without mission, the technology park becomes an address. Without industry, the startup becomes fragile. Without public policy, the ecosystem becomes rhetoric. Without social justice, innovation becomes ideology.

The challenge is to make innovation once again part of a national and territorial project - one capable of building productive capacities, reducing inequalities, and responding to the concrete problems of Brazilian society.

Part V - Innovation with Mission or Innovation as Slogan

16. When Innovation Loses Its Mission

Mazzucato, Finep, the Entrepreneurial State, and the Vulgarization of Entrepreneurship

The central dispute of this book can be summarized in a simple opposition: **innovation with mission** or **innovation as slogan**. Innovation with mission begins from collective problems, mobilizes institutions, builds capabilities, assumes public risks, orients investment, coordinates actors, and seeks social return. Innovation as slogan, by contrast, produces language, events, images, rankings, and expectations, but may remain disconnected from structural transformation.

This distinction is fundamental because innovation has become one of the most overused words in contemporary public policy. It appears in government programs, university reforms, corporate strategies, startup events, urban plans, technology parks, international reports, institutional missions, and electoral speeches. Almost everything can now be called innovative: a digital platform, a public management method, a coworking space, a hackathon, a new building, a social project, a city brand, or a business model.

The problem is not the expansion of the word itself. The problem is its emptying. When innovation is detached from mission, it ceases to name a process of collective capability building and becomes a sign of modernity. It begins to function as a seal, a label, an aesthetic, a vocabulary of legitimacy.

This chapter argues that one of the central tasks for the Global South is to recover the meaning of mission-oriented innovation. For this, Mariana Mazzucato's work is decisive. Her contribution allows us to understand that innovation does not emerge only from entrepreneurs, startups, venture capital, or creative districts. It depends on public risk, State direction, market creation, institutional coordination, and social return (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2018; 2021).

But Mazzucato herself can be vulgarized. Her idea of the entrepreneurial State can be reduced to a generic celebration of entrepreneurship, as if the State's role were merely to stimulate individual initiative or transform every worker into an entrepreneur of the self. This is the opposite of her argument. The entrepreneurial State is not the State that abandons workers to the market. It is the State that assumes strategic risk, creates markets, and orients innovation toward public missions.

16.1 The Entrepreneurial State Against the Myth of the Market

The dominant narrative of innovation often presents the private sector as dynamic, creative, and risk-taking, while the State appears as slow, bureaucratic, conservative, and merely regulatory. In this narrative, the entrepreneur creates the future, while the State gets in the way. Public policy should therefore reduce barriers, cut bureaucracy, protect property, and allow the market to innovate.

Mazzucato's work directly challenges this narrative. In *The Entrepreneurial State*, she shows that many of the most important technologies of contemporary capitalism were made possible by public investment, public procurement, basic research, defense programs, health missions, universities, and State agencies willing to assume risks that private capital would not take alone (MAZZUCATO, 2013).

The State did not merely correct market failures. It created markets. It financed uncertain research. It organized demand. It sustained technological trajectories. It supported capabilities before profitability was

evident. It made possible, directly or indirectly, technologies later captured and commercialized by private firms.

This argument is crucial for understanding Silicon Valley, but also for countries of the Global South. If innovation depends on public risk, then public policy cannot be reduced to creating a friendly environment for startups. It must define strategic missions, finance long-term research, coordinate institutions, stimulate productive sectors, use public procurement, protect workers, and negotiate mechanisms of social return.

The entrepreneurial State is not the minimal State. Nor is it merely the managerial State. It is the State as an agent of transformation.

16.2 Mission Is Not a Slogan

The word mission has also entered the vocabulary of innovation. Governments, companies, universities, startups, and foundations often declare missions. Some say their mission is to transform education, revolutionize mobility, democratize finance, connect people, improve health, or change the world.

But mission, in the strong sense, is not a motivational phrase. It is not a corporate slogan. It is not a statement of purpose printed on a wall. Mission is a political orientation that defines priorities, mobilizes resources, coordinates institutions, distributes responsibilities, and evaluates results according to public value.

Mission-oriented innovation begins with a collective problem: energy transition, climate adaptation, public health, sanitation, housing, mobility, food security, digital sovereignty, industrial decarbonization, or inequality reduction. It then asks: which scientific, technological, productive, institutional, and territorial capabilities must be built in order to confront this problem?

This is very different from asking: how many startups can we create? How many hackathons can we organize? How many patents can we register? How many companies can we attract to a district?

These indicators may matter, but they are secondary. The main criterion is whether innovation contributes to solving a public problem and building collective capabilities.

Mission gives direction to innovation. Without mission, innovation disperses.

16.3 Public Risk and Private Appropriation

One of the most important questions raised by Mazzucato concerns the relation between public risk and private reward. If the State finances research, trains workers, builds infrastructure, supports firms, assumes technological uncertainty, and creates markets, then society has the right to ask how it will participate in the gains.

This question is often absent from innovation policies. Public agencies finance research and technological development. Public universities train highly qualified professionals. Public banks provide credit. Research foundations support laboratories. Municipalities provide land and infrastructure. But when a company succeeds, the gains may be privatized, while the public contribution disappears from the narrative.

This is the same ideological mechanism of the garage myth. The entrepreneur appears as sole creator. The State appears only later, as tax collector or regulator. The collective history of innovation is erased.

A mission-oriented innovation policy must therefore include mechanisms of social return. These can take different forms: affordable prices, public equity participation, royalties, reinvestment obligations, local production requirements, open standards, public procurement with conditions, technology transfer, territorial counterparts, training commitments, or reinvestment in public funds.

The point is not to punish private success. The point is to recognize that when success depends on public risk, social return must be built into the agreement.

16.4 Finep, BNDES, and the Brazilian Question

Brazil has institutions capable of financing innovation. Finep has historically supported science, technology, and innovation through grants, credit, subsidies, and support for research and development. BNDES has played a central role in financing infrastructure, industry, productive transformation, and technological development. FAPESP, CNPq, CAPES, state foundations, public universities, and research institutes also form part of the Brazilian innovation system.

The problem is not the total absence of institutions. The problem is discontinuity, fragmentation, weak coordination, and the absence of a stable national mission. Brazil often has programs, calls, funds, credit lines, scholarships, and isolated initiatives, but lacks a long-term strategy capable of articulating these instruments around major public and productive challenges.

Funding without mission produces dispersion. It may support excellent projects, but not necessarily build national capability. It may finance innovation, but not necessarily change the productive structure. It may support firms, but not necessarily create technological sovereignty. It may produce papers, patents, prototypes, and startups, but not necessarily solve public problems.

This is why the Brazilian debate must move from the question "how can we finance more innovation?" to another: **what missions should orient Brazilian innovation?**

Climate adaptation, the SUS, sanitation, housing, green reindustrialization, food security, Amazon protection, energy transition, digital sovereignty, medical equipment, vaccines, urban mobility, resilient infrastructure, aerospace, and defense are not merely policy sectors. They can be missions capable of organizing scientific and technological efforts.

16.5 The State Is Not a Passive Financier

A frequent error in innovation policy is to treat the State as a passive financier. The State opens calls, receives proposals, evaluates projects, transfers resources, and waits for results. This model has value, especially for supporting scientific autonomy and decentralized creativity. But it is insufficient for mission-oriented innovation.

In mission-oriented policy, the State must do more than finance. It must coordinate. It must define problems. It must convene institutions. It must articulate universities, firms, public agencies, workers, communities, and territories. It must use procurement power. It must evaluate results. It must correct directions. It must build capabilities. It must negotiate social return.

This does not mean that the State should control everything or suppress experimentation. Missions require openness, learning, pluralism, and decentralized solutions. But they also require direction. Without direction, innovation becomes a collection of disconnected efforts.

The State that only funds responds to demand. The State that orients creates demand.

This is the central difference between innovation as subsidy and innovation as mission.

16.6 The Vulgarization of Entrepreneurship

One of the greatest ideological confusions of the contemporary period is the vulgarization of entrepreneurship. In its stronger meaning, entrepreneurship may involve the creation of new combinations, productive transformation, technological development, organizational innovation, and the opening of new markets. In its vulgarized form, however, entrepreneurship becomes any form of individual survival in the market.

The app driver becomes an entrepreneur. The delivery worker becomes an entrepreneur. The informal vendor becomes an entrepreneur. The unemployed worker who opens a small business out of necessity becomes an entrepreneur. The precarious professional who issues invoices without labor rights becomes an entrepreneur. The indebted worker becomes an entrepreneur of the self.

This semantic expansion is politically dangerous. It turns precarization into initiative. It transforms the withdrawal of rights into autonomy. It converts unemployment into opportunity. It shifts responsibility from structures to individuals.

Dardot and Laval show how neoliberal rationality produces subjects who must behave as enterprises of themselves, responsible for managing their own risks, skills, employability, failures, and performances (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2013). In Brazil, this logic meets a labor market historically marked by informality, inequality, and instability. The result is the moralization of precariousness.

A democratic innovation policy must distinguish between different forms of entrepreneurship. Technology-based entrepreneurship is one thing. Social entrepreneurship is another. Popular economic initiative is another. Necessity entrepreneurship is another. Labor precarization disguised as entrepreneurship is another.

To call all of them innovation is to erase social conflict.

16.7 Entrepreneurial State Versus Precarious Self-Entrepreneurship

The expression "entrepreneurial State" must therefore be protected from vulgarization. It does not mean a State that tells everyone to become entrepreneurs. It does not mean public policy reduced to startup competitions. It does not mean replacing labor rights with individual initiative. It does not mean transforming unemployment into business opportunity.

The entrepreneurial State, in Mazzucato's sense, is the opposite of abandonment. It is the State that assumes collective risk so that society does not depend only on fragmented individual risks. It is the State that creates markets, directs investment, builds capabilities, and links innovation to missions.

Precarious self-entrepreneurship transfers risk downward. Mission-oriented public innovation socializes risk upward, through institutions capable of organizing collective responses.

This distinction is fundamental for Brazil. A country cannot face technological dependence, deindustrialization, climate crisis, health challenges, housing deficits, or urban inequalities by telling individuals to reinvent themselves. It needs public institutions, productive strategy, labor protection, territorial planning, and long-term financing.

The entrepreneurial State is not the State of the self-employed individual. It is the State of collective capability.

16.8 Innovation Without Industrial Policy

Innovation without industrial policy tends to become fragile. Startups may emerge, but have difficulty scaling. Universities may produce research, but firms may not absorb it. Technology parks may exist, but lack productive chains. Patents may be registered, but not transformed into national technological capacity. Public funding may support projects, but not change the country's position in global value chains.

Industrial policy is often treated as old-fashioned by the evangelists of the new economy. But China, South Korea, Germany, the United States, and other experiences show that technological development depends on sectoral strategies, public procurement, industrial upgrading, supplier development, standards, financing, and coordination.

The Global South cannot leap directly from deindustrialization to the digital economy through apps, pitches, and coworking spaces. It must build productive capacity. It must know how to produce machines, equipment, components, medicines, vaccines, chips, sensors, aircraft, buses, trains, renewable energy systems, medical devices, public technologies, and urban infrastructure.

Innovation without production becomes dependence. Industrial policy without innovation becomes stagnation. The challenge is to connect both.

16.9 Mission and Territory

Mission-oriented innovation must be territorialized. Missions do not happen in the abstract. Climate adaptation occurs in cities, river basins, coastal areas, rural territories, forests, and vulnerable neighborhoods. Public health depends on laboratories, hospitals, primary care units, logistics, local manufacturing, data systems, and territorial surveillance. Sanitation depends on infrastructure, watersheds, engineering, housing, and municipal capacity. Energy transition depends on grids, industries, regions, workers, and land.

Technology parks and innovation districts can play an important role if they are connected to territorial missions. A park oriented toward climate adaptation can articulate universities, municipalities, civil defense, engineering firms, data platforms, communities, and public agencies. A health innovation district can connect universities, hospitals, laboratories, public procurement, medical equipment firms, and the SUS. A green industrial park can support renewable energy, circular economy, low-carbon materials, and worker training.

The problem is when parks are defined before missions. First, a building is constructed; then one asks what it will do. Mission-oriented innovation reverses the order: first define the public problem; then build the institutional, technological, and territorial infrastructure needed to confront it.

The territory is not the scenery of innovation. It is where the mission becomes real.

16.10 The Return of Public Value

Innovation policy must recover the idea of public value. It is not enough for a project to be technologically sophisticated or profitable. It must be evaluated according to its contribution to collective life: does it improve public health? Does it reduce inequalities? Does it create dignified jobs? Does it strengthen national capabilities? Does it protect the environment? Does it democratize access? Does it produce territorial justice? Does it return value to society?

This does not mean that every innovation must be public in the narrow sense. Private companies are fundamental. Markets matter. Competition can stimulate improvement. Entrepreneurs can create solutions. But when public resources, public infrastructure, public universities, and public risks are involved, public value must be explicit.

Public value is not automatic. It must be designed into policy. It requires conditions, contracts, governance, evaluation, participation, and mechanisms of return.

Without public value, innovation becomes private accumulation with public subsidy.

16.11 When Mission Disappears

When mission disappears, innovation is reduced to fragments.

The university creates a startup, but the country does not build a sector.
The city inaugurates a hub, but does not solve a public problem.
The government finances a call, but does not articulate a trajectory.
The company launches a platform, but precarizes workers.
The park attracts firms, but does not produce territorial development.
The event mobilizes young people, but leaves no institution behind.
The landmark communicates the future, but does not build it.

This is the danger of innovation without mission: everything appears modern, but little becomes structural. There is movement, but no direction. There is language, but no project. There are initiatives, but no system. There are opportunities, but no guarantee of collective benefit.

The Global South cannot afford this dispersion. Its problems are too deep, its resources too scarce, and its inequalities too large. Innovation must be oriented.

16.12 Replacing the Question

The central task is to replace the question that organizes innovation policy.

Instead of asking:
How can we create more startups?

Ask:
Which public problems require new technological, productive, and institutional capabilities?

Instead of asking:
How can we attract the creative class?

Ask:
How can we train, remunerate, and retain people in missions that matter to society?

Instead of asking:
How can we build an innovation district?

Ask:
Which territorial infrastructure is necessary to solve our collective challenges?

Instead of asking:
How can we rise in rankings?

Ask:
Which capabilities must be built to reduce dependence and inequality?

Instead of asking:
How can we stimulate entrepreneurship?

Ask:
How can we distinguish productive innovation from precarious self-employment?

This change of question is the beginning of a serious innovation policy.

Table 16 - Innovation Without Mission and Innovation With Mission

Innovation Without Mission	Innovation With Mission
Dispersed calls and isolated projects	Strategic coordination around public problems
Startup as an end in itself	Startup as one possible instrument
Technology park as showcase	Technology park as territorial infrastructure for missions
Public funding without social return	Public risk linked to public value
Entrepreneurship as individual survival	Entrepreneurship linked to productive transformation
Innovation measured only by patents and rankings	Innovation evaluated by capabilities, justice, and social impact
State as passive financier	State as mission-oriented coordinator
University pressured to commercialize knowledge	University connected to public value and autonomy

16.13 Final Remarks

When innovation loses its mission, it becomes slogan. It becomes a word capable of legitimizing almost anything: events, buildings, districts, policies, companies, rankings, platforms, and motivational speeches. It produces enthusiasm, but not necessarily direction. It produces images, but not necessarily capabilities. It produces opportunities, but not necessarily justice.

Mariana Mazzucato's contribution is essential because it restores the political density of innovation. She shows that the State has historically assumed risks, created markets, financed radical technologies, and oriented trajectories. More importantly, she insists that innovation must be connected to missions and public value (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021).

For Brazil and the Global South, this lesson is decisive. It is not enough to create parks, hubs, startups, hackathons, or innovation districts. It is necessary to define missions capable of confronting structural problems: health, climate, sanitation, housing, mobility, energy, food, industry, digital sovereignty, and inequality.

Innovation must cease to be the ornament of modernization and become the method of collective transformation. It must reconnect State, university, industry, territory, labor, financing, and public purpose.

Without mission, innovation is faith without project. With mission, innovation can become development.

17. The Electric Shower and the Bandeirante

Two Brazilian Missions of Social and Territorial Innovation

Socially relevant innovation is not necessarily the most spectacular, digital, or profitable kind of innovation. It is the kind that responds to a collective need within a specific historical, territorial, and productive context.

This chapter proposes a displacement. After discussing the evangelists of innovation, the myths of the garage, the café, the icon, technology districts, hackathons, startups, and technology parks, it becomes necessary to ask: **which Brazilian innovations emerged not from the imitation of global models, but from concrete responses to national problems?**

Two experiences help answer this question: the **electric shower**, associated with Francisco Canhos, in Jaú, and the **Bandeirante aircraft**, developed in São José dos Campos through the articulation between ITA, CTA, the Brazilian State, and Embraer. At first glance, they are very different objects. One belongs to domestic life, to the bathroom, bathing, hygiene, health, and residential infrastructure. The other belongs to the aerospace industry, territorial integration, defense, regional transportation, and the construction of a technology company of global scale.

Yet both share something decisive: they are Brazilian innovations oriented toward concrete territorial needs. The electric shower responded to the problem of hot bathing in a continental country undergoing rapid urbanization, without a broad residential gas network and with significant availability of electricity. The Bandeirante responded to the problem of air integration in a continental country, marked by vast distances, uneven airport infrastructure, and the need for robust, versatile aircraft suitable for small and medium-sized cities.

These two cases allow us to recover one of the central ideas of this book: innovation is not only disruption, startup, unicorn, pitch, or digital technology. Innovation is also **sociotechnical adequacy**. It is the capacity to produce a historically situated, territorially appropriate, and socially necessary solution.

17.1 Innovation with Mission, Not Glamour

The contemporary gospel of innovation tends to value what appears new, scalable, digital, profitable, and spectacular. The fast-growing startup, the application with millions of users, the unicorn that receives billion-dollar investments, the founder pitching to investors, the glass hub, the technology district with cafés and bicycles, the iconic building, and the motivational phrase on the wall have become privileged images of innovation.

But this aesthetic produces a misleading hierarchy. It makes it seem that the most important innovation is the one with the greatest media visibility, the highest market value, or the greatest capacity to attract venture capital. Yet many of the most socially relevant innovations are not spectacular. They are relatively simple technical solutions, adapted to real needs, incorporated into everyday life, and capable of improving the lives of millions of people.

Mazzucato insists that innovation should be thought through public missions - that is, major collective challenges capable of orienting the State, firms, universities, financing, and productive capabilities

(MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021). A mission is not merely an abstract intention. It is a historical direction: to solve a relevant problem, build capabilities, and produce social return.

In this sense, the electric shower and the Bandeirante can be read as two Brazilian missions. The first democratized, to a significant extent, access to hot bathing under infrastructural conditions compatible with twentieth-century urban Brazil. The second helped construct Brazilian aeronautical capacity and respond to the territorial challenge of connecting a continental country. Neither was created to win a pitch. Both emerged from concrete problems.

17.2 Francisco Canhos, Jaú, and the Electric Shower

The history of the Brazilian electric shower is associated with **Francisco Canhos Navarro**, from Jaú, in the interior of São Paulo. Technical and divulgation literature attributes to Canhos the development of a modern and automatic model of electric shower, capable of turning on with the passage of water through the use of a diaphragm that activated electrical contacts and allowed instantaneous heating (ARAÚJO; SILVA; ANDRADE, 2023).

The importance of the electric shower does not lie only in the device itself. It lies in its adequacy to the Brazilian territory. In countries with consolidated urban infrastructure, gas networks, and central heating systems, domestic hot water was historically solved through other technologies. In Brazil, however, urban expansion took place amid enormous infrastructural inequalities. Piped gas never became universal as a broad residential solution. At the same time, urban electrification advanced as one of the foundations of everyday modernization.

The electric shower was therefore a **point-of-use heating solution**. Instead of requiring boilers, central heaters, gas networks, or complex hot-water distribution systems, the device heated water at the moment of bathing, directly in the bathroom. This reduced the need for sophisticated prior infrastructure and made hot bathing more accessible to popular households, especially in a country of accelerated urbanization and unequal infrastructure (ARAÚJO; SILVA; ANDRADE, 2023).

Canhos's innovation should not be read only as an individual invention. It should be understood as a situated response to a sociotechnical conjuncture: urban expansion, electrification, the absence of universal piped gas, the need for hygiene, the growing value of bathing, the popularization of domestic equipment, and the search for low-cost solutions. The electric shower is, in this sense, a Brazilian technology of territorial adequacy.

17.3 Hot Bathing, Public Health, and Urbanization

The history of the electric shower should also be read through the relation between bathing, hygiene, and health. The consolidation of bathing as an everyday practice is linked to modern urbanization, medicine, the diffusion of hygienic norms, the construction of domestic bathrooms, and the expansion of urban infrastructures of water and energy. Araújo, Silva, and Andrade (2023) recall that, from the late nineteenth century onward, bathing became more common due to the development of medicine and the valorization of hygiene as a form of disease prevention.

The electric shower participates in this process. It allows hot bathing to cease depending on a stove, firewood, boiler, external heater, or prior preparation of water. In everyday terms, this means comfort,

hygiene, health, and time savings. In social terms, it means a partial democratization of a condition of well-being: access to heated bathing.

The word "partial" is important. The electric shower does not, by itself, solve inequalities in sanitation, housing, or access to water. There is no dignified bath without water supply, sewage, an adequate bathroom, safe electrical installation, and housing in minimally appropriate conditions. But within these limits, the electric shower became a solution compatible with Brazilian urban reality.

This is the difference between **adequate innovation** and **abstract innovation**. Abstract innovation is imported as form, without considering local conditions. Adequate innovation responds to the material conditions of the territory. The electric shower responds to Brazil not because it is technologically more sophisticated than other heating systems, but because it combines simplicity, relatively low cost, decentralized installation, and the use of available electricity.

It is a simple technology, but a deeply territorial one.

17.4 The Diaphragm as Technical Intelligence

One of the central elements of the modern electric shower is its automatic activation through the passage of water. The functioning described by Araújo, Silva, and Andrade (2023) involves water pressure acting on a diaphragm, which activates electrical contacts and allows current to pass through the resistance. As water circulates through the device, it is heated by the Joule effect - that is, by the transformation of electrical energy into heat in the resistance (ARAÚJO; SILVA; ANDRADE, 2023).

This mechanism is technically simple, but conceptually brilliant. It solves a problem of safety and practicality: heating occurs only when there is water flow. Opening the shower valve activates the system. The user does not need to turn on a heater in advance, wait for the water to warm up, or operate a complex system. The hydraulic infrastructure of bathing itself activates the electrical infrastructure of heating.

The diaphragm is therefore a small technical intelligence. It articulates water, electricity, pressure, resistance, and everyday use. It is a solution at the interface between systems. It is not an algorithm. It is not artificial intelligence. It is not a digital platform. But it is intelligence embodied in an object.

This observation is important for criticizing the contemporary fetish of digital innovation. Many relevant innovations are mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, material, organizational, or institutional. Not every innovation needs software. Not every innovation needs to scale through an application. Not every innovation needs to capture data. Sometimes innovation lies in solving an everyday problem well for millions of people.

The electric shower is a humble technology. But its humility is its strength.

17.5 The Electric Shower Against the Myth of Glamorous Innovation

The electric shower does not fit comfortably into the aesthetics of the evangelists of innovation. It was not born in a glass hub. It was not presented at a demo day. It did not depend on venture capital. It did not promise to "disrupt" the global bathing market. It was not accompanied by storytelling about unicorns. It did not become a symbol of the creative class. It did not produce an iconic tower. It did not generate a technology district.

And yet it is one of the most important innovations of Brazilian everyday life.

It is present in domestic life, in bathing, hygiene, comfort, health, and the routines of millions of people. Its importance is not measured by the market value of a startup, but by its massive incorporation into social life.

This observation displaces the question of innovation. Instead of asking, "which innovation produces the most glamour?", we should ask: **which innovation responds best to a collective need?** Instead of asking, "which solution scales fastest in the market?", we should ask: **which solution best adapts to the social, technical, and territorial conditions of the country?**

The electric shower also allows Brazil to be thought of in a less colonized way. The question is not why Brazil did not create the next Google or the next Apple. The question is to recognize that the country created its own solutions, adequate to its territory, some of which remain invisible because they do not correspond to the dominant aesthetics of innovation.

The electric shower is popular, domestic, and infrastructural innovation. It is bathroom innovation, not stage innovation. Perhaps that is exactly why it deserves to be taken seriously.

17.6 São José dos Campos: State, Technique, and Territory

The second Brazilian mission analyzed in this chapter is the **Bandeirante**. To understand it, it is necessary to situate São José dos Campos as a strategic territory of national technology. The city consolidated itself as an aerospace pole through the presence of institutions such as the Centro Técnico Aeroespacial - later the Departamento de Ciência e Tecnologia Aeroespacial - the Instituto Tecnológico de Aeronáutica, and later Embraer.

ITA is a public institution linked to the Brazilian Air Force and located in São José dos Campos, forming the basis for the training of highly qualified engineers for the Brazilian aerospace sector. The trajectory of São José dos Campos demonstrates that territorial innovation depends on institutions. The city did not become an aerospace pole because it created cafés, coworking spaces, or city branding campaigns. It became an aerospace pole because it received strategic institutions of training, research, engineering, defense, and production. Its technological base was built through State, science, technique, industry, and national mission.

This trajectory is close to the notion of a national innovation system, according to which innovation depends on the articulation of institutions, firms, universities, public policies, learning, and historical trajectory (FREEMAN, 1987; LUNDVALL, 1992; NELSON, 1993).

São José dos Campos is therefore not a generic innovative city. It is a territory of mission. Its innovation density does not derive from the adoption of global vocabulary, but from a long institutional construction connected to aeronautics, defense, engineering, and national integration.

17.7 The Bandeirante as Industrial Policy

The Bandeirante cannot be understood only as an aircraft. It must be read as an instrument for the construction of Brazilian aeronautical capacity. The development of the EMB-110 Bandeirante and the

creation of Embraer articulated technical training, State demand, engineering, institutional planning, and industrial ambition.

The literature on the Brazilian aeronautical industry emphasizes that the creation of Embraer responded to the need to overcome the fragility of the national productive structure in the aeronautical sector. The company was created as a mixed-capital State-owned enterprise linked to the Ministry of Aeronautics, with budgetary support, an initial order from the Brazilian Air Force, and a strong connection with CTA (FERREIRA, 2012).

This point is fundamental: the Bandeirante was not born merely as a product. It was born as industrial policy. The aircraft was a means to build national capacity in design, integration, manufacturing, certification, maintenance, suppliers, and competence formation. The mission was not only to make an airplane; it was to create a Brazilian aeronautical industry.

This completely changes the interpretation of innovation. The central question is not whether an object is technologically sophisticated in isolation, but whether it builds capabilities. The Bandeirante built capabilities. It helped transform knowledge into industry, engineering into production, and public mission into enterprise.

17.8 The Bandeirante and Territorial Integration

The name "Bandeirante" is revealing. It evokes the idea of inland expansion, movement, territorial penetration, and national integration. Despite the profound historical ambiguities associated with the figure of the bandeirantes, in the context of the aircraft the name mobilizes a narrative of connecting distant regions in a continental country.

Brazil is a territory of continental scale, marked by vast distances, regional inequalities, and heterogeneous infrastructure. For decades, national integration depended on roads, incomplete railways, river navigation, regional aviation, air mail, and State presence in remote regions. In this context, a robust aircraft, with low operating costs, capable of operating regional routes and serving small and medium-sized cities, had strategic function.

The relation with the **Correio Aéreo Nacional** is central to the interpretation proposed here. The CAN expresses a territorial mission of the Brazilian State: to connect, transport, supply, bring public presence, and integrate distant regions. The Bandeirante aircraft, in its military and civilian versions, belongs to this logic of integration. It is not only about market. It is about territory.

This dimension allows us to understand the Bandeirante as social and territorial innovation. Social because it expands connectivity, transportation, services, and State presence. Territorial because it responds to the problem of distances, unequal infrastructure, and the need to integrate regions poorly served by other means.

17.9 Public Demand and Market Creation

One of the most important aspects of the Embraer-Bandeirante case is the role of public demand. By ordering aircraft, the Brazilian Air Force helped make initial production viable. The State did not merely finance technical training and technological development; it also created a market. This is exactly the type of

mechanism emphasized by Mazzucato: the entrepreneurial State creates demand, assumes risks, and allows emerging technologies to cross the critical stage between project and production (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021).

Ferreira (2012) shows that, in the 1970s, the Brazilian State guaranteed initial demand for Embraer through aircraft orders from the Brazilian Air Force and later also stimulated civilian demand for the Bandeirante through the restructuring of regional aviation. This policy articulated defense, industry, and territorial integration (FERREIRA, 2012).

This point is decisive for the debate on innovation. Many contemporary discourses exalt the importance of the entrepreneur, but forget that complex products need initial buyers, certification, financing, and scale. In the aeronautical sector, this is even more evident. No company becomes globally competitive without demand, learning, tests, certification, engineering, and institutional support.

The Bandeirante shows that innovation is not only invention. It is the passage from invention to production. And this passage requires market, State, and strategy.

17.10 Innovation Without Glamour, But With Social Mission

The electric shower and the Bandeirante seem to occupy opposite ends of innovation. One is a simple domestic device; the other is a complex aircraft. One is in the bathroom; the other is in the sky. One operates at the residential scale; the other at the territorial and national scale. One heats water; the other shortens distances. But both have something in common: they respond to concrete Brazilian needs.

The electric shower responds to the need for hot bathing without a broad gas network and without expensive central systems. The Bandeirante responds to the need to integrate a continental country with uneven regional infrastructure. The first transforms everyday life. The second transforms territorial mobility. The first is innovation of comfort, health, and hygiene. The second is innovation of integration, industry, and sovereignty.

Both fit poorly with the contemporary glamour of innovation. The electric shower is too banal for the stages of disruption. The Bandeirante is too institutional for the garage myth. But that is precisely why both matter. They show that socially relevant innovation does not need to look modern in the eyes of global evangelists. It needs to solve problems.

This is the central critique of the startup fetish. Startups can be important, but they are not the universal form of innovation. The unicorn can generate financial value, but it is not necessarily the measure of social relevance. The pitch can communicate an idea, but it does not replace mission, industry, and territory.

17.11 The Contrast with the Startup Fetish

The contemporary culture of innovation tends to measure success through metrics such as accelerated growth, scalability, valuation, investment attraction, number of users, internationalization, and exit potential for investors. This logic makes sense within the world of venture capital, but it cannot be confused with public innovation policy.

The electric shower is not a unicorn. The Bandeirante was not born as a scalable startup. Both, however, produced social and territorial value. The electric shower became part of the everyday infrastructure of

bathing in Brazil. The Bandeirante helped build a national aeronautical company and consolidate strategic technological competencies.

The difference lies in the metric. Financial innovation asks: **how much is it worth?** Mission-oriented innovation asks: **what problem does it solve?** Market innovation asks: **how much does it scale?** Territorial innovation asks: **in what context does it work?** Pitch innovation asks: **how can it convince investors?** Public innovation asks: **what collective capabilities does it build?**

This does not mean despising startups. It means refusing their transformation into a fetish. Startups can participate in public missions, develop relevant technologies, and solve important problems. But they must be placed within larger strategies. Without mission, the startup becomes form. With mission, it can become instrument.

17.12 Innovation Adequate to the Brazilian Territory

The idea of **adequate innovation** is central to this chapter. Adequate innovation is not necessarily the most technologically advanced. It is the one that responds intelligently to the social, technical, environmental, economic, and territorial conditions of a given context.

The electric shower is adequate because it dialogues with electrification, the absence of universal piped gas, urbanization, climate, cost, and simplicity of installation. The Bandeirante is adequate because it dialogues with continental territory, regional distances, small runways, civilian and military demand, territorial integration, and the construction of an aeronautical industry.

This notion allows us to criticize the uncritical importation of models. Not every solution from the Global North serves Brazil. Not every model from Silicon Valley serves Jaú, São José dos Campos, Recife, Manaus, Diadema, Iguape, or the semi-arid region. The challenge is not to copy technologies, but to produce responses adequate to one's own problems.

This reading dialogues with Milton Santos, for whom technique, science, and information are unevenly territorialized and must be analyzed through the uses of territory (SANTOS, 1996; SANTOS; SILVEIRA, 2001). It also dialogues with Mazzucato by placing public mission back as the orientation of innovation (MAZZUCATO, 2021).

Adequate innovation is always territorialized. It asks: what infrastructure exists? Which population will be served? What costs are acceptable? What maintenance is possible? What productive capabilities can be mobilized? What collective problem is at stake?

17.13 Two Scales of Brazilian Innovation

The electric shower and the Bandeirante also represent two complementary scales of Brazilian innovation.

The first is the scale of domestic everyday life. At this scale, innovation enters the house, the bathroom, the body, bathing, hygiene, comfort, and health. This scale is often underestimated by grand discourses on technology, but it is fundamental. An innovation incorporated into daily life can transform social practices profoundly, even when it lacks spectacle.

The second is the scale of national territorial integration. At this scale, innovation articulates engineering, industry, the State, defense, transportation, regional development, and sovereignty. It does not act inside the household, but upon the territory. It connects regions, shortens distances, and builds industrial capabilities.

These two scales should not be opposed. They show that innovation may be simultaneously humble and strategic. It may exist in a showerhead and in an aircraft. It may heat water and connect territories. It may improve domestic comfort and construct national sovereignty.

The most important lesson is that the relevance of innovation does not depend on glamour, but on mission.

17.14 Lessons for Technology Parks and Innovation Districts

These two cases also offer lessons for technology parks and innovation districts. The first lesson is that the territory must be the starting point, not the scenery. Innovation should respond to concrete needs. A park or district should not begin by asking how to attract startups, but which problems it wants to solve.

The second lesson is that adequacy matters. Solutions must be compatible with infrastructure, costs, maintenance, culture of use, climate, income, markets, and local productive capacity.

The third lesson is that simplicity can be a virtue. Not every innovation needs to be sophisticated in order to be relevant. A simple, cheap, robust, and disseminable solution may produce greater social impact than a glamorous and inaccessible technology.

The fourth lesson is that the State matters. The Bandeirante shows that training, research, public demand, and industrial policy can create national capability. The electric shower shows that everyday innovations depend on broad infrastructure: electricity, water, housing, technical norms, and markets.

The fifth lesson is that innovation must build capabilities. Embraer was not merely the result of the Bandeirante; the Bandeirante was a means for forming an industry, a chain of competencies, and a global company.

17.15 What These Cases Teach the Global South

For the Global South, the electric shower and the Bandeirante teach that innovation must be judged by its historical and territorial adequacy. Peripheral countries should not measure their innovative capacity only by resemblance to Silicon Valley, by the number of unicorns, or by the presence of Instagrammable technology districts.

They should ask which technologies respond to their problems. In many cases, the necessary innovation will be less glamorous: decentralized sanitation, climate-adapted housing, urban drainage, regional transportation, public health, affordable medical equipment, social technologies, distributed energy, sustainable agriculture, environmental monitoring, public connectivity, and resilient infrastructure.

The electric shower and the Bandeirante show that Brazil has already produced innovation oriented by its own problems. The challenge is to recover this tradition at another historical level. This is not nostalgia. It is method: start from the territory, identify needs, build capabilities, mobilize State, university, and industry, and produce adequate solutions.

Table 17 - Two Brazilian Missions of Innovation

Dimension	Electric Shower	Bandeirante
Territory of origin	Jaú, interior of São Paulo	São José dos Campos
Collective problem	Accessible hot bathing	Territorial integration and regional transportation
Associated infrastructure	Electricity, water, housing	ITA, CTA, FAB, Embraer
Type of innovation	Domestic, electrical, everyday	Aeronautical, industrial, territorial
Social mission	Hygiene, comfort, and health	Connectivity, defense, and national integration
Territorial adequacy	Alternative to the absence of a broad piped gas network	Aircraft for a continental country and regional routes
Form of value	Everyday well-being	Industrial capacity and technological sovereignty
Contrast with the startup fetish	Not glamorous, but massive	Not garage, but State mission

17.16 Final Remarks

The electric shower and the Bandeirante help relocate Brazilian innovation in another register. They show that innovating is not only creating digital companies, attracting venture capital, inaugurating hubs, or organizing pitches. Innovating means responding to collective needs in concrete historical and territorial contexts.

Francisco Canhos and the electric shower represent a domestic, popular innovation adequate to an urban, electrified Brazil without a broad residential gas network. São José dos Campos, ITA, CTA, and Embraer represent an institutional, industrial, and territorial innovation oriented by the need to build aeronautical capacity and integrate a continental country.

These two cases reveal a fundamental idea: socially relevant innovation can be simple or complex, domestic or industrial, everyday or strategic. What matters is its mission.

Brazil does not need only startups, unicorns, and technology districts. It needs innovation with territory, mission, and social return. It needs to value both the humble object that improves everyday life and the complex technology that builds sovereignty. It needs to recover the capacity to formulate national problems and mobilize science, technique, the State, and industry to face them.

Perhaps the most important Brazilian innovation is not the one that most resembles Silicon Valley. It is the one that most deeply understands Brazil.

Conclusion: Beyond the Evangelists of Innovation

Territory, Technology, Ideology, and Public Missions in the Global South

This book began with a simple question: **why has innovation become one of the most powerful words in contemporary capitalism?** Throughout the chapters, we have seen that innovation is not only a technical, economic, or business process. It is also a language, a promise, an aesthetic, a moral pedagogy, an urban policy, a territorial strategy, and a form of ideological production.

The evangelists of innovation - authors, consultants, institutions, banks, think tanks, architects, public managers, accelerators, rankings, manuals, and entrepreneurial communities - helped build a global grammar of the future. This grammar states that cities, universities, companies, workers, and governments must become creative, disruptive, connected, entrepreneurial, flexible, smart, and innovative. Innovation thus appears as an almost universal answer to deindustrialization, fiscal crisis, urban competition, brain drain, labor precarization, and the search for new horizons of development.

But the central thesis of this book is that innovation must be taken out of the field of faith and placed back into the field of politics. Innovation is not a miracle. It is not born only in garages, cafés, hackathons, wall phrases, technology districts, or iconic buildings. It depends on the State, universities, industry, financing, labor, territory, infrastructure, technical culture, regulation, demand, sovereignty, and public missions (MAZZUCATO, 2013; ZUKIN, 2020).

Innovation as a Secular Gospel

The expression **"evangelists of innovation"** allows us to understand the almost religious dimension of the new economy. The evangelist announces good news. Under contemporary capitalism, this good news is the promise that technology, entrepreneurship, and creativity can redeem cities, regions, and countries from industrial crisis, economic stagnation, and territorial obsolescence.

This promise has temples, rituals, and symbols. The temples are hubs, accelerators, coworking spaces, technology parks, and innovation districts. The rituals are pitches, hackathons, meetups, demo days, innovation weeks, and investment rounds. The sacred texts are management manuals, reports by international organizations, global rankings, books by business gurus, and best-practice guides. The saints are heroic entrepreneurs, startup founders, designers of disruption, and garage visionaries. The promises are growth, impact, freedom, creativity, prosperity, and the future.

This secular gospel is powerful because it offers meaning in a time of uncertainty. Cities that lost factories can imagine themselves as creative. Universities under pressure can imagine themselves as entrepreneurial. Workers facing precarization can imagine themselves as autonomous. Governments without national development strategies can imagine themselves as managers of ecosystems. Territories marked by inequality can imagine themselves as smart, innovative, and connected.

But this faith has a cost. When innovation becomes gospel, it tends to hide the historical and political conditions that make innovation possible. It speaks of talent, but not always of wages. It speaks of ecosystems, but not always of industry. It speaks of disruption, but not always of rights. It speaks of

creativity, but not always of inequality. It speaks of entrepreneurship, but not always of public risk. It speaks of the future, but not always of who will own it.

The task of critique is not to destroy innovation. It is to rescue innovation from its own mythology.

The Myths of Innovation

Throughout the book, we identified different myths that structure the gospel of innovation.

The **Garage Myth** presents innovation as the result of individual genius, erasing the State, universities, industry, public financing, and collective labor. The **Café Myth** claims that urban amenities, bars, bike lanes, coworking spaces, and cultural life are sufficient to attract the creative class and transform the local economy. The **"If You Build It, They Will Come" Myth** bets that the simple construction of parks, hubs, and technology districts will attract companies, talent, and investment. The **Icon Myth** believes that landmarks, towers, bridges, and spectacular architecture can reposition cities on the global map of innovation. The **wall pedagogy of innovation** reduces structural problems to motivational phrases and individual responsibility.

These myths are not entirely false. Garages can host experiments. Cafés can favor encounters. Districts can bring actors closer together. Icons can communicate projects. Phrases can inspire. The problem begins when these partial dimensions are transformed into total explanations.

The critique of myths does not mean rejecting garages, cafés, districts, icons, or events. It means placing them in their proper position. They may be accessories of innovation, but they are not its structural causes.

Innovation requires more than symbolic environments. It requires scientific capacity, productive base, financing, demand, institutions, workers, regulation, infrastructure, and mission. Without these elements, the garage becomes legend, the café becomes decoration, the district becomes real estate, the icon becomes spectacle, the event becomes substitution, and the phrase becomes ideology.

The Innovative City and the Just City

One of the central risks of innovation urbanism is replacing the **just city** with the **competitive city**. The city begins to be evaluated according to its ability to attract talent, companies, events, investments, and tourists. Its quality is measured by rankings, brands, districts, cafés, startups, and international visibility. Yet cities in the Global South still face historical deficits in sanitation, housing, mobility, drainage, health, education, green areas, food security, and climate adaptation.

Urban innovation only makes sense if it is linked to these missions. An innovation district should not be merely a territory for technology companies. It should also be a platform for confronting concrete urban problems. It could produce technologies for sanitation, drainage, social housing, climate adaptation, popular mobility, public health, clean energy, waste management, and inequality reduction.

The innovative city should not be the city that merely looks modern. It should be the city that uses knowledge, technology, and public policy to improve people's lives. This requires recovering the centrality of the right to the city, understood as the right to participate in the production, appropriation, and transformation of urban space (LEFEBVRE, 2001; HARVEY, 2012).

An innovation district may create jobs, but for whom? It may valorize land, but who captures that valorization? It may requalify spaces, but who remains there? It may attract companies, but what links do they establish with the local economy? It may improve the image of the city, but does that image correspond to the life of most of its residents?

The decisive question is not only where innovation should be located. It is how innovation should be socially distributed.

The Four Territories of Innovation

The four cases analyzed in this book - Silicon Valley, 22@ Barcelona, China, and Brazil - show that innovation is always territorial, historical, and political.

Silicon Valley teaches that innovation requires dense historical systems: universities, the State, military contracts, semiconductors, venture capital, industry, technical networks, migration, and global markets. Its global myth, however, simplified this complexity into garages, founders, and market culture. The Valley should not be copied. It should be understood.

22@ Barcelona teaches that innovation can be urbanized through districts, planning, heritage, universities, branding, and the requalification of industrial areas. But it also teaches that innovation districts can generate productive gentrification, real estate appreciation, displacement, and the aestheticization of industrial memory. Barcelona should not be treated as a universal model. It should be read as a field of contradictions.

China teaches that technological capability depends on the State, industrial policy, territorial experimentation, special zones, technology parks, science cities, public investment, manufacturing, scale, and national missions. But it also warns that technological sovereignty can coexist with inequality, displacement, labor discipline, surveillance, and authoritarian control. China should not become a new gospel. It should be critically learned from.

Brazil teaches that peripheral innovation is neither absent nor complete. The country has universities, research institutions, public funding agencies, strategic firms, Embraer, Embrapa, Fiocruz, Butantan, Petrobras, technology parks, and regional ecosystems. But it also faces deindustrialization, inequality, technological dependence, fragmentation, and the absence of a durable national mission. Brazil does not need to imitate the Valley, Barcelona, or China. It needs to build its own path.

Together, these four territories show that innovation is never pure technique. It is always the result of relations among territory, technology, capital, labor, State, universities, institutions, image, ideology, and power.

The Global South and the Refusal of Imitation

For the Global South, the central problem is not whether to innovate. Of course it must innovate. The question is: **innovate for what, for whom, through which institutions, with which resources, in which territories, and with what social return?**

The Global South cannot afford to import innovation as a ready-made formula. It cannot import the technology park without industrial policy, the coworking space without productive chains, the pitch without

patient financing, the hackathon without public mission, the creative class without wages, the landmark without universal infrastructure, the ranking without technological sovereignty.

The historical conditions of the Global South are specific: colonial legacies, technological dependence, urban inequality, informality, premature deindustrialization, fiscal fragility, environmental vulnerability, and unequal access to infrastructure. Any innovation policy that ignores these conditions risks producing only an aesthetic layer of modernization over deep structures of inequality.

For this reason, the Global South must learn from the evangelists of innovation without converting to their gospel. It must read Schumpeter, Drucker, Florida, Landry, Howkins, Etzkowitz, Chesbrough, Christensen, Blank, Ries, Katz, Wagner, Castells, Zukin, and Mazzucato critically. It must ask which concepts help build capabilities and which concepts reproduce dependency. Which ideas reveal reality and which conceal conflicts. Which models strengthen the public sphere and which intensify private capture.

The Global South does not need small scenographic Silicon Valleys. It needs public missions rooted in its own territories.

Innovation as Public Mission

The key concept for moving beyond the evangelists is **mission**. Innovation must be linked to collective problems: sanitation, public health, climate adaptation, mobility, housing, food security, energy transition, green reindustrialization, digital sovereignty, regional integration, biodiversity, education, and inequality reduction.

Mission does not mean a vague purpose statement. It means political direction. It means defining priorities, mobilizing resources, coordinating actors, financing research, building productive capabilities, using public procurement, evaluating results, and negotiating social return.

Without mission, innovation becomes dispersion. Calls for proposals multiply, but do not build trajectories. Parks are inaugurated, but remain empty. Startups emerge, but do not transform the productive structure. Universities produce knowledge, but remain disconnected from national challenges. Public funding assumes risk, but private actors capture the gains. Territories receive buildings, but not development.

With mission, innovation can become public policy. It can articulate State, university, industry, labor, capital, territory, and society around historical problems. It can build capabilities instead of merely producing images. It can generate public value instead of only private valorization.

Mazzucato is decisive in this movement because she shows that the State does not merely correct market failures; it creates markets, assumes risks, and orients technological trajectories (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021). But her contribution must also be protected from vulgarization. The entrepreneurial State is not the State that tells precarious workers to become entrepreneurs. It is the State that organizes collective resources to confront historical challenges.

From Startup Fetish to Collective Capabilities

Startups can be important. They can develop technologies, solve problems, create firms, generate jobs, and participate in public missions. But they cannot become a fetish. A country does not become innovative simply because it has more startups, more pitches, more acceleration programs, or more coworking spaces.

The central question is not how many startups were created, but which capabilities were built. Which sectors were strengthened? Which technologies were mastered? Which public problems were addressed? Which workers were trained? Which regions benefited? Which institutions were reinforced? Which forms of social return were generated?

The electric shower and the Bandeirante help reconstruct this debate. They show that Brazilian innovation does not need to resemble the global aesthetics of the startup in order to be relevant. The electric shower is domestic, humble, simple, and infrastructural. The Bandeirante is industrial, institutional, territorial, and strategic. Both responded to concrete Brazilian needs. Both show that the most important innovation is not necessarily the most glamorous, digital, or profitable, but the one that responds with technical intelligence and territorial rootedness to a collective need.

This is the shift from innovation as spectacle to innovation as capability.

Beyond the Evangelists

To move beyond the evangelists of innovation does not mean abandoning the authors, institutions, metrics, parks, districts, hubs, events, or methodologies discussed in this book. It means refusing their transformation into dogma.

We can learn from Schumpeter without reducing development to heroic entrepreneurship. We can learn from Drucker without reducing innovation to management manuals. We can learn from Christensen without turning every change into disruption. We can learn from Chesbrough without confusing openness with private capture of public knowledge. We can learn from Etzkowitz without reducing the Triple Helix to formal agreements. We can learn from Florida without believing that cafés create development. We can learn from Katz and Wagner without believing that districts summon ecosystems by themselves. We can learn from Zukin by recognizing that innovation is a complex articulation among land, labor, culture, capital, and narrative. We can learn from Mazzucato by placing mission, State, and public value back at the center.

The critical task is not to reject the grammar of innovation, but to rewrite it.

Innovation should no longer be defined by the beauty of its buildings, the number of its events, the charm of its cafés, the charisma of its founders, the height of its towers, or the valuation of its startups. It should be defined by its capacity to build collective futures.

What Innovation Must Become

Innovation must become less evangelical and more democratic.

Less oriented by conversion, more oriented by debate.
Less fascinated by icons, more committed to infrastructure.
Less obsessed with talent attraction, more committed to talent formation and dignified work.
Less dependent on rankings, more committed to sovereignty.
Less captured by real estate valorization, more oriented toward territorial justice.
Less guided by motivational phrases, more grounded in institutions, rights, and public value.
Less defined by the market alone, more oriented by missions collectively chosen.

This requires conflict. Real innovation demands disputes over priorities, risks, returns, beneficiaries, territories, technologies, and futures. A society that innovates democratically must be able to ask difficult questions: who defines the mission? Who pays? Who works? Who owns the result? Who is displaced? Who captures value? Who receives benefits? Who is protected? Who decides?

Without conflict, innovation becomes celebration. With democratic conflict, it can become transformation.

Final Statement

The evangelists of innovation announce the future. But the future cannot be left to evangelists alone. It must be disputed politically, constructed collectively, and rooted territorially.

Innovation is too important to be delivered to slogans. It is too important to be reduced to garages, cafés, hackathons, pitch decks, towers, rankings, or inspirational walls. It is too important to become merely a language of modernization for unequal cities and dependent countries.

Innovation must return to the field of public mission.

For the Global South, and especially for Brazil, this means asking not how to imitate Silicon Valley, Barcelona, or Shenzhen, but how to build technological, productive, social, and territorial capabilities capable of confronting our own historical problems. It means linking science and technology to sanitation, health, housing, mobility, climate, food, energy, industry, education, sovereignty, and equality. It means transforming public risk into public value. It means making innovation a project of society, not merely a promise of the market.

The innovation that matters is not the one that merely appears modern in the eyes of global evangelists. It is the one that understands the territory it intends to transform.

Innovation is not a faith.
It is not a phrase on a wall.
It is not an illuminated tower.
It is not a café full of laptops.
It is not a three-minute pitch.

Innovation is the collective capacity of a people to transform knowledge into a shared future.

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Appendix 1 - Questions and Answers: Evangelists of Innovation, Technology Parks, and Public Missions

1. What is the innovation complex?

The innovation complex is the arrangement formed by technology companies, universities, governments, venture capital, accelerators, coworking spaces, events, urban narratives, and real estate markets that produce the new economy in cities. It is not merely technological: it involves land, labor, culture, capital, and urban power. In Sharon Zukin's work, the innovation complex shows how the city is reorganized to attract companies, talent, investment, and symbolic prestige (ZUKIN, 2020).

2. What are the evangelists of innovation?

The evangelists of innovation are authors, consultants, managers, institutions, companies, banks, think tanks, and mediators who disseminate the idea that innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and technology are almost compulsory paths to development. They translate complex theories into narratives, slogans, methodologies, rankings, urban models, and public policies. Their strength lies in transforming innovation into social belief, a language of government, and a territorial strategy (ZUKIN, 2020; KAWASAKI, 2004).

3. What is urban entrepreneurialism?

Urban entrepreneurialism is the shift through which local governments cease to act only as administrators of public services and begin to behave as competitive promoters of the city. In this model, the city seeks to attract investment, events, tourists, companies, talent, and real estate projects through public-private partnerships, urban marketing, and major territorial interventions. Harvey interprets this shift as the passage from urban "managerialism" to urban "entrepreneurialism" in late capitalism (HARVEY, 1989).

4. What was the Barcelona model?

The Barcelona model was an experience of urban restructuring, strategic planning, valorization of public space, high-quality architecture, and international projection of the city, especially after the 1992 Olympic Games. It became a global reference by combining urban intervention, city branding, culture, tourism, and competitiveness. 22@ can be understood as a second generation of this model, now oriented toward the knowledge economy and innovation districts (MONCLÚS, 2003; BORJA; CASTELLS, 1997).

5. What is the creative class?

The creative class is the group of workers linked to the production of knowledge, culture, technology, design, science, communication, the arts, and innovation. Richard Florida argued that cities capable of attracting these professionals would tend to grow more, especially when they combined technology, talent, and tolerance. The critique is that, when vulgarized, this theory can justify elitist urban policies, gentrification, and competition for amenities without confronting structural inequalities (FLORIDA, 2002; PECK, 2005).

6. What is the Café Myth?

The Café Myth is the belief that cafés, bars, coworking spaces, bike lanes, gyms, galleries, nightlife, and urban amenities would be sufficient to attract the creative class and generate innovation. The critique is that these elements may favor encounters and sociability, but they do not replace wages, universities, industry, financing, public policy, and national missions. The café may be part of an ecosystem, but it does not create innovation by itself (FLORIDA, 2002; PECK, 2005; ZUKIN, 2020).

7. What is the Garage Myth?

The Garage Myth is the narrative according to which major innovations are born from brilliant individuals, in improvised spaces, without the State, without universities, without industrial policy, and without public financing. It transforms innovation into an individual epic and erases the collective infrastructures that make it possible. The history of Silicon Valley shows the opposite: universities, DARPA, public contracts, semiconductors, defense, and venture capital were decisive in its formation (ABBATE, 1999; LÉCUYER, 2006; MAZZUCATO, 2013).

8. What is the "if you build it, they will come" Myth?

The "if you build it, they will come" Myth is the belief that merely building a technology park, innovation district, hub, or entrepreneurship center will automatically attract talent, companies, and investment. The critique is that physical infrastructure does not create an ecosystem by itself. Ecosystems depend on universities, companies, financing, trust, demand, public policies, technical culture, and long-term missions (KATZ; WAGNER, 2014; STORPER, 1997; MAZZUCATO, 2021).

9. What is the Icon Myth?

The Icon Myth is the belief that a tower, bridge, museum, corporate headquarters, or architectural landmark can reposition a city as innovative, creative, or global. These visual landmarks help materialize the knowledge economy, but they do not replace urban policy, industry, universities, or social inclusion. The icon communicates the future, but it may also mask gentrification, real estate valorization, and the absence of a productive strategy (JENCKS, 2005; ANHOLT, 2007; ZUKIN, 2020).

10. What is the Triple Helix?

The Triple Helix is the model that explains innovation as the result of interaction among university, industry, and government. The university produces knowledge and talent; industry transforms knowledge into products, services, and processes; government finances, regulates, creates incentives, and guides public policies. The critique is that the mere gathering of these three actors does not guarantee innovation: mission, trust, financing, demand, and productive capacity are also necessary (ETZKOWITZ; LEYDESDORFF, 2000; ETZKOWITZ, 2008).

11. What is open innovation?

Open innovation is the idea that firms and institutions should not rely only on their own internal laboratories, but also on external knowledge from universities, startups, suppliers, users, partners, and collaborative networks. It values the circulation of ideas and cooperation. The risk is that collaboration may become empty rhetoric, without industrial policy, without public return, and without protection against the private appropriation of collective knowledge (CHESBROUGH, 2003).

12. What is the lean startup?

The lean startup is a methodology for creating firms in uncertain environments, based on quickly testing hypotheses, building minimum viable products, measuring responses, and learning from the market. Its best-known cycle is "build, measure, learn." The critique is that this logic may be useful for startups, but it should not be mechanically applied to public policies, cities, universities, or social rights (RIES, 2011).

13. What is the creative economy?

The creative economy is the set of activities that produce value from ideas, culture, design, art, audiovisual production, music, fashion, software, games, heritage, communication, and intellectual property. It broadens the notion of development by recognizing culture and creativity as economic forces. The critique is that, when captured by the market, it may transform culture into a real estate asset, elitized consumption, and territorial branding (HOWKINS, 2001; UNCTAD, 2022; ZUKIN, 1995).

14. What is the creative city?

The creative city is the city that mobilizes culture, imagination, diversity, participation, and knowledge to confront urban and economic problems. In Charles Landry's work, urban creativity should be a collective capacity to reinvent policies, spaces, and institutions. The risk is reducing the creative city to a strategy of marketing, tourism, cultural consumption, and attraction of qualified middle classes (LANDRY, 2000; SCOTT, 2000; ZUKIN, 1995).

15. What is city branding?

City branding is the strategic construction of a city's image, reputation, and identity in order to attract investment, tourists, events, talent, and international recognition. It transforms urban elements - architecture, culture, landscape, history, innovation, and quality of life - into a territorial brand. The critique is that the city may come to be treated as a product, erasing social conflicts, inequalities, and public needs (ANHOLT, 2007; EVANS, 2003).

16. What is the Bilbao Effect?

The Bilbao Effect is the idea that an iconic cultural or architectural facility can transform the image and economy of a city, as occurred with the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. The term came to symbolize the bet on spectacular architecture as an instrument of urban regeneration and tourist attraction. The critique is that not every city can replicate this effect, and iconic works do not replace structural policies of urban and social development (PLAZA, 2000; PLAZA, 2006; JENCKS, 2005).

17. What is the entrepreneurial State?

The entrepreneurial State is the State that does not merely regulate or correct market failures, but assumes risks, finances uncertain technologies, creates markets, orients investments, and builds strategic capabilities. Mariana Mazzucato shows that many innovations attributed to the private sector depended on prior public investment. The entrepreneurial State is not the State that tells everyone to become individual entrepreneurs, but the State that organizes collective missions of innovation (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2018).

18. What is mission-oriented innovation?

Mission-oriented innovation is the organization of science, technology, industry, financing, and public procurement policies around major collective challenges. Instead of financing dispersed projects, the State defines directions, such as energy transition, public health, sanitation, climate adaptation, mobility, or digital sovereignty. The mission articulates different sectors and institutions to solve long-term public problems (MAZZUCATO, 2021; KATTEL; MAZZUCATO, 2018).

19. Why is the electric shower a Brazilian social innovation?

The electric shower is a Brazilian social innovation because it responded to a concrete need: guaranteeing hot bathing in a country undergoing rapid urbanization, with expanding electricity supply and without broad residential piped gas infrastructure. Its point-of-use heating solution was simple, cheap, decentralized, and adapted to the Brazilian territory. For this reason, its relevance lies not in technological glamour, but in its everyday impact on hygiene, comfort, and health (ARAÚJO; SILVA; ANDRADE, 2023).

20. Why was the Bandeirante a territorial innovation?

The Bandeirante aircraft was a territorial innovation because it responded to the challenge of integrating a continental country, marked by great distances, unequal infrastructure, and the need for regional air transportation. Developed in the institutional environment of São José dos Campos, with ITA, CTA, FAB, and Embraer, the Bandeirante helped create national aeronautical capability. Its importance lies less in technological spectacle and more in the mission of connecting territory, industry, and State (BERNARDES, 2000; FORJAZ, 2005; FERREIRA, 2012).

21. Why do technology parks not automatically create ecosystems?

Technology parks offer infrastructure, location, laboratories, incubators, and spaces of interaction, but this is not enough to create innovation. An ecosystem requires firms capable of absorbing knowledge, strong universities, financing, demand, public policies, institutional trust, qualified workers, and clear missions. Without these elements, the park may become only an address, a showcase, or a real estate venture (VEDOVELLO, 1997; ZOUAIN, 2003; ETZKOWITZ, 2008).

22. Why do rankings not measure real development?

Innovation rankings can compare countries and cities through indicators such as patents, R&D, publications, human capital, business environment, and infrastructure. They help organize diagnoses, but they do not fully measure real development, social justice, technological sovereignty, quality of work, inequality reduction, or the public return of innovation. Rising in a ranking does not automatically mean building deep productive and social capabilities (OECD; EUROSTAT, 2018; WIPO, 2025; MAZZUCATO, 2018).

23. Why do cafés not create innovation?

Cafés may favor encounters, informal conversations, and urban sociability, but they do not replace universities, laboratories, financing, wages, companies, industrial policy, and public demand. The belief that cafés create innovation confuses urban atmosphere with productive structure. They may be part of an innovative environment, but they are not a sufficient cause of innovation (FLORIDA, 2002; PECK, 2005; KATZ; WAGNER, 2014).

24. Why do landmarks not replace industrial policy?

Landmarks make innovation visible, communicable, and attractive, but they do not create, by themselves, companies, productive chains, technology, qualified workers, or industrial sovereignty. A tower, bridge, or museum may strengthen a city's brand, but it does not replace financing, universities, industrial policy, public procurement, and national missions. When image replaces structure, innovation becomes urban scenography (JENCKS, 2005; ANHOLT, 2007; MAZZUCATO, 2021).

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Appendix 2 - Cartography of the Evangelists of Innovation

Author / Axis	Main Work	Key Concept	Contribution	Risk of Vulgarization	Use in This Book
Sharon Zukin	The Innovation Complex (2020)	Innovation complex	Shows how technology, capital, urban land, culture, labor, universities, governments, and narratives are articulated in the production of the new urban economy.	Reducing the innovation complex to a mere "entrepreneurial ecosystem," erasing urban conflicts, real estate rent, and inequalities.	Conceptual foundation of the book; structures the critique of evangelists, innovation districts, and the city as a territory of the new economy.
Joseph Schumpeter	Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (1942)	Creative destruction	Places innovation and entrepreneurship at the center of capitalist dynamics.	Transforming the entrepreneur into an abstract hero and calling every precarious self-employed worker an innovative entrepreneur.	Used to distinguish innovative entrepreneurship from survival entrepreneurship.
Peter Drucker	Innovation and Entrepreneurship (1985)	Innovation as managerial discipline	Treats innovation as a systematic, organizable, and learnable practice.	Reducing innovation to a management technique, business manual, or generic organizational culture.	Helps explain the passage from innovation as an economic phenomenon to innovation as a managerial method.
Clayton Christensen	The Innovator's Dilemma (1997)	Disruptive innovation	Explains how smaller firms may challenge incumbents through simpler, cheaper solutions or new markets.	Calling every application, incremental change, or novelty "disruption."	Basis for criticizing the contemporary fetish of disruption.
Henry Chesbrough	Open Innovation (2003)	Open innovation	Shows that firms innovate through internal and external knowledge networks.	Turning collaboration into empty rhetoric, without discussing industrial policy or public return.	Used to criticize the private capture of collectively produced knowledge.
Steve Blank	The Four Steps to	Customer	Consolidates hypothesis	Treating society, the State, and	Helps criticize the excessive transfer of

	the Epiphany (2005)	development	validation, customer learning, and iterative startup development.	public policy as if they were startups.	business methods to universities, cities, and public policies.
Eric Ries	The Lean Startup (2011)	Lean startup	Popularizes MVPs, rapid cycles, validated learning, and the build-measure-learn logic.	Applying startup experimentation mechanically to social rights and public policies.	Basis for the critique of public policy as disposable experiment.
Guy Kawasaki	The Art of the Start (2004)	Business evangelism	Explicitly formulates evangelism as persuasion, mobilization, and diffusion of products and ideas.	Replacing structural analysis with enthusiasm, passion, and adherence.	Supports the conceptualization of the evangelist as a producer of belief.
Henry Etzkowitz / Loet Leydesdorff	The Triple Helix (2008); article in Research Policy (2000)	Triple Helix	Systematizes interaction among university, industry, and government as a foundation of innovation.	Believing that formal agreements automatically create ecosystems.	Used to criticize the reduction of innovation policy to institutional arrangements without mission, firms, or demand.
Richard Florida	The Rise of the Creative Class (2002)	Creative class	Places talent, tolerance, technology, and urban diversity at the center of economic development.	Assuming that cafés, bike lanes, nightlife, and amenities automatically produce innovation.	Origin of the Café Myth.
Charles Landry	The Creative City (2000)	Creative city	Values imagination, culture, and creativity as resources for urban transformation.	Treating creativity as a universal solution to urban problems.	Used to discuss the creative city and the risks of converting culture into a competitiveness strategy.
John Howkins	The Creative Economy (2001)	Creative economy	Consolidates the idea that ideas, intellectual property, design, culture, and symbolic production generate economic	Reducing culture to an economic asset and creativity to a market input.	Used to discuss the institutionalization of the creative economy.

			value.		
Bruce Katz and Julie Wagner	The Rise of Innovation Districts (2014)	Innovation districts	Give contemporary territorial form to innovation through dense, mixed, walkable, connected urban areas.	Believing that "if you build it, they will come."	Basis for the critique of innovation districts as spatial formulas detached from mission and productive structure.
Jordi Borja and Manuel Castells	Local and Global (1997)	Strategic urban planning	Treat the city as a political actor in globalization and emphasize urban strategy.	Transforming the city into a company and strategic planning into territorial marketing.	Supports the critique of the competitive city and entrepreneurial urbanism.
Manuel Castells	The Rise of the Network Society (1996/1999)	Network society	Explains informational capitalism through flows, networks, and strategic urban nodes.	Treating connectivity as inevitable destiny and technological adaptation as neutral.	Used to discuss the city, networks, and informational capitalism.
Mariana Mazzucato	The Entrepreneurial State (2013); Mission Economy (2021)	Entrepreneurial State; mission-oriented innovation	Restores the State, public risk, market creation, and missions to the center of innovation.	Confusing the entrepreneurial State with generic encouragement of individual entrepreneurship.	Central reference for reconstructing innovation as public mission and social return.
Simon Anholt	Competitive Identity (2007)	City branding / territorial branding	Shows how cities, regions, and nations compete for image, reputation, and recognition.	Treating the city as a brand and development as image management.	Used to analyze city branding and the symbolic economy of innovative territories.
Charles Jencks	The Iconic Building (2005)	Iconic architecture	Explains how iconic buildings condense image, distinction, and urban narrative.	Believing that spectacular architecture produces development by itself.	Used in the critique of landmarks and the Icon Myth.
Beatriz Plaza	Articles on the Guggenheim Bilbao (2000; 2006)	Bilbao Effect	Analyzes the economic and tourism impacts of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao.	Imagining that any city can generate transformation through an iconic work.	Used to criticize the replication of the Bilbao Effect and the fetish of landmarks.

David Harvey	"From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism" (1989); Rebel Cities (2012)	Urban entrepreneurialism; right to the city	Explains the transformation of urban governance into competitive and entrepreneurial strategy.	Naturalizing the city as enterprise and large projects as the only path to urban development.	Grounds the critique of neoliberal urbanism, mega-projects, and the commodity-city.
Milton Santos	A Natureza do Espaço (1996); O Brasil (2001, with Silveira)	Technical-scientific-informational milieu	Shows how technique, science, and information selectively reorganize territory.	Treating technology as an abstraction, without considering territorial inequalities and the uses of territory.	Theoretical basis for reading Brazilian technology parks and territorial innovation.
Neil Smith	The New Urban Frontier (1996)	Gentrification; urban frontier	Interprets gentrification as urban restructuring linked to land rent and real estate valorization.	Calling displacement, social substitution, and real estate valorization mere "urban regeneration."	Used to interpret 22@ Barcelona and productive gentrification.
Jamie Peck	"Struggling with the Creative Class" (2005); "Geographies of Policy" (2011)	Critique of the creative class; policy mobility	Criticizes the conversion of the creative class into an urban policy recipe and shows how models travel.	Importing global urban models without their historical conditions and conflicts.	Grounds the critique of the Café Myth and the international circulation of the 22@ model.
Shoshana Zuboff	The Age of Surveillance Capitalism (2019)	Surveillance capitalism	Analyzes data extraction, behavioral prediction, and platform power.	Treating digital platforms merely as convenient innovation, without discussing surveillance and power.	Used to criticize the platform city and the digital economy as an infrastructure of control.
Nick Srnicek	Platform Capitalism (2017)	Platform capitalism	Interprets platforms as digital infrastructures for extracting, organizing, and monetizing data.	Treating platforms as neutral tools of efficiency and innovation.	Used to discuss Silicon Valley, digital dependence, and platform urbanism.
Evgeny Morozov	To Save Everything, Click Here (2013)	Technological solutionism	Criticizes the belief that complex social problems can be solved by digital tools alone.	Reducing political, urban, and social conflicts to technical problems.	Used to criticize hackathons, apps, dashboards, and solutionist public policies.

Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello	The New Spirit of Capitalism (1999)	New spirit of capitalism	Show how capitalism absorbed the critique of hierarchy through autonomy, creativity, networks, and flexibility.	Treating flexibility and creativity as inherently emancipatory.	Used to interpret startup culture and the moral pedagogy of innovation.
Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval	The New Way of the World (2009/2013)	Neoliberal subjectivation	Analyze how neoliberalism produces subjects who govern themselves as enterprises.	Turning precarization into autonomy and unemployment into entrepreneurial opportunity.	Used to critique self-entrepreneurship and motivational innovation culture.
Byung-Chul Han	The Burnout Society (2010/2015)	Performance subject	Analyzes self-exploitation, positivity, and exhaustion in contemporary capitalism.	Treating overwork, permanent performance, and exhaustion as passion or purpose.	Used to critique wall phrases, resilience, and the moralization of work.
Richard Sennett	The Corrosion of Character (1998)	Flexible capitalism and character	Shows how flexibility and unstable work affect identity, time, and social bonds.	Celebrating flexibility without discussing insecurity and erosion of life trajectories.	Supports the critique of precarious work in the new economy.
AnnaLee Saxenian	Regional Advantage (1994)	Regional networks; Silicon Valley vs. Route 128	Shows how regional culture, professional networks, and interfirm mobility shaped Silicon Valley.	Believing that regional networks can be created by decree or events alone.	Used to understand Silicon Valley as a territorial and relational formation.
Janet Abbate	Inventing the Internet (1999)	Public origins of the internet	Demonstrates the role of public funding, universities, and military networks in the creation of the internet.	Erasing the State and transforming the internet into the exclusive triumph of private entrepreneurs.	Basis for the critique of the Garage Myth and the erasure of DARPA.
Christophe Lécuyer	Making Silicon Valley (2006)	Industrial formation of Silicon Valley	Shows the centrality of electronics, semiconductors,	Telling the history of the Valley only through garages, founders, and	Grounds the reading of Silicon Valley as a territorial, industrial, and State-linked

			defense, and industry in the formation of the Valley.	startups.	formation.
Margaret O'Mara	The Code (2019)	Political history of Silicon Valley	Shows how politics, the State, universities, defense, and markets formed Silicon Valley.	Presenting the Valley as a spontaneous market phenomenon.	Helps dismantle the heroic narrative of digital capitalism.
Barry Naughton	The Chinese Economy (2007); The Rise of China's Industrial Policy (2021)	Chinese industrial policy	Explains China's transition, the role of the State, and the rise of industrial policy.	Turning China into a new universal model without considering its contradictions.	Basis for the chapter on China, technology parks, and industrial missions.
Arthur Kroeber	China's Economy (2020)	Chinese political economy	Analyzes growth, State, market, industry, and contradictions in the Chinese economy.	Idealizing the efficiency of the Chinese State and ignoring inequality and political control.	Used to discuss China as a case of innovation with State direction and industrial policy.
Silvia Lindtner	Prototype Nation (2020)	Prototype nation; Chinese maker innovation	Shows how Shenzhen and Chinese maker culture articulate manufacturing, prototyping, State, and market.	Imagining maker innovation as spontaneous and depoliticized.	Helps discuss Shenzhen and the importance of manufacturing for innovation.
Ha-Joon Chang	Kicking Away the Ladder (2002)	Late development and strategic protection	Shows how developed countries used industrial policies and later denied them to others.	Defending free markets as if they had been the historical path of development.	Used to argue that the Global South needs industrial policy and technological sovereignty.
Alice Amsden	The Rise of "The Rest" (2001)	Late industrialization	Shows how late-industrializing countries built capabilities through State action, learning, and industry.	Treating late development as simple market liberalization.	Used to support the argument for productive learning and national capabilities.
Robert Wade	Governing the Market (1990)	Developmental State	Shows the role of State coordination in East Asian	Reducing development to market opening	Used to strengthen the critique of neoliberal

			industrialization.	and institutional imitation.	innovation models.
Roberto Bernardes	Embraer: Links Between State and Market (2000)	Brazilian aeronautical capability	Analyzes Embraer as an articulation between State, market, technology, and industrial capability.	Treating Embraer only as entrepreneurial success, without State and mission.	Basis for the chapter on the Bandeirante and Brazilian mission-oriented innovation.
Maria Cecília Spina Forjaz	"The Origins of Embraer" (2005)	Origins of Embraer	Reconstructs the political and institutional formation of Embraer.	Erasing the institutional and State foundations of Brazilian aeronautics.	Used to read São José dos Campos as a territory of mission.
Ozires Silva	Memoirs and accounts on Embraer	Aeronautical entrepreneurship and national mission	Provides an internal narrative of Embraer's creation and the Bandeirante project.	Reducing the case to individual heroism and forgetting institutional construction.	Used to connect leadership, engineering, State demand, and territorial integration.
Araújo, Silva and Andrade	Article on the electric shower (2023)	Electric shower as social technology	Reconstruct the history and functioning of the electric shower in Brazil.	Treating everyday technologies as minor or non-innovative.	Used to argue that the electric shower is a Brazilian innovation adequate to territory, infrastructure, hygiene, and popular life.

Appendix 3 - Institutional Cartography of the Gospel of Innovation

The institutional cartography shows that the gospel of innovation does not circulate only through books and authors. It is sustained by a global machine composed of multilateral organizations, think tanks, banks, funding agencies, rankings, universities, consulting firms, accelerators, professional networks, and city branding institutions.

This machine does not merely describe innovation: it teaches governments to desire it, measure it, finance it, build it, symbolize it, and sell it. The problem is not the existence of these institutions. Many of them produce relevant knowledge, funding, and capacities. The problem arises when their models become universal recipes, detached from public missions, territorial inequalities, and the concrete needs of the Global South.

Institution	Group	Role in the Gospel of Innovation	Emblematic Documents / Programs	Effects on Public Policies
Brookings Institution	Territory / innovation districts	Think tank that helped disseminate the concept of innovation districts as dense, mixed, walkable, and connected urban areas.	The Rise of Innovation Districts	Influences urban policies aimed at creating technology districts, innovation zones, university-led districts, and urban regeneration strategies.
IASP - International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation	Physical territory / science parks and areas of innovation	Global network that standardizes concepts, connects managers, and legitimizes science parks, technology parks, and areas of innovation.	IASP definitions of science parks and areas of innovation; global indicators reports	Helps governments and universities structure technology parks, governance models, and international innovation networks.
IDB - Inter-American Development Bank	Physical territory / creative economy / regional funding	Diffuser of the creative economy and the so-called Orange Economy in Latin America.	The Orange Economy: An Infinite Opportunity	Finances urban revitalization projects, historic centers, culture, creative economy, smart cities, and public innovation.
Creative Class Group	Physical territory / creative class	Consultancy linked to the theory of the creative class, translating talent, tolerance, and technology into urban metrics.	Reports and diagnostics on creative class, talent, and urban competitiveness	Influences policies for attracting talent, creating urban amenities, developing creative neighborhoods, promoting city branding, and retaining skilled workers.
International Triple	Institutional	Diffuses the university-	Publications and	Influences technology

Helix Institute / Triple Helix Association	governance of innovation	industry-government model as the basis for innovation ecosystems.	conferences on the Triple Helix	parks, incubators, technology transfer offices, university-industry policies, and innovation councils.
WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organization	Metrics / intellectual property / rankings	Produces global indicators on innovation and strengthens the international regime of intellectual property.	Global Innovation Index; reports on patents and intellectual property	Encourages countries to organize innovation policies around patents, trademarks, intellectual assets, and international rankings.
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	Metrics / manuals / innovation policy	Defines categories and standards for measuring research, development, and innovation.	Frascati Manual; Oslo Manual	Shapes national innovation systems, statistics, public policies, R&D indicators, and comparative assessments.
UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Creative economy / trade / development	Organizes the creative economy as a strategic field of international development and trade.	Creative Economy Outlook	Helps countries treat culture, design, audiovisual production, fashion, software, and creative services as economic sectors.
Nesta	Public innovation / experimentation / creative clusters	Produces applied research, methodologies, and experiments on social innovation, digital transformation, creative economy, and technology.	Reports on innovation methods, creative clusters, social innovation, and emerging technologies	Influences innovation labs, public experimentation, social innovation programs, and policy design methodologies.
European Commission	Regulation / knowledge valorization / innovation policy	Formulates policies for research, innovation, knowledge valorization, and university-industry collaboration.	Horizon Europe; Knowledge Valorisation policies	Supports spin-offs, startups, intellectual asset management, standardization, user participation, and knowledge transfer.
World Bank	Capital / digital transformation / development	Disseminates digital transformation, infrastructure, and knowledge economy agendas for developing countries.	Digital Progress and Trends Report; digital development reports	Influences national policies on digital infrastructure, connectivity, productivity, and digital inclusion.
World Economic Forum	Ideology / business agenda / technological	Global arena for legitimizing corporate innovation agendas and	Reports on the Fourth Industrial Revolution	Disseminates narratives on artificial intelligence, robotics, automation,

	futures	narratives of technological transformation.		biotechnology, digital platforms, and future work.
Finep	Capital / public funding / science and technology	Brazilian public agency for funding science, technology, and innovation.	Credit lines, economic subsidies, research and development programs	Supports firms, universities, research institutes, and technological development projects.
BNDES	Capital / development finance / productive transformation	Brazilian public development bank that finances infrastructure, industry, innovation, and productive transformation.	Innovation credit lines; industrial and infrastructure funding programs	Provides long-term financing for industrial upgrading, infrastructure, firms, and technological capacity.
MIT Media Lab	Talent / experimentation / technological imagination	Global reference in interdisciplinary experimentation, design, media, technology, and future-oriented innovation.	Research programs, laboratories, prototypes, media technologies	Inspires labs, innovation centers, interdisciplinary research, and experimental pedagogies.
Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship	Talent / entrepreneurship education	Center for entrepreneurial training, startup methods, and business formation.	MIT entrepreneurship programs and methodologies	Influences entrepreneurship education, startup formation, mentoring, pitch culture, and university-based innovation.
Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft	Applied research / industry / technological capability	German institution focused on applied research connected to industry and technological development.	Applied research programs in industry, climate technologies, artificial intelligence, health, hydrogen, and advanced manufacturing	Offers an alternative model to startup-centered innovation by emphasizing applied research, industrial demand, and pre-competitive development.
Singularity University	Talent / exponential technologies / futurism	Institution that disseminates a mindset associated with exponential technologies and accelerated transformation.	Programs on artificial intelligence, biotechnology, robotics, future of work, and exponential technologies	Influences leaders, companies, and governments through technological futurism and entrepreneurial imagination.
Guggenheim Foundation / Guggenheim	Visual imaginary / iconic architecture	Symbolic case of the use of iconic architecture for urban repositioning.	Guggenheim Museum Bilbao	Helped consolidate the so-called Bilbao Effect and the belief in landmarks as instruments

Museum Bilbao				of urban regeneration.
Bilbao Ría 2000	Urban redevelopment / iconic regeneration	Public agency linked to the urban transformation of Bilbao.	Urban renewal projects in Bilbao	Shows how iconic projects depend on broader infrastructure, governance, urban recovery, and institutional coordination.
Ajuntament de Barcelona / 22@ Barcelona	Innovation district / strategic planning / city branding	Local government and planning framework that transformed Poblenou into a knowledge-economy district.	22@ Barcelona planning documents	Became a global reference for innovation districts, industrial-area redevelopment, and creative city strategies.
Local Development Agencies	Territorial governance / implementation	Translate innovation strategies into local programs, partnerships, projects, and territorial policies.	Strategic plans, innovation agendas, economic development programs	Implement technology parks, districts, incubators, startup programs, and attraction strategies.
Universities	Knowledge / talent / public mission	Produce research, train professionals, generate knowledge, and act as anchors of innovation territories.	Research programs, graduate programs, patents, spin-offs, incubators	Support technology transfer, regional development, startup formation, public policy, and scientific capacity.
Technology Transfer Offices / NITs	Intellectual property / university-industry interface	Manage patents, licensing, technology transfer, and relations between universities and firms.	Patent portfolios, licensing agreements, innovation policies	Transform academic knowledge into intellectual assets and partnerships with firms.
Incubators and Accelerators	Startup formation / entrepreneurial pedagogy	Support early-stage ventures through mentoring, business modeling, networks, and investment readiness.	Acceleration programs, demo days, startup challenges	Help disseminate pitch culture, MVP logic, lean startup methods, and entrepreneurial subjectivities.
Venture Capital Funds	Capital / scaling / financialization	Finance high-growth firms and organize expectations of accelerated returns.	Investment rounds, seed funding, venture funds	Prioritize scalable business models, rapid growth, platform strategies, and financial valuation.
FAPESP and State Research Foundations	Scientific funding / research capacity	Finance academic research, scholarships, innovation programs, and university-industry projects.	Research grants, PIPE/PITE-type programs, thematic projects	Sustain scientific capacity, technology-based entrepreneurship, and long-term research infrastructure.
CAPES and CNPq	Scientific training /	Support graduate	Graduate program	Form the human base of

	human capital	education, scholarships, academic research, and researcher formation.	evaluations; scholarship and productivity calls	innovation, although not always articulated with productive and industrial missions.
SENAI / SENAI Institutes of Innovation	Technical training / industrial innovation	Act in professional training, applied research, and technological support for industry.	SENAI Innovation Institutes reports and programs	Connect technical qualification, manufacturing, Industry 4.0, and applied innovation.
Embrapii	Applied research / bridge to industry	Finances cooperative projects between research units and firms.	Cooperative industrial innovation projects	Helps reduce the "valley of death" between research and market by bringing ICTs, research institutes, and firms closer together.

Interpretive Synthesis

Layer of the Institutional Board	Typical Institutions	Function in the Gospel of Innovation	Critical Risk
Soul / Ideology	Think tanks, consultancies, authors, WEF	Produce narratives, concepts, and visions of the future.	Transforming innovation into faith, slogan, or historical inevitability.
Body / Physical Territory	Brookings, IASP, IDB, 22@, urban agencies	Translate innovation into parks, districts, hubs, clusters, and urban areas.	Confusing infrastructure with ecosystem.
Brain / Metrics and Regulation	OECD, WIPO, UNCTAD, European Commission, Nesta	Create indicators, rankings, manuals, standards, and categories.	Measuring innovation without measuring real development.
Blood / Capital and Funding	World Bank, IDB, BNDES, Finep, FAPESP, venture capital	Finance projects, firms, infrastructure, and policies.	Socializing risks and privatizing gains.
Muscles / Talent and Training	MIT, Fraunhofer, SENAI, Embrapii, universities	Form skills, methods, competencies, and innovative subjects.	Reducing education to entrepreneurial employability.
Face / Visual Imaginary	Guggenheim, Bilbao Ría 2000, starchitects, city branding	Create icons, landmarks, and global images of innovation.	Replacing productive policy with architectural spectacle.

Appendix 4 - Critical Glossary

Evangelist

An evangelist is an agent who disseminates, translates, and legitimizes a belief. In the field of innovation, the evangelist is not necessarily a religious figure, but someone who announces a secular good news: that technology, entrepreneurship, creativity, startups, ecosystems, hubs, and innovation districts can redeem cities, universities, workers, regions, and countries from crisis.

The evangelist of innovation may be an author, consultant, entrepreneur, public manager, investor, university leader, think tank, bank, international organization, architect, accelerator, or ranking institution. Their role is to transform complex ideas into persuasive narratives. The risk is that, in this translation, innovation becomes faith, slogan, and doctrine rather than public policy, historical process, and social mission.

Ecosystem

An ecosystem is a set of interdependent relations among actors, institutions, resources, rules, territories, and flows. In innovation discourse, the term refers to the articulation among universities, companies, startups, governments, investors, incubators, accelerators, research centers, workers, mentors, and support institutions.

The word is powerful because it suggests balance, cooperation, diversity, and organic interaction. But innovation ecosystems are not natural forests. They are historically constructed, politically disputed, institutionally organized, and socially unequal. The risk is using the term to hide asymmetries of power, dependence on public funding, real estate interests, weak firms, precarious labor, and the absence of mission.

Hub

A hub is a node of connection. In innovation environments, it usually refers to a physical or institutional space designed to gather entrepreneurs, startups, mentors, companies, investors, universities, events, and public agencies. The hub promises circulation, encounter, collaboration, and acceleration.

Its critical ambiguity lies in the fact that a hub may connect actors, but it does not necessarily produce innovation. Without firms, funding, knowledge, demand, technical capacity, and public mission, the hub may become only an event space, a symbolic address, or a scenography of the new economy.

Startup

A startup is an organization created to develop a new product, service, technology, platform, or business model under conditions of uncertainty, usually with the expectation of rapid growth and scalability. In contemporary innovation culture, the startup became one of the privileged figures of the new economy.

The risk is transforming the startup into the universal model of innovation. Not every innovation needs to become a startup. Not every social problem can be solved through a scalable business model. Not every entrepreneur is a technological innovator. In countries marked by inequality and precarization, the startup vocabulary may also confuse productive entrepreneurship with survival entrepreneurship.

Pitch

A pitch is a short, persuasive presentation of a project, company, product, or idea, usually addressed to investors, mentors, judges, companies, or public agencies. It condenses problem, solution, market, business model, team, traction, and request into a few minutes.

The pitch is useful as a communication tool, but it is also a ritual of selection. It rewards those who master performance, business language, confidence, slides, storytelling, and the codes of the ecosystem. The risk is that the quality of the presentation may become more valued than the social relevance, technical density, or public usefulness of the project.

Hackathon

A hackathon is an event in which teams work intensively, usually over a short period, to propose solutions, prototypes, applications, dashboards, or models for a given challenge. It is one of the central rituals of innovation culture.

Hackathons can stimulate learning, collaboration, experimentation, and the visibility of problems. But they may also simplify complex social, urban, environmental, and public policy challenges. Floods, health, mobility, sanitation, education, and inequality cannot be solved in a weekend. The risk is replacing long-term public policy with prototypes and treating political problems as merely technical challenges.

Creative Class

The creative class is the group of workers associated with knowledge, technology, science, design, culture, communication, media, education, and symbolic production. Richard Florida argued that cities capable of attracting creative workers would become more dynamic, especially when combining technology, talent, and tolerance.

The critical problem lies in the vulgarization of this idea. The creative class may become a redeeming subject: if cities create cafés, bike lanes, cultural districts, nightlife, and amenities, talent will supposedly arrive and development will follow. This is the basis of the Café Myth. The concept becomes dangerous when it justifies gentrification, elitized consumption, and urban policies aimed at attracting middle and upper classes rather than reducing inequality.

Creative City

The creative city is the city that mobilizes culture, imagination, diversity, participation, and innovation to confront urban and economic challenges. In its best version, the concept values cultural life, local knowledge, urban experimentation, and collective imagination.

In its vulgarized version, however, the creative city becomes a marketing strategy. Culture is reduced to an economic asset. Artists and popular territories become instruments of branding. Historical neighborhoods become consumption landscapes. The risk is transforming creativity into a competitiveness tool while ignoring housing, labor, infrastructure, and social justice.

Innovation District

An innovation district is an urban area designed to concentrate universities, companies, startups, research centers, housing, public spaces, cafés, services, mobility, and cultural amenities. It is presented as a denser, more urban, more mixed, and more connected alternative to isolated technology parks.

Innovation districts can favor proximity and interaction. But they do not create ecosystems automatically. Without industrial policy, firms, financing, talent formation, affordable housing, public transportation, and mission, they may become real estate projects dressed in the language of the future. The risk is believing that "if you build it, they will come."

Technology Park

A technology park is a planned space, often associated with universities, research centers, companies, incubators, laboratories, and public agencies, designed to support technological development and university-industry interaction. It may be an important instrument for organizing scientific and productive capabilities.

Its limit is that infrastructure alone does not generate innovation. A technology park without firms, demand, financing, governance, workers, public procurement, and mission risks becoming an address rather than an ecosystem. The park must be understood as an instrument of policy, not as a miracle of development.

Open Innovation

Open innovation is the idea that companies and institutions innovate not only through internal research, but also by mobilizing external knowledge from universities, startups, suppliers, clients, users, public agencies, and networks. It values collaboration, circulation, partnerships, licensing, and knowledge exchange.

Its critical ambiguity concerns appropriation. Who finances the knowledge? Who owns the patent? Who captures the value? Who defines the agenda? Open innovation can strengthen networks, but it can also facilitate the private capture of collectively produced knowledge. Without public mission and social return, openness may become extraction.

Triple Helix

The Triple Helix is the model that explains innovation through interaction among university, industry, and government. The university produces knowledge and talent; industry transforms knowledge into products, services, and processes; government finances, regulates, induces, coordinates, and creates conditions.

The model is important, but often vulgarized. The mere presence of university, company, and government at the same table does not create innovation. Formal agreements, councils, memoranda, and inaugurations do not guarantee ecosystems. A real Triple Helix requires trust, funding, firms with absorptive capacity, public demand, industrial strategy, governance, and long-term missions.

Disruption

Disruption refers to processes through which new technologies, business models, or entrants transform existing markets, sometimes displacing established firms. Clayton Christensen's theory of disruptive innovation originally had a specific analytical meaning.

In business vulgarization, however, any novelty becomes "disruptive." The risk is celebrating rupture without evaluating its social, labor, urban, environmental, or regulatory effects. Not every disruption is

emancipatory. Some disruptions destroy rights, precarize workers, weaken public systems, and privatize gains. A democratic theory of innovation must ask not only what is disrupted, but who benefits and who pays the cost.

City Branding

City branding is the strategic construction of a city's image, reputation, and identity in order to attract investment, tourists, events, firms, talent, and international visibility. Architecture, culture, history, landscape, innovation, quality of life, landmarks, and lifestyle are transformed into components of a territorial brand.

The risk is treating the city as a product. When branding replaces democratic planning, social conflicts disappear from the official image. The city becomes a showcase. Innovation districts, landmarks, creative neighborhoods, and smart city strategies may improve reputation, but they do not necessarily reduce inequality, improve housing, strengthen industry, or produce public value.

Entrepreneurial State

The entrepreneurial State is the State that assumes risks, finances uncertain technologies, creates markets, orients investments, builds capabilities, and organizes public missions. In Mariana Mazzucato's formulation, the State is not merely a regulator or a corrector of market failures; it is an active agent of innovation.

The risk of vulgarization is confusing the entrepreneurial State with simple encouragement of individual entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurial State is not the State that tells precarious workers to become entrepreneurs of themselves. It is the State that organizes collective resources, public risk, industrial policy, scientific capacity, and missions to confront historical challenges.

Mission

A mission is a collective, public, and strategic challenge capable of orienting science, technology, industry, financing, public procurement, universities, companies, and territories. Unlike a slogan, a mission defines direction, coordinates resources, articulates sectors, and evaluates results around problems such as health, sanitation, energy, climate adaptation, mobility, housing, food security, or technological sovereignty.

Mission is the opposite of dispersed innovation. Without mission, innovation becomes a collection of events, calls, startups, hubs, rankings, and images. With mission, innovation can become a public project of transformation.

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Appendix 5 - Timeline of Territorial Innovation

From Schumpeter to Silicon Valley, from Barcelona to 22@, from China to the Torch Program, from Brazilian Technology Parks to Innovation Districts

This timeline organizes the main historical, theoretical, institutional, and territorial milestones that shaped the contemporary relationship between innovation, territory, technology, and ideology. Its purpose is not to present a complete chronology of innovation, but to show how certain concepts, policies, territories, and myths gradually formed the global grammar of technology parks, innovation districts, creative cities, entrepreneurial universities, startup ecosystems, and mission-oriented innovation.

Period / Year	Milestone	Territorial Logic	Contribution	Critical Reading
1911 / 1942	Schumpeter formulates innovation and later creative destruction	Innovation as capitalist rupture	Places the entrepreneur and innovation at the center of capitalist dynamics	Later vulgarized into the myth of the heroic entrepreneur
1930s–1970s	Formation of Silicon Valley	University, defense, electronics, semiconductors, and regional networks	Creates the territorial matrix of digital innovation	Later reduced to garages, founders, and venture capital
1940s–1960s	Expansion of U.S. military and aerospace research	State, Cold War, universities, and public procurement	DARPA, NASA, defense contracts, computing, microelectronics	Erased by the myth of purely private innovation
1969	Creation of Embraer in Brazil	State, aeronautical engineering, ITA, CTA, public demand	Builds Brazilian aeronautical capacity	Shows that innovation can be mission-oriented and territorial
1970s–1980s	Diffusion of science parks and technology parks	Planned environments linked to universities and firms	Consolidates the model of spatially organized innovation	Often confused infrastructure with ecosystem
1978 onward	Chinese reform and opening	Territorial experimentation, special zones, controlled opening	Creates conditions for industrial learning and global insertion	Shows that territory can be an instrument of national strategy
1980	Shenzhen becomes a	Export industry,	Becomes one of the	Demonstrates that

	Special Economic Zone	manufacturing, technology learning, infrastructure	world's major innovation-manufacturing territories	innovation depends on production, not only ideas
1985	Peter Drucker publishes Innovation and Entrepreneurship	Innovation as organizational discipline	Treats innovation as systematic and manageable	Later reduced to managerial manuals and motivational culture
1986	China launches the 863 Program	Strategic high technology	Supports biotechnology, space, information technology, automation, energy, and materials	Innovation as national technological mission
1988	China launches the Torch Program	High-tech zones and technology commercialization	Organizes Chinese technology parks and high-tech industrial zones	Counters the "if you build it, they will come" myth by linking parks to policy
1989	Harvey analyzes urban entrepreneurialism	Competitive city, public-private partnerships, urban projects	Explains the shift from managerial to entrepreneurial urban governance	Foundation for the critique of the city as enterprise
1992	Barcelona Olympic Games	Strategic planning, public space, global image	Consolidates the Barcelona model	Urban success becomes an exportable model
1994	Saxenian compares Silicon Valley and Route 128	Regional networks and interfirm learning	Shows the importance of territorial culture and professional mobility	Innovation is relational, not only corporate
1996 / 1999	Castells publishes The Information Age	Network society, space of flows, informational capitalism	Explains the territorial logic of global networks	Sometimes vulgarized as technological determinism
1997	Borja and Castells publish Local and	City as strategic actor	Strengthens strategic urban planning and	Helps form the competitive city

	Global		global city discourse	imaginary
1997	Christensen publishes The Innovator's Dilemma	Disruptive innovation	Explains how entrants challenge incumbents	Later every novelty becomes "disruption"
2000	Creation of 22@ Barcelona	Industrial-to-knowledge district	Converts Poblenou into an innovation district	Combines innovation, branding, real estate valorization, and productive gentrification
2000	Landry publishes The Creative City	Culture and imagination as urban resources	Gives urban creativity a planning vocabulary	Later reduced to cultural marketing
2001	Howkins publishes The Creative Economy	Ideas, culture, and intellectual property as value	Consolidates the creative economy field	Risks reducing culture to market asset
2002	Florida publishes The Rise of the Creative Class	Talent, tolerance, technology, amenities	Makes the creative class central to urban development strategies	Origin of the Café Myth
2003	Chesbrough publishes Open Innovation	Knowledge networks and collaboration	Shows firms innovate through external knowledge	Risks private capture of collective knowledge
2004	Brazil approves the Innovation Law	Legal framework for university-industry-government relations	Encourages technological innovation and cooperation	Requires mission and industrial policy to avoid formalism
2005	Steve Blank consolidates customer development	Startup learning and market validation	Strengthens startup methodology	Later society itself is treated as a startup
2008	Etzkowitz publishes The Triple Helix	University-industry-government interaction	Consolidates a global model for innovation policy	Often reduced to formal agreements
2011	Ries publishes The Lean Startup	MVP, rapid testing, validated learning	Becomes a startup catechism	Risk of applying startup logic to public policy

				and rights
2013	Mazzucato publishes The Entrepreneurial State	State as risk-taker and market creator	Restores public risk and State direction to innovation	Must not be vulgarized as individual entrepreneurship
2014	Katz and Wagner publish The Rise of Innovation Districts	Dense, mixed, walkable, connected urban districts	Gives territorial form to the new geography of innovation	Strengthens the innovation district model and the "if you build it" risk
2015	China launches Made in China 2025	Advanced manufacturing and technological sovereignty	Defines strategic sectors for industrial upgrading	Technonationalism as response to dependence
2016	Brazil approves the Legal Framework for Science, Technology and Innovation	Institutional simplification and cooperation	Strengthens legal instruments for innovation	Still insufficient without national missions
2017	Florida publishes The New Urban Crisis	Critique of inequality in creative cities	Recognizes contradictions of the creative class model	Confirms that innovation can deepen urban inequality
2020	Zukin publishes The Innovation Complex	Land, labor, culture, capital, and urban tech	Provides the central concept for reading innovation as urban complex	Shows innovation as material, symbolic, and conflictual
2021	Mazzucato publishes Mission Economy	Mission-oriented public policy	Reorients innovation toward major collective challenges	Key to moving beyond slogan innovation
2020s	Expansion of innovation districts in Brazil and Latin America	Hubs, parks, startup ecosystems, creative districts	Circulation of global models in peripheral contexts	Risk of importing form without structure
Present	Return of industrial policy and technological sovereignty debates	Climate, health, semiconductors, energy, digital sovereignty	Innovation returns as strategic State agenda	Opens space for mission-oriented policies in the Global South

Five Genealogies of Territorial Innovation

1. The Economic Genealogy: Schumpeter and Creative Destruction

The first genealogy begins with Schumpeter. Innovation appears as the engine of capitalism, capable of destroying old productive structures and creating new ones. This genealogy gave enormous strength to the figure of the entrepreneur. Its critical risk is the transformation of the entrepreneur into an abstract hero detached from institutions, public policy, industry, territory, and social relations.

2. The Technoscientific Genealogy: Silicon Valley

The second genealogy is territorial and technoscientific. Silicon Valley became the global image of digital innovation, but its formation depended on universities, the State, defense, semiconductors, public procurement, venture capital, and regional networks. Its myth reduced this complex history to garages, founders, and entrepreneurial culture.

3. The Urban Genealogy: Barcelona and 22@

The third genealogy is urban. Barcelona transformed strategic planning, public space, architecture, culture, and city branding into a global model. With 22@, this model was updated through the knowledge economy and the innovation district. Its critical contradiction lies in productive gentrification, real estate valorization, and the transformation of industrial memory into creative scenery.

4. The Developmentalist Genealogy: China and the Torch Program

The fourth genealogy is developmentalist. China shows that innovation territories can be instruments of national strategy when connected to State coordination, industrial policy, manufacturing, technological learning, public investment, and mission. Its lesson is powerful, but it also carries warnings about inequality, labor discipline, environmental pressure, surveillance, and authoritarian control.

5. The Peripheral Genealogy: Brazil and Incomplete Innovation

The fifth genealogy is Brazilian and peripheral. Brazil has scientific institutions, public universities, Embraer, Embrapa, Petrobras, Fiocruz, Butantan, Finep, BNDES, FAPESP, technology parks, and regional ecosystems. But it also faces deindustrialization, inequality, dependence, fragmentation, and discontinuity. Its challenge is not to imitate Silicon Valley, Barcelona, or China, but to build mission-oriented innovation rooted in its own territory.

Synthetic Interpretation

The timeline shows that territorial innovation did not emerge from a single source. It is the result of overlapping genealogies: economic theory, military research, university-industry relations, strategic urban planning, creative economy, entrepreneurial methods, institutional metrics, State missions, development banks, technology parks, innovation districts, and global branding.

The critical lesson is clear: innovation became territorial when cities, regions, universities, States, companies, and institutions began to transform technology into landscape, strategy, identity, and promise. But the same process also produced myths. Garages, cafés, districts, icons, rankings, and events became symbolic shortcuts for complex historical processes.

For the Global South, this timeline offers a warning and a possibility.

The warning: importing the visible forms of innovation without the invisible structures that sustain them produces dependency, scenography, and disappointment.

The possibility: innovation can be reconstructed as a mission-oriented, territorially rooted, socially just, and historically situated project.

The future of innovation in the Global South will not come from copying models. It will come from transforming knowledge into collective capability.

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Appendix 6 - Ten Theses on the Evangelists of Innovation

1. Innovation Has Become the Secular Gospel of Contemporary Capitalism

Innovation is no longer merely a technical or economic process. It has become a language of salvation. It promises to redeem deindustrialized cities, underfunded universities, precarious workers, companies in crisis, and States without national projects. Its evangelists announce the good news: all one must do is undertake, connect, accelerate, disrupt, create ecosystems, attract talent, and build innovative environments.

But when innovation becomes gospel, it ceases to be analyzed as a historical relation among State, territory, technology, labor, capital, and power. It becomes belief.

2. Evangelists Are Not Only in Books; They Are in Institutions, Rankings, and Walls

The evangelists of innovation are not only authors such as Richard Florida, Bruce Katz, Henry Etzkowitz, or Mariana Mazzucato. They are also think tanks, multilateral banks, consultancies, accelerators, entrepreneurial universities, funding agencies, international rankings, methodological manuals, strategic plans, and motivational phrases printed on the walls of hubs.

The gospel of innovation circulates as theory, metric, architecture, financing, event, slogan, and public policy. Its strength lies precisely in appearing natural, inevitable, and desirable.

3. Innovation Is Too Important to Be Left to Slogans

"Innovate," "disrupt," "fail fast," "love what you do," "be the protagonist," and "build the future" are formulas of the moral pedagogy of the new economy. They transform structural problems into individual challenges.

Unemployment becomes lack of attitude. Precarization becomes flexibility. The absence of industrial policy becomes entrepreneurial opportunity. The underfunding of science becomes inability to sell ideas.

Innovation must be removed from the motivational wall and placed back on the terrain of public policy, political economy, and territorial justice.

4. Garages, Cafés, Hackathons, and Pitches Do Not Create Development by Themselves

The garage myth erases the State, universities, the military industry, semiconductors, and public financing that made Silicon Valley possible. The café myth imagines that bars, bike lanes, coworking spaces, and urban amenities automatically attract the creative class. The "if you build it, they will come" myth believes that technology parks and districts summon companies and talent through spontaneous generation.

Hackathons and pitches may create networks and mobilize energy, but they do not replace missions, financing, industry, wages, institutions, and public demand.

5. Technology Parks Are Not Ecosystems: They Are Only One Possible Infrastructure

A technology park, hub, or innovation district does not create an ecosystem automatically. It may support innovation if there are universities, firms, financing, workers, public procurement, technological demand, trust, governance, and mission. Without these elements, the park becomes an address, a showcase, a real estate asset, or an event venue.

The mistake of the evangelists is to confuse spatial form with historical process.

6. The Innovative City Can Also Be the City of Gentrification

Innovation districts, creative cities, and technological landmarks promise to regenerate degraded areas, attract talent, and reposition cities on the global map. But they can also raise rents, displace residents, replace productive activities, aestheticize industrial memory, and transform culture into real estate rent.

22@ Barcelona reveals this ambiguity: it is a laboratory of urban innovation, but also a field of dispute over land, memory, labor, and value. The innovative city is not necessarily the just city.

7. The State Is Not the Enemy of Innovation; It Is One of Its Historical Conditions

The neoliberal gospel of innovation often presents the State as an obstacle and the market as the natural source of creativity. History shows the opposite.

Silicon Valley depended on DARPA, universities, public contracts, and the defense industry. China built technological capabilities through industrial policy, special zones, the Torch Program, and national missions. Embraer was born from ITA, CTA, the Brazilian Air Force, the State, and public demand. As Mazzucato shows, the State does not merely correct market failures: it creates markets, assumes risks, and orients technological trajectories (MAZZUCATO, 2013; 2021).

8. Without Mission, Innovation Becomes Dispersion

Socially relevant innovation must respond to collective problems: sanitation, public health, climate adaptation, mobility, housing, digital sovereignty, green reindustrialization, territorial integration, energy, food, and inequality reduction.

Without mission, public calls become dispersed, parks become empty, startups become fetishes, universities become isolated, and public funding loses direction. The fundamental question is not how many startups were created, but which collective capabilities were built.

9. The Global South Does Not Need to Copy the Valley, Barcelona, or Shenzhen; It Needs to Build Its Own Paths

Silicon Valley is not replicable as a recipe. Barcelona is not a universal model. China should not be converted into a new gospel.

The Global South must learn critically from these experiences, but formulate its own missions from its own territories, inequalities, productive capabilities, and social needs. For Brazil, this means thinking innovation through sanitation, the SUS, the Amazon, industry, energy, housing, mobility, climate adaptation, public universities, and unequal cities.

10. Innovation Deserves That Name Only When It Expands Collective Capabilities

Innovation should not be measured only by patents, rankings, unicorns, applications, valuation, number of pitches, or quantity of inaugurated hubs. It should be measured by its capacity to improve life, build sovereignty, generate dignified work, reduce inequalities, strengthen public institutions, expand rights, and confront historical problems.

The electric shower and the Bandeirante teach this: the most important innovation is not always the most glamorous, digital, or profitable. It is the one that responds, with technical intelligence and territorial rootedness, to a collective need.

Manifesto

Against the empty gospel of innovation, we defend innovation as public mission.

Against the garage myth, we defend national systems of science, technology, and industry.

Against the café myth, we defend wages, universities, housing, dignified work, and urban policy.

Against the icon myth, we defend social, productive, and territorial infrastructure.

Against the startup as fetish, we defend collective capabilities.

Against survival entrepreneurship, we defend rights.

Against the commodity-city, we defend the just city.

Against abstract rankings, we defend technological sovereignty and social return.

Against innovation as spectacle, we defend innovation as historical project.

Innovation is not a faith.

It is not a wall covered with phrases.

It is not an illuminated tower.

It is not a café full of laptops.

It is not a three-minute pitch.

Innovation is the collective capacity of a people to transform knowledge into a shared future.