

Resource for Sharing Cities: Collaborative Consumption and Social Enterprises

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Abstract

A decade after sharing city initiatives were announced, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has developed its projects under economic circumstances. In the meantime, the concept of social enterprise has also grown with the same goal of public initiatives. However, as both have focused on using idle resources, they have struggled to maintain sustainability. Accepting the triadic relationship concept of collaborative consumption, to achieve the fundamental goal and resolve the common problem, local government, and social enterprises could opt for collaborative consumption as a way to set up their business model and design the role for each player. This chapter mainly focuses on explaining each concept and describing the structure of the three factors, with practical examples of the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Keywords: collaborative consumption, sharing city initiatives, social enterprise, sustainable consumption.

¿Cómo citar este capítulo? / How to cite this chapter?

Baek, M. (2024). Resource for Sharing Cities: Collaborative Consumption and Social Enterprises. En S. Zerpa de Hurtado y Á. Licona Michel (Eds.), *Corea del Sur en el contexto global* (vol. 8, pp. 104-120). Ediciones Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia y Universidad de Colima. <https://doi.org/10.16925/9789587605143>

Recurso para ciudades compartidas: consumo colaborativo y empresas sociales

Resumen

Una década después de que se anunciaran las iniciativas de ciudades compartidas, el Gobierno Metropolitano de Seúl ha desarrollado sus proyectos en circunstancias económicas. Mientras tanto, el concepto de empresa social también ha crecido con el mismo objetivo de las iniciativas públicas. Sin embargo, como ambos se han centrado en utilizar recursos ociosos, han luchado por mantener la sostenibilidad. Aceptar el concepto de relación triádica del consumo colaborativo, para alcanzar el objetivo fundamental y resolver el problema común, la Administración local y las empresas sociales podrían optar por el consumo colaborativo para establecer su modelo de negocio y diseñar el papel de cada actor. Este documento se centra principalmente en explicar cada concepto y describir la estructura de los tres factores con ejemplos prácticos del Gobierno Metropolitano de Seúl.

Palabras clave: consumo colaborativo, iniciativas de ciudades compartidas, empresa social, consumo sostenible.

Introduction

On September 20, 2012, the Seoul Metropolitan Government presented the “Sharing City Seoul” initiatives under the sharing economy concept and promoted the sharing culture to maximize the efficiency of public resources. This initiative utilized idle resources to systemize the time, information, and space-sharing in society. The local government presented three primary purposes with the announcement: Maximizing resource consumption efficiency, community restoration, and revitalizing the urban economy. Under this goal, the local government introduced five priority projects, Figure 1, to the sharing economy: Goods, Space, Human (talent), Time, and Information.

In the meantime, the general idea of the “sharing city” is also introduced and accepted by Latin American countries. Nowadays, multiple cities, including the capital cities of Brazil and Colombia, are expanding their capacity with this development plan. This is because the economic idea of the local government has contributed to the global city plan and has more significant potential for sustainable growth and SDGs.

However, until recent days, the idea and physical practices of the sharing economy are more likely to be applied in the private sector, particularly for market rebalancing and regulatory frameworks. Even though it has a fundamental characteristic of social benefit by utilizing idle resources, the practical cases have been concentrated on a few influential private players, such as Uber and Airbnb. Furthermore, as the initiatives are based on the public sector, they highly depend on political and economic conditions, such as changes in the ruling party, restrictions in policies or regulations, and the annual budget for subsidy. This is why previous studies have focused more on the social conditions, resources, and infrastructure with relatively less interest in alternatives or assistance from other players.

Figure 1. Five Priority Projects for the Sharing Initiatives of Seoul

Sharing City Initiative Priority Project

Goods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Easy Car sharing 2. Shared bookshelf 3. Neighborhood workshop 4. Children's clothing sharing 5. Medical equipment sharing 6. Office equipment sharing
Space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Smart parking lot sharing 2. One-roof generation empathy 3. Vitalization of homestay with tourism 4. Open space project 5. Senior leisure and welfare facility complex 6. Resolving youth-housing problem through sharing
Human	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Library Mentor sharing 2. Seoul Mecenat Matching 3. Co-prepared Special wedding
Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. S-Job Joint recruitment project 2. CO-purchasement of kindergarden and welfare facilities
Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Wi-Fi Seoul Project 2. Seoul Photo Bank 3. Cultural information sharing through smart technologies

Source: Own elaboration.

In this context, this chapter describes how social enterprises based on collaborative consumption could be a part of the sharing city initiatives and contribute to resource procurement of those public initiatives. As Oliveira delivered constellation analysis, this chapter suggests an original view of social enterprises with the sharing economy with related sectors (De Oliveira *et al.*, 2022). In Chapter Three's main chapter, this chapter explains how the three concepts work together and relocate the structure for the positive results of the sharing city initiatives and social enterprises with collaborative consumption.

Theoretical Background and Conceptual Foundation

Clarifying the definitions and concepts is important before this article connects three main keywords. It varies on researchers and criteria. It is noticeable that

sharing city, social enterprises and collaborative consumption have relatively common points with a general idea of a sharing economy. Some articles found the starting point of the sharing economy at Focolare of Brazil in 1991 (Kang, 2012; Lubich, 2001). However, the fundamental idea of “sharing resources” is supposed to have come out much before that year. For instance, we can find the “sharing city” practice in Colombia in 1974: The Ciclovía initiatives. In any case, the primary purpose of this article is not necessarily to find out the origin of each concept. This chapter will focus on the characteristics and meaning of the relationship between each other and practical cases.

Sharing City Initiatives

The local government of Seoul announced “The Sharing City Seoul” initiatives in 2012, the first time in the global sharing city project. Based on one concept of the initiatives, “sharing”, the city tested and accepted various ideas and proposals to actualize the sharing economy.

Even if the word “sharing city” does not impose an economic sense, the implements are based on economic engagement from public and private sectors so that it could be analyzed as one of the sharing economy practices. It is necessary to briefly define the idea of the sharing economy for this article to clarify and prevent any misunderstanding regarding the structure of this article’s description. The academic term “sharing economy” was primally labeled by Lawrence Lessig in 2008 (Lessig, 2008). It is a form of economy based on sharing and collaboratively consuming one completed product by open users (Kang, 2012).

As Figure 1 shows, Seoul divided five sectors for the sharing sector and designated 27 companies and non-profitable organizations for the first step. As the fundamental purpose of the sharing city initiatives of Seoul was to improve traffic and environmental issues caused by vehicles and housing problems, most of the projects were focused on item sharing and space sharing, which means “tangible property sharing”. Among those, we can see parking space sharing, tool sharing, space in church sharing, meeting room sharing, kid’s wear, suite sharing, house sharing, and car sharing. For the tangible property aspect, it is clear that they are more likely to share idle resources and individual property. On the other hand, intangible property sharing has more diversity than the others. We can see intellectual property sharing, multicultural knowledge sharing, job and wisdom sharing, and even trip experience sharing. However, the common aspect between those two has been proposed, developed, and modified along with Korean culture and customers’ needs.

For example, as Kwak (2013) said, based on the basic concept of a sharing economy, Seoul developed this idea of a non-commercial economy and eco-friendly and

cooperative enterprises. This approach helped the policy fit the local problem, not only the house and vehicle one, but also encouraged social enterprises that mainly pursue social benefits rather than maximizing profit and caring for foreign workers, increasing yearly and establishing time bicycle-sharing infrastructure.

Above all, the meaning of these projects could be understood as a localized practice of sharing economy for one country. For example, to overcome the regulation for the proper protection and security issue of house-sharing services, Seoul encouraged more flexible enterprises for car and house-sharing services instead of just accepting Uber and Airbnb with localized modifications. Ten years after the announcement, although many early projects and enterprises have disappeared, more cooperative and startup companies have engaged in the initiatives.

Collaborative Consumption

“Collaborative consumption” refers to new consumer behavior where consumers utilize advanced IT technology to share or exchange products, equipment, and more among themselves. It is a socio-economic system based on a public infrastructure where individuals relinquish full ownership and opt for temporary utilization. This behavior contrasts traditional notions of property rights and represents a more advanced form of collaborative engagement, distinct from alternative consumption practices such as bartering.

Collaborative consumption has become a significant and growing element of the economy in many countries (Benoit *et al.*, 2017). Collaborative Consumption (cc) is a business model for sharing a particular product that provides a way to delay or prevent waste by exchanging used goods that are not used or desired among individual groups. Moreover, cc is an alternative ecological consumption method and as a socio-economic basis that will change how a company thinks about its value proposition and how people meet their needs (Botsman *et al.*, 2010).

cc is when one or more persons consume economic goods or services in joint activities with one or more others (Felson & Spaeth, 1978). Botsman and Rogers suggested that cc stands for traditional sharing, exchange, lending, trading, leasing, futures, and exchanges redefined through technology and peer communities (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Ertz, Myriam and Durif argued that cc is a set of resource rotation systems that enable consumers to acquire, temporarily, or permanently deliver valuable resources or services through direct interaction with other consumers or through intermediaries (Ertz *et al.*, 2016).

However, collaborative consumption has been mentioned and used in various terms (Choi, 2022). As we can see below in Table 1, many articles have

described and mentioned similar terms of collaborative consumption to describe their purposes.

Table 1. Concepts of Collaborative Consumption and Sharing

No	Terms	Year	Author	Characteristics
1	Access-Based Consumption	2012	Bardhi & Eckhardt	Categorized six dimensions based on the accessed object
2	Access-Based Service	2016	Schaefers <i>et al.</i>	Contagious misbehavior of access-based service
3	Non-Ownership Services	2013	Wittkowski <i>et al.</i>	Reason and factors to use non-ownership services by firms
4	Sharing	2012	Belk & Llamas	Explained it as a fundamental consumer behavior
5	Commercial Sharing Systems	2012	Cait & Rose	Explained the term with shared goods
6	Two-Sided Markets	2006	Rochet & Tirole	Explained usage charge and membership fee for the industry
8	Collaborative Consumption	2010	Botsman & Rogers	Conceptualized the idea and flexible economic term

Source: Own elaboration.

Nevertheless, nowadays, collaborative consumption is more likely to connect with an internet network, platform or mediator for consumers and suppliers. However, the necessity and appearance of the platform are only for the accelerator of collaborative consumption, so it does not redefine the fundamental idea of collaborative consumption, which is sharing idle resources with others. In this context, collaborative consumption could be understood as a methodology for sharing city initiatives.

Social Enterprises

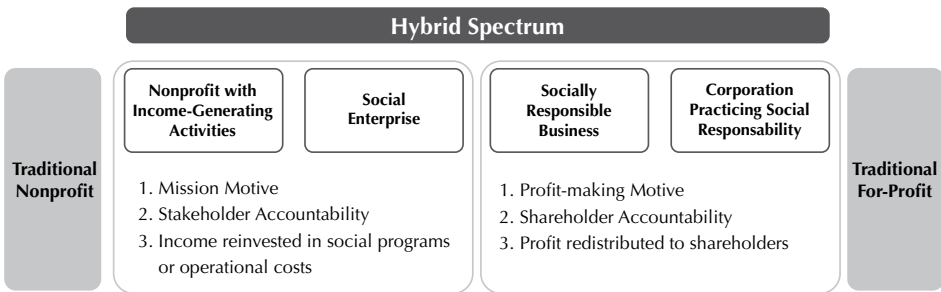
Social enterprises are a part of the social economy, aiming to accomplish the social goal with market preference (Doherty *et al.*, 2023). Social enterprises are a leading factor in the social economy and pursue profit to achieve social goals (Defourny & Nyssens, 2008).

This chapter is more focused on the standard definition of OECD, which is “any private activity conducted in the public interest, organized with an entrepreneurial

strategy, whose main purpose is not the maximization of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals, and which has the capacity for bringing innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment” (OECD, 2023).

In Korea, social enterprises are legalized and encouraged by the social enterprise promotion act to make employment of vulnerable classes and provide social services (Kim, 2010).

Figure 2. Spectrum and Location of Social Enterprise



Source: From Alter (2007).

During this time, the government established the Social Enterprise Promotion Act to foster social enterprises for job creation and the provision of social services. Moreover, in the process, the central government has delegated significant authority over social enterprise promotion policies to local governments, leading them to prioritize cultivating social enterprises. The social enterprise promotion policy has yielded visible results through these efforts. However, the issue of sustainability remains, and various solutions have been suggested to address the crisis (Kang, 2012).

Method and Conceptual Characteristics

Common Characteristics of Social Enterprises and Sharing City Initiative

This chapter acknowledges the triadic framework of Sabine and Benoit. The chapter explained a triangular structure of collaborative consumption: the customer, the peer service provider, and the platform provider. Understanding this chapter makes it easy to make another structure with the three factors: sharing city, collaborative consumption, and social enterprise.

With this chapter, many studies have found common ground between the sharing economy and social enterprise. As the sharing economy does, social enterprises

also have a clear purpose to benefit the local community. One of the primary purposes of social enterprises is to serve and dedicate themselves to the people of the local community or specific groups. From the same perspective, the characteristics of social enterprises aim to foster awareness of social responsibility at the local level (Borzaga & Santuari, 2001).

Also, both the sharing economy and social enterprises emphasize equal participation as a crucial element. The emphasis on equality is evident within the sharing economy. By sharing their benefits, entrepreneurs in this context view themselves as contributors to creating a fairer society (Lorna, 2010).

Under those common factors and concepts, there are fundamental conditions to explain the structure of the three factors. First, the government cannot be a customer of the sharing city initiatives. As this initiative aims to facilitate the idle resources within the city and let the citizens use them, the government has to attract citizens and visitors as consumers. On the other hand, the local government can invite the peer service provider or platform provider under its controller, or it can also be the provider itself. Notably, the government could open a platform for the initiatives with outsourcing or application development for the motives of the platform provider, which are innovating and reacting to the market and building beneficial relationships (Benoit *et al.*, 2017).

In practice, Seoul started a bicycle-sharing service for the whole city. At the end of 2022, 43,500 bicycles were in service, and 2,719 bicycle stations were established. The government created an application to use the resource (bicycle) and outsourced service providers to small bicycle shop owners in local villages. In this case, each participant could be described in the below graph. The government operated the business and offered a platform. Local shop owners manage and provide maintenance service as the peer service provider. Last but not least, every person who can use a smartphone is a potential customer for this project.

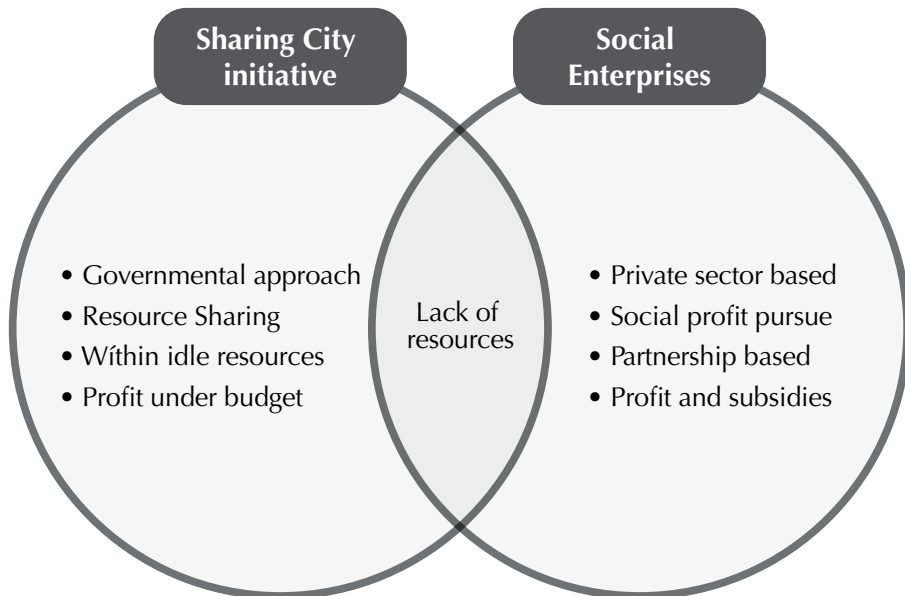
Second, collaborative consumption mainly utilizes the use of the idle resource of society. It is evident that the sharing economy also cannot be free from a limited supply. It means the supplier must invest and provide additional resources to maintain its business and limit item problems, particularly in tangible property sharing.

For example, car-sharing service and house or space service has limited availability. They can expand their business as other commercial companies if they are profitable enough and proactively invite investors. However, under the public initiatives and main purpose of the sharing city initiatives, the primary goal of the sharing service cannot be focused on profit. That is why more than 3,500 social enterprises and non-profit entities are engaged in the first step of the Seoul Sharing City initiatives.

In this context and to overcome the resource limitation, it is highly recommendable to cooperate with social enterprises that are based on collaborative consumption. In June 2022, about 3,590 companies were registered as social enterprises, and they have been legally supported by financial terms in Korea since 2010, for example, under the Social Enterprise Promotion Act of Korea. The government supports business management, education and training, subsidy and facility cost, preferential purchases by public institutions and tax reduction or exemption, financial support, and liability for social enterprises. This kind of encouragement is not only limited to South Korea but also to global enterprises. Nevertheless, even with the pre-set of policies, the government can solve the resource limitation problem and reduce additional investment to secure items for sharing city initiatives.

As other chapters described and this chapter explained above, social enterprises have the common problem of resource limitation. Social enterprises and the sharing economy consider collaboration as high value, which can originate from the social community or social resources. In this point of view, finding resources from society has to be foregone, and finding surplus from idle resources shall be guaranteed (Rheingold, 2007). However, the main reason social enterprises are not considered traditional non-profitable entities is that the actor, social enterprises, has to find economic surplus with rational logic within the sharing economy frame (Lorna, 2010).

Figure 3. Common Characteristics of Sharing City Initiative and Social Enterprise



Source: Own elaboration.

From this point of view, it can be explained that the sharing economy and sharing city initiatives have common sense social enterprises, which are finding resources from civil society and pursuing social goals with ration surplus with collaborative action. Even if the sharing economy is not only looking for social enterprises or non-profitable for its initiatives, finding a business model and pursuing sustainable profit is important for two reasons.

First, by pursuing or guaranteeing profit itself, the enterprises can lead the business and act more freely from the government. It helps enterprises gather resources and information in its own way and lets them create sustainability without government subsidies.

Secondly, by abiding by the government's subsidy, the government can also reduce its budget for the initiatives and invest that money to attract more participants and newcomers. For example, the subsidy can be divided into two categories in Korea. Economic subsidies in law include tax incentives, more low-interest loans for businesses, etc., and physical subsidies, such as business consulting, training, conferences, or incentives for public auctions. However, that kind of subsidy can also restrict its business development and let the starting enterprises put them in a safe cage by asking them to comply with the requirements. Indeed, the start-ups must earn subsidies to maintain their business until they enter the market, but encouraging them to find and let out from the safety net can also be helpful for both actors.

Conceptual Characteristics and Relationship of Sharing City Initiatives, Social Enterprises and Collaborative Consumption

As explained above, social enterprises and sharing city initiatives have the same public mission, creating additional value and market for society. For this concept, the relationship of three factors could be displayed as Figure 3. This condition allows us to find examples of triangular relationships adding collaborative consumption logic. Until now, the government has tried creating business infrastructure and social enterprise circumstances. Under the public market and social economy, the government has invited and provided business opportunities to Social Enterprises.

In practice, the Korean government already has an act for social enterprise for preferential purchases by public institutions (Social Enterprise Promotion Act, Article 12). Social enterprises made 1,623 billion KRW in revenue (about 1.3 billion us dollars) through this support in 2021. It accounts for only 2.85 %, an increase of 1.35 % points to the number of 2020 total purchases of public institutions so that

the market grew. By defining this public market as B2G (Business to Government) and inviting social enterprises, the government can create a common market to support social enterprises (Crunchbase, 2021).

However, it has been discussed and asked that social enterprises match the government's and social enterprises' expectations. According to the Social Economy Issue Bridge, one of the government's top suggestions is that social enterprises need to engage in a more precise problem definition and consider the impact. Despite their distinct purpose from regular businesses and non-profit organizations, many social enterprises have lacked clear definitions of the social issues they aim to address and connections to their missions and visions (Crunchbase, 2021). In other words, social enterprises in Seoul could not find independence with broad ambiguity and are still looking for opportunities under public initiatives.

In this sense, a more proactive role setting with a concrete target setting is needed. For quite some time, the sustainability of social enterprises has been encouraged. For example, the financial sustainability of social enterprises and economic contribution are among the most important evaluation points to earn the certification of the Social Enterprise. In this sense, social enterprises have been highly recommended to find their business model cooperating with the government's goal.

As Bostman explained, this concept has three forms: a redistribution market for resource allocation, a product-service system, and a collaborative lifestyle (Bostman *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, social enterprises could fulfill their business under this idea by sharing city initiatives.

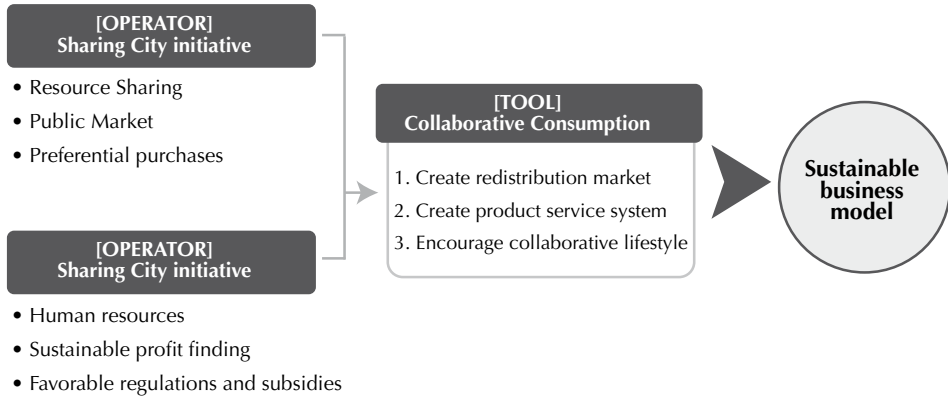
In great detail, Lee argued that Collaborative Consumption is a subset of the sharing economy. However, while collaborative consumption was mentioned as a similar notion to emphasize the key element of "collaboration" in establishing the sharing economy concept, Collaborative Consumption ultimately describes the activity centered around "consumption by users." On the other hand, the most crucial factor of the sharing economy, as perceived by Seoul citizens, emerged as the "involvement of suppliers and renters." In other words, if collaborative consumption focuses on explaining the process of activities centered around user consumption, the perception of the sharing economy among Seoul citizens emphasizes the involvement of suppliers and individuals renting resources (Lee, 2019).

Table 2. Top 15 Topics of Social Enterprises in Seoul Cares

Contents	Cases	Percentage (%)	Revenue (1 million KRW)		Operating Profit (1 million KRW)		Employees	
			Average	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total
Issue of jobs for Vulnerable Classes	95	22.9	2,625	249,405	-15	-1,499	36.5	3,427
Discrimination against socially vulnerable individuals	38	9.2	2,313	87,914	-42	-1,604	29.5	1,090
Lack of engagement in cultural and artistic activities	25	6	1,317	32,929	-6	-154	19	455
Inadequate welfare	21	5.1	2,308	48,472	17	365	37	777
Income instability among small business owners	15	3.6	1,716	25,744	35	528	20.3	305
Educational disparity among vulnerable populations	15	3.6	801	12,015	-25	-379	7.5	113
Income insecurity among vulnerable populations	13	3.1	2,192	28,498	19	250	31.6	411
Social safety net for vulnerable populations	13	3.1	1,839	23,907	20	260	39.2	509
Preparation for Retirement	10	2.4	4,573	45,733	-14	-140	42	420
Regional development imbalance	10	2.4	5,034	50,349	41	414	42.6	426
Lack of high-quality education	9	2.2	523	4,712	-75	-678	6.4	58
Single-parent/multi-cultural families	8	1.9	902	7,221	-43	-346	7.6	61
Housing insecurity	8	1.9	1,039	8,313	-61	-488	20.8	166
Entrepreneurship difficulty	7	1.7	650	4,555	-35	-250	9	63
Digital and information disparity	7	1.7	4,183	29,282	285	2,000	12.7	89
Sum of top 15 topics	294	70.8	21,344	659,049	6.73	-1,721	24.1	8,370
Total of social enterprises	414	100	2,226	921,944	-8	-3,361	29.3	12,006

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 4. Conceptual Structure of the Three Concepts for Sharing City Initiatives



Source: Own elaboration.

The three factors could be delineated as Figure 4 regarding this structure. As the operator, the Seoul metropolitan government encouraged and proactively used Seoul's social enterprise law and circumstances, finding out demand from citizens. Unlike government and social entities, collaborative consumption has no specific actor for this concept. By selecting collaborative consumption as the tool for both players, both can bind the method and avoid ambiguity of actions. Also, selecting collaborative consumption can help the players face the rack of resource problems because the term collaborative consumption has much more intuitive strategies for the customers (citizens). As Figure 4 describes, with the term collaborative consumption, the three factors have been aligned with substantive roles.

Seoul has introduced sharing city initiatives as the premiership. This idea is still developing with actual cases and various industries as these initiatives have been started by the local government, modified, and applied, undergoing the economic fluctuations with COVID-19, high inflation rate, and soaring raw materials and freight costs, more dynamic and practical approaches are needed rather than accepting superficial policies and systems.

Conclusion

The Seoul Metropolitan Government has developed sharing city initiatives over a decade. As it is based on the sharing economy concept, the characteristics of the initiatives and resources for the project have been limited. These characteristics have also been found in social enterprises; both have been analyzed and co-existed

with similarities. However, as much as they have been through similar economic circumstances and difficulties, the problem rack of resources has stood out.

This chapter focuses on the advantages of opting out of the concept of collaborative consumption for the project setting. Within this concept, governments and social enterprises could take the distinguishable role rather than equal partnership and focus more on resolving the limited resource problem by considering collaborative consumption as a business model concept. This chapter has found some examples of this concept in Korea. This initiative has been modified and adapted under political, social, and economic circumstances. The Seoul Metropolitan Government has regularly invited well-known scholars and specialists to modify its detailed projects and share their expertise. As the initiatives include sharing experience and knowledge, developing practical projects in a global context and sharing knowledge could deepen the foundation of the sharing economy.

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