Chapter 2

Towards a New Economy: Co-Creation and Open Innovation in a Trustworthy Europe

Domenico Rossetti di Valdalbero  
European Commission, Belgium

Bogdan Birnbaum  
European Commission, Belgium

ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the transition towards a new economy, where Europe can find untapped sources of growth and employment, renewing the legitimacy of public policy-making, especially through greater citizens' involvement and by delivering better public services for all. The chapter analyses the perspectives of Europe in 2050 following three dimensions: Global and European demographic changes; Economics, energy, environment and technological prospects; Geopolitics and governance. The concepts of trust, co-creation, sharing and sustainable economy, innovation, and social innovation are presented as the key ingredients of the “new” economy.

INTRODUCTION

Two strong trends are emerging in the European Union that, at first glance, appear contradictory: on the one hand, individual empowerment, and on the other, the collaborative economy.

Individuals in Europe have rarely, through history, been masters of their destiny to the extent they are today. A person can live, travel and work throughout the whole European Union. They can contact anyone across the world from a PC, tablet or smart phone. Using a 3D printer, one can make virtually anything from the comfort of its shelter. Thanks to the “selfie”, not only a great painter or a famous aristocrat can have its own portrait. By merely speaking its own language, one can communicate with half the globe with the help of automatic translation programme. Legislation on euthanasia and abortion place the rights of the individual above any superior norm. In short, the 21st century is that of the most extreme form of “egolatry”.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0568-6.ch002
Towards a New Economy

On the other hand, the collaborative economy has never been as fashionable. Driven by population growth (from 2.5 billion people in 1950 to 9 billion in 2050), the expansion of urban areas (from two megacities in 1950 to around 30 in 2050), the knowledge society (see search engines and worldwide ICT companies) and the social networks (from Facebook to Twitter), this new “collaborative economy” seems to be taking off in sectors such as tourism, transport and urban farming. Bottom-up shared consumption is gaining in popularity. In the same time there is an ever increasing demand for top-down sustainable environment, high-quality public spaces, public transport and well-planned city centres with properly maintained green areas.

Europe has to propose solutions to the current issues with and effective short, medium and long term action as suggested by the report Global Europe 2050 and the work performed by the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (European Commission [EC], 2013a; European Union [EU], 2014). Ageing population, securing sustainable resources, developing clean energy supplies, migration, instability in the neighbourhood represent the main issues at stake. The EU has to resist the charm of fanatical individualism/nationalism and keep in mind the founding principles of the European construction: de facto solidarity (the 1951 Schuman Declaration), social and economic cohesion (the counterpart to the internal market) as held dear by Jacques Delors, and intelligent, inclusive and sustainable growth. The words “fairness” and “European social resilience” ought to begin to outweigh short-term national self-interest and the “I want my money back” attitude proclaimed by an ever growing chorus – with 28 voices standing together on this point. In this context the EU should take further steps to build resilient and sustainable economy (Rossetti di Valdalbero, 2015).

Europe should reap the benefits of individual empowerment and the collaborative economy by re-discovering the concept of trust and stimulating the concept of co-creation (Moedas, 2015a). While the giants of information and communication technology across the Atlantic may be dominating the global marketplace with the Koreans, Chinese and Japanese close behind, Europe has a huge capacity for social, marketing, technological and organisational innovation to be exploited. But it needs to be given the financial and legal means to be able to grow and thrive. The book by Mariana Mazzucato is worth absorbing, and its title “The Entrepreneurial State”, speaks for itself (Mazzucato, 2013).

Over centuries, Europe has developed a particular relationship with innovation and nature. Precaution and progress go hand in hand. Man works the earth and uses it for his advantage while respecting and nurturing it. The environmental question which is well described by Michel Serres in “Le contrat naturel” permeates every part of European society (Serres, 1992). Proof of this can be seen in European regulations on the environment, agriculture and health, animal welfare, biodiversity and the fight against climate change, as well as the promotion of research, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. When Europe presents itself as the pioneer of the “circular economy”, it has in mind the interests of the individual as well as that of the collective and the environment (EC, 2014a). When Europe brings together the strands of individualism and the collaborative economy, it encourages the social entrepreneurs, the marriage between profit and volunteering, between the economic viability and the social purpose of the companies.
Related Content

A Study on Factors Influencing the Initial Public Offerings (IPO) in the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), India: During 2007-2013

Application of RFID Technology in Banking Sector
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/application-rfid-technology-banking-sector/46234?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/application-rfid-technology-banking-sector/46234?camid=4v1a)

Carbon-Efficient Supply Chains
[www.igi-global.com/article/carbon-efficient-supply-chains/134861?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/carbon-efficient-supply-chains/134861?camid=4v1a)

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/nonparametric-estimation-of-national-promotional-banks-efficiency-and-productivity/172729?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/nonparametric-estimation-of-national-promotional-banks-efficiency-and-productivity/172729?camid=4v1a)