

EXPANDED ABSTRACT

Collaborative economy. An approach to sharing tourism in Spain

Collaborative economy is an economic and social model where agents temporarily share assets, goods and services which are in many cases underused, in exchange for money or other services, using online platforms. Its rate of growth seems unstoppable and it is being introduced in traditional sectors such as the manufacturing sector, the provision of professional and financial services and more substantially, in the tourism sector as well as the accommodation and transport subsectors.

With this in mind the following project intends to: a) further the study in the different proposals that have been defined regarding the definition of collaborative economy and suggest its own definition as to what we understand by collaborative economy; b) analyse the benefits and conflicts that this new economy generates when implemented; c) provide new information about how collaborative economy is used in the European Union; d) analyse the latest trends that are taking place in collaborative tourism, specifically in the transport and accommodation sectors in Spain, going into depth regarding the obstacles the traditional competitors and public administrations are trying to place before its development.

In order to accomplish these goals, a broad review of all the information available related to collaborative economy has been conducted at the European level. The main studies and documents that have been published by different organisations of the European Union have been analysed and, for Spain, all reports issued by the National Commission of Market and Competition have been studied, as well as the different legal decisions that have been taken in Spain during recent years regarding this matter.

Following this methodology, it can be shown in relation to a collaborative economy that multiple activities have some things in common such as the use of online platforms, the temporary use of resources, the relation between consumers or the exchange of goods and services. Nevertheless, many of the activities related to this sector do not really belong to it. In reality, part of these activities are only new business models that have little to do with a collaborative scheme. That is why as per our point of view, a collaborative economy or better said a pure sharing economy is an economic and social pattern where economic and social agents share in a temporary way, with a clear social goal, assets, goods and services which were untapped in many cases, in exchange for money or other services, using online platforms as support. Therefore, this social goal will exclude from the pure collaborative economy those business models where third parties work for profit.

In spite of the recent emergence of the collaborative economy phenomenon, there is no doubt that the figures show huge growth and a powerful future for this new business model which is leading to important changes in the provision of relations and the supply chain structure, regarding the distinction between property and the ability to use numerous goods. The profound economic and financial crisis that has affected most of the world economies, significantly reducing the purchasing power of families and individuals, has led to collaborative economy as a way to decrease the negative impacts of the crisis.

Although a collaborative economy is being implemented in numerous economic sectors such as the production of goods, professional and financial service delivery, education, health or logistics, the tourism sector is becoming increasingly important in this field, especially in relation to transportation and accommodation. In any case, when new business models emerge, companies and businessmen who have reached a certain status see their position as being in danger if the situation changes and new suppliers appear without any regulation in the market. This is what is happening when drivers and companies in the taxi sector and hotel chains are faced with these new ways of generating business.

With this in mind, the European Union has clearly adopted a position in favour of collaborative economy. The Economic and Social European Committee, with an opinion issued in 2014 named: 'Collaborative or participative consumption: a sustainability model for the XXI century'; the European Commission, in June 2016 with the publication entitled: 'A European schedule for collaborative economy', which was addressed to the European Parliament, The Economic and Social European Committee and to the Committee of the Regions, are pursuing its development, providing certain guidelines to help consumers, companies and public authorities to take part in a collaborative economy because it is a new type of offer and use of products and services that involves numerous sectors and provides new opportunities to all the interested parties.

However, public administrations of some EU countries, like Spain, which restrict and in some cases block, the full development of this type of economy, even though each autonomous community with a strong lack of coordination, has the capacity for better law-making in the touristic field, is providing different treatments for these activities especially those related to the touristic use of housing (must remember there are not touristic housing). On the other hand, the Spanish National Commission of Market and Competition is recommending concrete proposals to promote a collaborative economy.

In conclusion and as per our opinion, in order to have a proper coexistence between the activities developed in a collaborative economy area as well as a traditional one, it is necessary to have regulations providing clear rules of the game. In this sense Edelman's and Gerardin's (2015) projects explore the need for clear regulation of platforms, in such a way that Airbnb or Uber companies would be able to do their job, but strictly sticking to the rules. In line with this but concentrating in collaborative accommodation, Fernández Pérez in 2016 brings to light the problems in Spain, due to the coexistence of national rules with other autonomous communities, especially in the tourism sector, advocating for pro-

per coordination between autonomous communities taking into account the restrictions of the State. All these difficulties and a deep analysis that each community is carrying out in order to regulate touristic housing, can be seen in Guillen (2015), Guillen and Iñiguez (2015), in addition to Guillen and Iñiguez (2016), even though some authors like Jefferson-Jones (2015) call into doubt the legal restrictions created in the United States in touristic accommodation, specifically the legality of short-term rents. Quattrone et al. (2016) provide recommendations about how town halls should establish, improve and accomplish all regulations related to collaborative tourism, such as Airbnb in London, in a way that they generate profit for society.

This actual study shows as a main restriction the simple fact of confinement, basically to the European Union and in particular to Spain, whereas in other regions and countries such as the United States, the collaborative economy is more developed.

The key value of this project consists in understanding the economy phenomenon and collaborative tourism, recommending a new definition of a pure collaborative economy concept. On the other hand giving substance to the collaborative economy has reached several countries in a short period of time and will be expanded in the near future according to all predictions. Finally, analysing the different approaches and conflicts the European Union is supporting as well as the public administrations of some countries that incorporate them into collaborative economy deployment is required.

KEYWORDS: Collaborative economy, sharing tourism, tourism accommodation, news business models, European Union.