Democracy and the environment are endangered species

RiConfiguring today for a better tomorrow- theories, policies, practices and politics for smart growth.

Interview with Dr. Prof. Elias Carayannis By Charlotte Koldbye



"We need to carefully look at both the extreme left and extreme right to understand their methods. We should not shy away from mimicking these methods as long as we do it to defend democracy and the planet we inhabit."

Elias Carayannis is the father of the concept of quadruple helix and the need to involve civil society in the innovation process. The triple helix – industry, academia and the public sector – will always have too narrow a focus. It will not provide the robust solutions we need to to address the problems of the 21st century in a sustainable way. However, Elias Carayannis soon realized that the model of quadruple helix missed a part – the environment. This is why the quadruple helix turned into a quintuple helix adding the environment. That is, the environment should be regarded as an active partner of innovation, not a resource to be exploited.



"We need to change the way we envision both business and society. The old ways have worn themselves out. We are having both a crisis of democracy and a climate crisis. They are both the result of a limited way of thinking."



Elias Carayannis has identified 6 rules of thumb that we ought to follow when trying to solve the immediate crises for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in order to protect democracy and the environment. When developing solutions, we should always ask ourselves are they:

- 1. Ethical?
- 2. Efficient?
- 3. Effective?

And if they are:

- 1. Environmentally sustainable?
- 2. Socially sustainable
- 3. Financially sustainable?

According to Elias Carayannis this mindset should be part of our DNA no matter which role we play and what we do. As a result, we will not only look at the black or red numbers on the bottom line. We should adopt a much more complex approach to considering our surroundings and dealing with challenges.

These six rules of thumb should be linked with four ways to evaluate projects, policies and solutions: Metrics, measuring, management and monitoring (M4)." It is instrumental for how you evaluate. You have to assess what you measure. You have to align the social and the environmental impact. It is no easy task to completely overturn the DNA of neo-liberal societies' mindset. We have spent decades to finetune this way of thinking and forming society to this mindset. But it does not take into account the long-term challenges. We are at a point in history where our short-term thinking has extremely longterm effect. We have to move from tactical fragmentation to strategic integration. Do we put coalminers out of work by cutting down on the use of coal? Then their situation must be dealt with in a long-term perspective."

The two endangered species of today: Democracy and Environment need a quadruple and quintuple innovation helix framework approach. The triple helix ennobles, empowers and enables autocratic policies and practices.

The true cost

When e.g. an oil company extracts crude oil, refines it, produces gas, and sells it at a petrol station, the damage to the environment or the climate is not a part of the statement of accounts. The cost and expenses caused by air pollution is paid by the individual, society at large, or future generations. This is just one example of how limited the parameters are that we use to evaluate e.g. a company's activities – these are indeed the negative externalities of pollution, corruption and disruption that are mutually complementary and reinforcing.

"There are short term, medium term and long term considerations to take into account. We have to look at outputs, outcomes and impacts. We need to use the means provided by technology including AI to create more accessible and win-win-win solutions in public-private-people-partnerships that are also environmentally sustainable (the Quadruple and Quintuple Innovation Helix frameworks)."

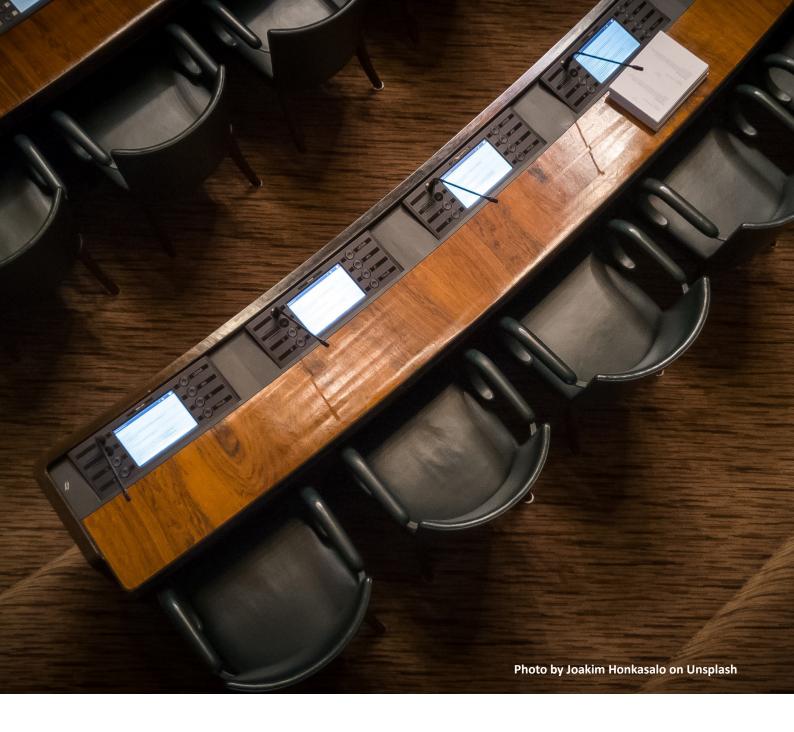
According to Elias Carayannis, the way to turn it around is also the tools at our disposal, e.g. social media, but instead of promoting greed and fear, we should promote hope and come together in a concrete way to pursue happiness and a better tomorrow.

"It is ironic how populism and extremism revisit similar messages catering to fear and sowing division among people over the centuries. When we involve civil society in finding long-term sustainable solutions, we might have to start adopting a local or regional approach instead of an approach at a national level. Perhaps we should start to think about the United Regions of Europe along with the United States of Europe".

Elias Carayannis stresses the need for moderates to learn from extremist tools including social media and AI modalities to develop a toolkit for democracy and the environment. What is so appealing about them? How can they be used to mitigate the damage caused by globalization and global warming? Elias Carayannis is betting for the better side of humans to win instead of appealing to rage and hate.

"There is a lot of inspiration to be found when a teenage activist refuses to travel by plane, but we cannot all do as the activist. We need to find a middle ground and consumers should make sound, realistic choices."

He thinks there is a tendency to short term thinking when developing and working with EU projects. The project holders typically step on to the next project, which entails dis-connect and dis-continuity risks and



challenges. "We need to find a way for the projects to spill over to external stakeholders. This should be embedded in every proof of concept of the projects. We must therefore promote cohesion. We must stop being projects and aim to be sustainable. And this should be part of early stage policies and the legal frameworks."

Elias Carayannis points out that, as it is now, policy makers design the call of proposal to become a voice for the private sector. This results in short sighted projects, which do not have our common interest at heart. "Every project funded by the European Commission should always have the quintuple helix in

mind when calling for proposals; all projects should have our common good as the foremost goal. We should therefore always ask ourselves how does this project support democracy and protect the environment and that is a Quadruple and Quintuple Innovation Helix framework thinking approach to policy and practice. Because we can never fully manage and cope with risk by avoiding it. We have to sail into the unknown as the Vikings of a new era."



We need to use technology toolkits: social media, crowdsourcing & AI to empower grassroots initiatives in this way we will have a bottom-up shaping the top-down. These need to be self-sustainable to bridge individual projects (such as RiConfigure) with long term legacies e.g. embedding the insights from the RiConfigure Project into policies and practices and not be too dependent on public/EU funding.

About

Dr. Prof. Elias G. Carayannis is Professor of Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the George Washington University School of Business in Washington, D.C. He is deeply involved in the areas of "strategic government-university-industry R&D partnerships, technology road-mapping, technology transfer and commercialization, international science and technology policy, technological entrepreneurship and regional economic development".