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Editorial

Milestones of *Triple Helix* in a year of hardships

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As new Co-Editors-in-Chief, replacing Professor Henry Etzkowitz, the former Editor-in-Chief of the *Triple Helix* journal run by the Triple Helix Association (THA), we are pleased to write the editorial on this issue. While we are thrilled about assuming such an important position for promoting knowledge advancement in research on innovation and entrepreneurship in the contexts of interactions between university, industry and government, we are clearly aware of our responsibilities for carrying forward the official journal of the THA. We feel obligated to the THA for entrusting us to take this task at a crucial time. In the past two years, the *Triple Helix* Journal has encountered extraordinary challenges, and, meanwhile, reached milestones.

The first challenge was related to the change of publisher. The *Triple Helix Journal* was initiated in 2014 with Springer. At that time, a generous sponsorship granted to the THA enabled the journal to be “Triple free access”: Free to readers as the journal is open access; free to authors as there is no article processing charge (APC); free to the publisher as the operation cost is covered by the THA. However, due to the discontinuation of the sponsorship, the model of “Triple free access” was no longer sustainable. In order to lessen the financial burden of APCs for authors, we accepted Brill’s offer of a very reasonable APC rate which still allows the journal to remain open access. However, the transition from Springer to Brill did cause confusion to readers and this led to a significant drop in submitted manuscripts in 2019. Thankfully, 2020 saw a visible increase of submitted papers and special issue proposals. This is a sign that the journal has got out of the hardships.

The second challenge is related to the pandemic caused by COVID-19. The fast scenario change, hitting badly the THA and its members like many other organizations, has required quick moves and thought decisions. The THA’s

Executive Committee has immediately created a task force to analyze COVID effects not only on the THA but also on the society, and one of the results will be the release of a special issue on the theme *Triple Helix Model of Innovation to Deal with Covid19 Pandemic and Future Societal Crises*. The THA also made several internal adjustments to maintain itself as a viable organization and has redefined the business model of its conferences. For instance, the Triple Helix Conference and Triple Helix Summit were successfully organized online by Tampere University and the University of Bologna respectively in 2020 with great success. While the online events provided free or cheap access for participants, this also resulted in less financial incomes for the THA. Consequently, it has weakened its financial capability to cover the APCs of authors who, having submitted high-quality papers to the Triple Helix journal, cannot afford the APCs.

Regardless of the hardships of 2020, the *Triple Helix* journal has reached milestones. Scopus decided to include *Triple Helix* in its database with the following comment "This is a well organized and impressive journal publishing material that is extremely well cited, underlining the importance of the journal in its research field". In the same year, the journal was also included in the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), Web of Science. The impact factor of *Triple Helix* will be released both in the Web of Science and Scopus in the coming year.

Moreover, in 2020, our editorial team offered to our research community as well as to our readership a new experience. We decided to split the 2020 volume into separate issues. The first one is a special issue with a focus on science and technology parks. We would like to express our gratitude to the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation (IASP) for the partnership and financial support for the APCs of the papers published in this special issue. This is a model we would like to explore with further partners!

The present issue consists of six articles through regular submissions. These articles deal with a range of issues related to innovation and entrepreneurship in different Triple Helix sectors and interactions between them. These studies not only make empirical and theoretical contributions to advance the Triple Helix model but also facilitate the dialogues between the Triple Helix approach and other approaches to innovation studies.

In the article *Theorizing the Triple Helix Model: Past, Present, and Future*, Cai and Etzkowitz (2020) review the state of the art of research on the Triple Helix model with an emphasis on its theoretical development. In particular they highlight the core theoretical rationales of the Triple Helix model in its original form (the past of theorizing Triple Helix), take stock of the current studies that enhance the theoretical rationales of Triple Helix (the present theoretical

developments), and envision the future directions of theorizing Triple Helix (the future theory of Triple Helix).

Responding to the lack of understanding of the micro-level mechanisms of Triple Helix interactions, Schiller and Leišytė (2020) explore how an entrepreneurial university could shape support structures and processes to foster innovation at the level of study program through a case study in the German context. Their findings show that the university in their case study can be seen as both an intermediary organization interacting with industry and government in responding to societal needs and a hybrid organization as a consequence of implementing an education program jointly provided by the university and its industry partner. Such insights help enhance our understanding of the entrepreneurial university and its role in the Triple Helix interactions.

Still in the university sector, Inzelt and Csonka (2020) study the impact of PhDs in social science and the humanities on both the PhD degree holders' career development and the employing organizations in the Hungarian context. While there is a global tendency that more and more doctoral graduates find jobs outside of the academia, the findings of this study indicate that a number of non-academic organizations are struggling in order to make better use of the knowledge and expertise of PhD graduates in social science and the humanities. Nevertheless, the authors find some best practices in a small segment of business organizations, where up-to-date knowledge of the PhDs contributes to advancing management approaches, devoting attention to social responsibilities and responsible research and innovation.

Some recent changes regarding innovation in the industry sector are examined by Steiber and Alänge (2020) and Steiber (2020). Both studies deal with the development of corporate-startups in the age of digitalization. The former article investigates corporate-startup co-creation through both a literature review and a case study. While confirming co-creation as a corporate-startup collaboration model, the study shows that there is a large knowledge gap in the existing literature regarding research on the phenomenon and calls for future research on corporate-startup co-creation, specifically in regards to metrics and its effects on corporate innovation, startups' growth, and society. The latter article demonstrates an example of addressing the research gap by conceptualizing the corporate-startup collaboration model and investigating how this kind of organizational innovation is diffused to and within a firm.

In the last article, Piqué, Berbegal-Mirabent, and Etzkowitz (2020) revisit a classic research question in Triple Helix studies about the role of universities in regional innovation using the case of Silicon Valley as an example. Particularly, it analyzes how the leading universities in Silicon Valley (UC Berkeley, Stanford and UC San Francisco) have evolved, adapting to new demands and, in

turn, shaping the evolution of Silicon Valley, as an ecosystem of innovation. The study reveals the universities' contribution to the regional ecosystem of innovation through entrepreneurship education, an intensified activity of technology transfer offices, increased interactions between universities and investors (business angels, Venture Capital funds and corporate investors), and the improvement of specific infrastructures to incubate and accelerate business ideas.

The studies collected in this issue, together with relevant Triple Helix research published elsewhere, remind us that the Triple Helix model, as a tool to support innovation and socio-economic development, has the potential to be further developed and utilized for tackling societal crises. As stated by Cai and Etzkowitz (2020), "the model is not the result of a self-organized evolution; rather the process of development needs to be pre-structured/coordinated" (p.15). The lessons learnt from 2020 show that regions and organizations, with clear purpose and long-term missions, can overcome the storms by rethinking the short-term actions without losing the long-term vision. From the challenges and hard work, organizations draw their strength. The THA quickly adapted itself to the "new normal" with an enhanced mission to help science, technology and innovation remain alive and more relevant than ever. We hope that the *Triple Helix* journal will be an important platform for scholarly discussions on the theme. We would like to express our gratitude to the authors for considering *Triple Helix* journal as a publication outlet to disseminate their research, and we are thankful to all our reviewers and readers.

In conclusion, despite the hard times we are living, we'd like to celebrate twenty-five years of the Triple Helix model (Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydesdorff coined the concept of Triple Helix in their joint publication released in January 1995). We also want to reinforce the commitment of both the *Triple Helix* journal and the THA to the mission of advancing the Triple Helix model, disseminating the movement and keeping the flag of innovation over our shoulders.

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