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"Managing the Triple Helix" : regions as place-based and industry-based political arenas

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FOREWORD

‘Managing the Triple Helix’: Regions as Place-Based and Industry-Based Political Arenas

Guest Editors: Emanuela TODEVA and Panagiotis KETIKIDIS

Research at the intersection of industries, regions, cities, clusters and economic growth has populated the academic literature with new concepts such as place-based policies and strategies. Place-based policy initiatives started with social policies that are trying to address issues of poverty, community development, or social services, enabling local actors to participate in policy development processes and to take greater control of their own destinies. Place-based policies usually evolve specific policy experiments which involve innovation and learning across multiple levels of government (Bradford, 2008).

The concept of ‘place management’ originates from the concept of urban development, alongside its constituent elements of public spaces, public services, public-private partnerships, design, and engagement. Although the Triple Helix is implicit in such policy initiatives, it is not often mentioned. From urban planning to place making, community empowerment, and economic regeneration – the actors are local authorities, citizens, private sector architects, and designers, public sector service providers – most of the Triple Helix actors are envisaged playing a leading role – except the universities and education providers (Crofts, 1998).

The current special issue includes two papers that extend the debate on place-based developments and the Triple Helix framework. Spero, Stone, and Aravopoulou discuss new emergent practices of delivering services to older adults. Based on an EU funded research and an in-depth interview with the research team, the authors describe a case of neighborhood initiative by older adults – to mobilize resources for service delivery. The authors call for ‘neighborhoods of the future’ as the type of communities that are able through self-organization to provide simultaneously employment opportunities for an age-discriminated group of adults, and social services – where and when needed. In this scenario, the outcomes match the problems and generate significant cost reduction and service upgrade. The Triple Helix model that is described by the authors is led by an NGO, who acts as an intermediary, gathering the different parties together to create a consensus of the direction of action, with the NGO moving more into the position of equal partner towards the end of the project. The enactment of *NGO-led* Triple Helix demonstrates the steps in the transition from public service – to self-service.

In a similar context, Mauro Romanelli introduces his discussion of sustainable cities, building change within public organizations that employ new information and communication enabling technologies to create a digital public ecosystem, capable of regeneration and innovation. The sustainability of cities according to Romanelli lies in cooperation and collaboration with institutions, businesses, and other members of the community. Although the author claims that active triple helices are essential drivers for sustainable cities, the universities remain, invisible

actors, replaced or substituted by digital ecosystems and empowered citizens that drive innovation. Although the universities are recognized as a source of knowledge, they remain inactive players in sustainable cities. Smart cities, according to Romanelli, are those driven by digital platforms, rather than driven by knowledge, humanity, and ethos.

The place-based paradigm for urban development remains framed by an efficiency argument of place-based investment and allocation of resources to build an adequate infrastructure for service delivery - in contrast to people-based aid, services, and support. Bradford (2005) acknowledges that there are three substantially different representations of the place-based concept. In Britain - these are targeted neighborhoods. In the US and Canada - the emphasis is put on cities and financial intermediaries that are put in place - to facilitate investment and upgrade. Three policy approaches have been adopted in the US since 1993 Budget Reconciliation Act in order to meet the challenge of urban distress. These are: 1) a people-oriented strategy; 2) a place-based people strategy, and 3) a pure place strategy (Ladd, 1994).

The EU's place-based urban agenda has been framed by two key principles - subsidiarity and cohesion, and by three important practices (piloting, partnership, and networking). Subsidiarity for the European regional development policies means that public activity should be led by the territorial level of government, which is best able to deal with the problems and the people. The cohesion principle has meant that resources and assistance are targeted to the most distressed places. For the EU, this includes both troubled neighborhoods within larger cities and smaller cities and communities struggling on Europe's geographic peripheries (European Commission, 1993, 1997).

In this context, place-based strategies represent economic regeneration and development strategies that aim to redistribute resources to specific geographic locations (places) and to support the implementation of specific policies and projects. Regional development, local economic development and regeneration policies, hence, are place-based policies. Research on regional development confirms that there is a strong association between growth and agglomeration, arguing that regional policies should facilitate agglomeration, migration, and specialization (Gill, 2011).

Agglomeration policies started throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, policymakers have shown interest in geographically targeted urban economic development strategies, specifically in the form of clusters and enterprise zones (Ladd, 1994). These policies refer to the English model that involved government intervention delivering deep tax breaks and regulatory relief to small geographic areas within a city. These early policy experiments in urban context have taken place in parallel with another policy experiment for the establishment of special economic zones, free trade zones, export-processing zones, and other special tax arrangements for specific economic activities. There is a wide variety of institutional innovations that have supported the growth and management of special zones, such as deregulation and liberalization of activities or lowering of

tariffs and taxes.

In practice, special and free trade zones may be as small as a retail store in an airport, or as large as the territory of Hong Kong. They may serve multiple functions – from simple warehousing to manufacturing, assembling, or combining a broad spectrum of industries inputs and outputs (Hamada, 1974; Grubel, 1982). Characteristics of special economic zones, such as a) effective governance structures and mechanisms; b) Adaptive and flexible objectives and incentives; c) Functional and spatial differentiation and specialization; and d) Intra- and cross-national diffusibility and transferability – all have been subsequently transposed to clusters and other spatial agglomerations that represent concentration of labor, resources, employment and business activities (Chen, 1995). Although the cluster literature and the literature on special economic zones demonstrates the synergies from public sector intervention and private sector initiatives, Triple Helix is not recognized as an issue for the sustainable development of the agglomeration.

The current volume contains two papers that advance the discussion on how Triple Helix constellations drive cluster development and internationalization. Liana Kobzeva and her co-authors present the case of the fine chemicals cluster in the Tomsk region – from the inception of the idea, through the involvement of 'keystone' people or boundary spanners and their contribution to the decision-making, policy development and implementation process, and the shaping of the regional cluster policy framework. The paper offers an insightful discussion of the practical decision-making regarding the development of the regional cluster, the active contribution of the regional universities, the regional government and the private sector, and the growing integration across public and private sector innovation initiative leading to sustainability of the cluster.

The paper by Małgorzata Runiewicz-Wardyn takes a further step towards assessing the positive externalities from university-industry linkages and Triple Helix constellations in the European biotechnology clusters. Her results show that the biotechnology industry relies very much on university-business R&D partnerships and research mobility (e.g. pharmaceutical firms that performed basic research in close cooperation with academia produced more patents). The argument of the author is that clusters as geographic concentrations generate dynamic externalities through social networking, social capital, knowledge spill over, and university spin-offs, and these externalities accelerate through Triple Helix interactions.

The paper by Todeva and Ketikidis focuses on the management aspects of orchestration and facilitation of the complex Triple Helix interactions that are induced by the efforts to develop and implement smart specialization strategies, and inter-regional co-operations. The authors focus on a number of EU policies that raise challenges for local and regional authorities and propose two distinctive models that can govern this orchestration. The first model is introduced as a framework for the implementation of the entrepreneurial discovery process. The second model goes beyond and offers a 'how-to-do' and a 9-step process for the orchestration of multi-stakeholder activities and the development of Triple Helix governance.

The paper by Yuqiu Wang takes the eco-system perspective on the Triple Helix, explains the evolution of the innovation and development paradigm, and discusses a number of short cases where effective management of Triple Helix constellations leads to enhanced global competitiveness. The paper by Solomon, Ketikidis, and Siavalas looks at the innovation diffusion during disaster management and discusses the institutional co-creation across helices, across organizations, and across stakeholders. The authors link stakeholder and institutional theories and explain how diffusion of innovation influences the emerging and constantly changing inter-organizational interfaces during disaster management action.

Although the papers in this special issue are very diverse, they co-align in one direction – offering discussions and in-depth examples of Triple Helix interactions and their orchestration by governments and public authorities.

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