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**International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Editors' Series: Innovation opportunities and future direction in entrepreneurship research**

**Endrit Kromidha, Deema Refai, Steven Pattinson, Laura Galloway, Alex Kevill**

We are delighted to present the latest issue of International Journal of Entrepreneurship & Innovation. As always, the papers represent a range of topics, and include work on innovation. We take the opportunity here to present a short editorial on the importance of the links between innovation and entrepreneurship and the rich opportunities for value-adding research on innovation in the entrepreneurship field.

Innovation and entrepreneurship meet in a space of curiosity, characterised by proactiveness and risk-taking towards opportunities. Changes in the current business climate have created many such opportunities. As innovation and entrepreneurship researchers, we sit at the crossroad of contextualising what we know from the past to make sense of what is happening now, and gain an insight into the future. However, it is impossible to cover the vast array of innovation pathways and trends without realising that they may soon become obsolete before seeing the light of publication. This, however, does not (and should not) discourage us as entrepreneurship scholars from exploring promising innovation trends that demand attention, particularly in light of today's global business context.

***Creativity and creation processes*** – An entrepreneur is habitually seen as the creator of innovations that can be radical or incremental. The field has advanced from the confined positioning of innovations as physical products or services, to encompass innovative concepts, such as crowdfunding whereby potential customers are simultaneously the funders and investors in a business. As innovation research on crowdfunding matures in the entrepreneurship domain, we continue to seek new knowledge in terms of the *what, why, how, when* and *where* of crowdfunding. This growing interest also applies to other innovation domains including, for example, different forms of automation such as artificial intelligence and machine learning powered by big data, and innovative ways of producing 3D printing. Our interest goes beyond the mechanical, operative and engineering aspects of those innovations, to consider their relevance to entrepreneurship research and how they can drive the field forward.

***Hypes and trends*** - Hypes and trends continue to feed an attention-hungry market with innovations and novel communication approaches. Whilst hypes are short-lived, both hypes and trends offer plentiful room for emerging opportunities, alongside ideas for marketing and entrepreneurship to converge. We often tend to theorise what can be generalised and prevail over time, however, hypes and trends can offer a foundation for other innovations to emerge, rendering it important to explore in more depth. A better understanding of this symbiotic relationship between innovations, hypes and trends can offer multiple pathways for future research in entrepreneurship.

***The innovation space*** - All innovations are placed or perceived within a spatial dimension, which can be as big as a space for populating Mars or as limited as a space for social distancing. It is not surprising that space remains a hot topic in the way it contextualises what is new, and how this newness is being positioned around us. We normally view space as a dimension that we continuously build up by bringing different things into alignment. We use our imagination to 'create' and materialise new things that do not yet exist in the 'real' world. This creation of new spaces in today's world has often become merged with the creation of virtual spaces, evidenced through the emergence of the concept of the metaverse. We argue, therefore, the need for innovation and

entrepreneurship research that challenges and rethinks how we position innovations within new social, physical and virtual spaces.

***Decentralised innovative organisations*** – The view of current research on how we network and communicate has substantially developed over the years. Whilst networking often implies some central coordination, we have seen a shift towards decentralised autonomous organisations (DAO) run in a shared form without any central entity. We are also witnessing the growth in decentralised cryptocurrency exchanges and social networks without a single owner such as Steem (<https://www.steem.com/>) or the non-fungible token (NFT) economy – all of which have been in existence for several years, but are only hyping now. The opportunity to study such innovations as new forms of organisations has never been greater, but research and conceptualisation within this domain remain far behind practice.

***Innovation from and for development*** – We have now endorsed a new paradigm entailing that new innovations can emerge from the know-how existing in different parts of the globe. Such know-how exchanges have spread the risks and costs, but also the benefits of innovation-related businesses globally. This emerging paradigm has rendered innovation as not exclusive to developed countries and organisations, but rather the result of multi-actor endeavours across the globe. In research, we often refer to such processes as open innovations and crowdsourcing, when multiple parties are involved in developing something new. The next step in this direction, we argue, could be focused on policy-level innovations and implications on innovative practice for development.

***Responsible and sustainable innovation*** – It is timely to challenge the traditional profit-first assumptions around innovation in business. With the growing interest in research on sustainable entrepreneurial development, new innovations can have equal emphasis on economic, social, environmental and psychological outcomes. However, research exploring the value of such sustainable entrepreneurial development within the context of innovation remains scarce. New models and insights can further bridge the division between moral and ethical responsibilities and the technical context of innovation.

***Playing with innovation data*** – What we know innovation in entrepreneurship research should not always originate from the lab and include interactions with people. Technology has allowed such interactions to be captured for business value through many online platforms. Unfortunately, in innovation and entrepreneurship research, we often remain bound to traditional research methods such as interviews and surveys. Developments in methodological approaches will provide opportunities to add much value to our research. With the growing complexity of innovation, research methods need to harness the value of innovation data in ways that are automated, intelligent and efficient.

***Theoretical positioning opportunities*** – Innovation research in entrepreneurship often suffers from a lack of theoretical depth. Research has consolidated that innovation is both a process and a materialised concept through frameworks explaining innovation development stages, types and diffusion. New theoretical approaches are important though, particularly to underpin paradigms on innovation as something more than a product/service within a business. Opportunities exist here to conceptualise innovation as a way of 'being' or as a way of connecting organisations, entrepreneurs and society. Until now, most theoretical frameworks used in entrepreneurship research borrow from social sciences to explain what innovation is and how it happens. Perhaps though it is time to try reversing the logic by using what we see to redefine what innovations in social, science, policy and practice are.