

Call for contributions

MANAGEMENT INTERNATIONAL

Coworking spaces, a new form of collective or socialized entrepreneurship?

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Guest Editors

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In today's digital age, forms of work organization have evolved; new forms have emerged, giving rise to what some call an "assembler capitalism" that is constantly aggregating and disaggregating itself (De Vaujany, 2016). The coworking movement, which is part of this evolution, originated in the mid-2000s in San Francisco, in the Californian world of the Web 2.0 and free software. In the Americas, in Europe and in Asia, coworking has developed since 2010 and is also bringing about significant changes in the organization of work. Coworking is a type of work organization that refers both to the sharing of a workspace, but also to a form of networking between workers within the same space, encouraging exchanges in a given workspace. Coworking spaces are places of socialization for individuals who benefit from the effects of networks produced in these workspaces. Genuine communities can then be formed through the creation of relationships of trust, mutual aid and shared values among coworkers (Fabbri, 2015, 2016; Garrett et al., 2017).

More generally, the phenomenon of coworking is part of the broader context of the development of "third places" (Oldenburg, 1999), i.e. places that lie between the place of residence and the workplace. Initially, these workspaces are not dedicated work spaces, they are places that have been partly diverted from their original function, such as cafes or libraries. However, gradually, dedicated spaces have emerged, first within metropolises and then outside urban centres, whether they have been created by individuals, large companies, politicians or public administrations. These are hybrid spaces that often offer better working conditions than those found in an office or workshop. For entrepreneurs and self-employed workers who come to coworking spaces, the goal is often to set up their project independently, in the absence of any hierarchical relationship. For some, this is a way of escaping the salaried employment context, where organizations are causing more and more stress and tension, for others, it is the opportunity to create one's own job or activity.

In many industrial and even emerging countries, coworking has become, over the past twenty years, a new way of organizing work based on a shared workspace, set up with the aim of promoting exchanges and emulation between coworkers, to nurture innovation (Brown, 2017). This phenomenon is thus seen as a real revolution in the organization of work, comparable to that of Taylorism and Fordism at the beginning of the 20th century. This new work context appears to question their top-down and authoritarian character but from a very different perspective.

Since the early 1980s, entrepreneurship has been seen as an alternative way to create jobs that large companies are no longer able to offer as was the case in the years of strong post-war growth. Entrepreneurship is also seen as a way to boost innovation and job creation. The model of innovation planned by the research and development departments of large companies (Galbraith, 1968; Schumpeter, 1942) seems to be in question in some sectors, notably in information technology, multimedia or others, with companies like Microsoft, Apple, Google... However, if the Schumpeterian entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 1911) becomes the new model to imitate and develop, this cannot be imposed (Casson, 1990). In addition, the innovation model of companies has evolved in favour of open innovation (Chesbrough, 2003, 2006), which seeks to take advantage of resources outside their organization by integrating knowledge and resources from networks and innovations created by small businesses.

In this context, measures and structures supporting the creation of businesses have multiplied in many countries. In particular, incubation spaces for new projects (incubators, accelerators, industrial clusters, etc.) have been created to supervise and support business creation. The business creator or start-up thus becomes one piece in a complex game in which many stakeholders (advisors, financiers, consultants, etc.) intervene. Entrepreneurship is more than ever a collective phenomenon (Johannisson, 2002), even a socialized reality (Boutillier, Uzunidis, 2016). The project owner is no longer isolated but is driven by a collective dynamic (Verstraete, Fayolle, 2005). This person is integrated in a network (Aldrich, Zimmer, 1986; Chabaud, Ngijol, 2010) or in teams (Shepherd, Krueger, 2002) making it possible to collect the information and resources necessary to carry out the project. Within coworking spaces, the collective dimension of entrepreneurship or business creation is particularly marked because, for people working in these spaces, the interactional dynamics (Trupia, 2016) with the various stakeholders are facilitated by geographical proximity, whether they are interactions with other entrepreneurs present in the coworking space who, formally or informally, exchange ideas, information or knowledge (Krauss, Tremblay, 2019 ; Parrino, 2013), or interactions with dedicated structures within the coworking space, as part of training or competition hours to determine the most innovative idea or project. The dynamism within the coworking space is driven by social networks between the various stakeholders. It thus becomes possible to highlight these relationships, but also the knots between the links where they connect (Cohendet et al., 2003). Building these networks is a way to reduce uncertainty in a constantly changing and highly competitive economic environment.

The coworking spaces directly or indirectly support the development of the projects of the self-employed or entrepreneurs they host and foster collaborative dynamics (Fabbri and Charue-Duboc, 2013) based on relations of trust and/or cooperation. The exchange of ideas, the collaborative work giving rise to innovations of all kinds follow rules of socialized organization, where the question of private ownership can arise all the more acutely, for example, when it comes to filing a patent, in terms of assessing the participation of different stakeholders. However, talking about coworking in the singular does not reflect the reality of the phenomenon. Coworking spaces can be created by self-employed or entrepreneurs who have identified a market opportunity, by local administrations who see here a way to create jobs in their region, or by large companies, thus favouring a form of nomadic work for employees. Situations vary by country and even regions (including urban versus rural areas) with regard to creators and people who work there, sometimes more self-employed, working solo or others starting small or medium-size businesses (SMEs). Depending on the organization, the governance arrangements can be different, more or less user-friendly, more or less market-oriented... In addition, the access to these spaces varies. Some select people and initiatives from the start, others don't. It is in this sense that coworking spaces are very different depending on the country or region in which they are located as well as creators' objectives, values, and interests.

The aim of this thematic issue is to bring together articles to better understand what was presented above and, in general, to enrich our understanding of entrepreneurship, project development and work within coworking spaces. The journal accepts all types of theoretical approaches and case studies. Studies reflecting the diversity of the phenomenon and international comparisons are particularly welcome. As examples, here are a few themes that could be addressed:

- ✓ -Analysis of coworking spaces in different regions and/or countries to highlight the complexity of the collective-socialized entrepreneurship and project development process and to compare situations across countries and/or regions of the world,
- ✓ -How to organize governance and management of coworking spaces: bottom-up or top-down strategies, participation of coworkers, and what are the consequences?
- ✓ -Innovation, collective-socialized entrepreneurship, or collective idea development, and intellectual property,
- ✓ -Profiles, career paths and motivations of coworking space project owners, creators-entrepreneurs or self-employed (members/users but also founders who are sometimes serial entrepreneurs),
- ✓ -Forms of collective learning, cooperative and mutual aid relationships within coworking spaces,
- ✓ -Geographical issues (location of activities, mobility of individuals) of collective entrepreneurship and development of projects within coworking spaces,
- ✓ -Digital technology as a support for this form of collective initiatives and entrepreneurship,
- ✓ -Coworking space as a source of support for new projects and entrepreneurship.

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They must respect the IM Style guide of *International Management-Management International-Gestion Internaciona*l : <http://www.managementinternational.ca/en/authors-section/im-style-guide/>

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