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Collaborative Spaces Promoting Creativity and Innovation

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In the current era of digital technology and artificial intelligence, the forms of organising work inherited from the industrial revolution have evolved, while new forms have gradually emerged. The complexity and increasing competition of markets have favoured the development of more agile work organization by favouring the "projectification" of work in order to be able to coordinate in a flexible way over time and space a wide diversity of professional fields. Hyper-specialization and division of labour have led to an increase in the outsourcing of independent professionals working in teams in face-to-face or virtual mode. Hierarchical structures are gradually adapting to become more open and inclusive, forming local and global networks. The increasing need to capture new knowledge and ideas has also pushed organizations to collaborate more and to integrate local entrepreneurial ecosystems, radically challenging the organizations' boundaries. All these changes have also impacted the status of workers (e.g. freelancers, teleworkers, microworkers, etc.) and independent work has gained importance, providing more flexibility to organisations, but also causing job precarity and instability.

The need for increasing innovation and collaboration, as well as integrating more flexible and autonomous ways of working, has also caused changes in the spatialisation of work. In recent years, there has been an explosion in the creation of spaces where individuals motivated by the development of their creative projects, interact face-to-face and collaborate with peers. The origin of the spaces might respond to different logics, but it is often related to an actor's need of gathering other locally distributed peers with a common interest. These collaborative spaces take many different forms and denominations such as fab labs, coworking spaces, living labs, makerspaces, hackerspaces, etc. These different kinds of spaces have attracted the interest of individuals who, in one way or another, profit from knowledge-sharing and from being involved in collective innovation processes (Capdevila, 2019). Taking an open innovation approach, business managers (and policy-makers) have also taken interest in this new phenomenon considering the high potential of involving their employees (or citizens) in the creative dynamics of their organizations (or territories).

A collaborative space can be defined as a localized space that offers open access to resources, and that is characterized by a culture of openness and collaboration concerning knowledge-sharing, skills and tools. Shared resources can range from physical resources such as office resources (printers, Wi-Fi connection, etc.), machines and prototyping tools, to more intangible resources such as new knowledge, professional networking, training, or mentorship.

The movements around coworking, fab labs, makers, etc. are relatively recent, having taken a large dimension mainly in the last decade (Morel, Dupont, & Lhoste, 2015). As a research field, it is an under-explored area, even if in recent years, it has attracted interest in management and organization studies (Blagoev, Costas, & Kärreman, 2019; Bouncken & Reuschl, 2018; Garrett, Spreitzer, & Bacevice, 2017; Ivaldi, Pais, & Scaratti, 2018; Rus & Orel, 2015), economic geography (Brown, 2017; Fuzi, 2015; Jamal, 2018; Schmidt, Brinks, & Brinkhoff, 2014; Suire, 2019), social economy (Jakonen, Kivinen, Salovaara, & Hirkman, 2017; Waters-Lynch & Potts, 2017), knowledge and learning studies (Fabbri & Charue-Duboc, 2013; Parrino, 2013), etc.

Even if the number of collaborative spaces has experienced a huge growth in the last years, the phenomenon is rooted in the past. For example, in the nineteenth century, Thomas Edison launch the Invention Factory, an open floor laboratory dedicated to the development of creative ideas. Similarly, in the 1970s and 1980s, the Homebrew Computer Club, that hosted informal meetings gathering high-profile hackers and computer entrepreneurs like young Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, or Steve Wozniak, represented the birthplace of the personal computer revolution. In the 1980s, the sociologist Ray Oldenburg theorized the importance of the so-called “third places” (Oldenburg, 2002), spaces that sustain the development of informal social relations through their inclusively sociable atmosphere, and that lie in between the domestic environment of home (the “first place”) and the productive professional workplace (the “second place”).

Collaborative spaces have attracted the interest of managers, policy makers, and academics. Managers have approached the phenomenon looking for new ways of integrating a more flexible workforce, developing external collaborations, and capturing new ideas. Policymakers have identified collaborative spaces as a new way of canalizing and developing collective creativity in urban areas, and as new laboratories of urban innovation. Spaces have even been seen as local factories of the future, based on 3D printing, and associated to new models of production, where cities could increase their levels of self-sufficiency and sustainability. From the academic point of view, the first steps in the study of the phenomenon were based on exploratory and rather descriptive accounts. In order to make sense of the explosion in the number of spaces and its variety, initial studies tried to established different types of typologies to make differentiations between spaces. The motivations behind collaborative spaces are diverse and intertwined, similar to the perspectives taken in their analysis. Three of the main rationales are 1) the facilitation of creativity and innovation; 2) the transformation

of work, considering the de-materialisation, de-spatialisation and de-temporalisation dimensions; and 3) the focus on territorial development and urban regeneration.

Firstly, collaborative spaces are considered as spaces facilitating creativity and innovation based on interdisciplinarity, openness and collaboration. The emergence of the knowledge economy has implied that an increasing amount of jobs are based on individual creativity, and personal initiative. In a complex and uncertain economy, the processes of creativity and innovation have become increasingly more heterogeneous, distributed and pervasive. The exploration of new ideas and the development of innovative products and services take place in a context in which the social aspect plays a key role. Innovation processes often take place outside conventional structures of research laboratories or R&D departments in organizations. The literature on open innovation (e.g. Chesbrough, 2006) has highlighted the value of collective innovation processes involving the participation of actors outside organizations, particularly localized innovation communities (Baldwin, Hienerth, & von Hippel, 2006). These collective innovation practices often imply the existence of physical spaces that allow the gathering of community members, sharing the use of physical assets, and facilitating face-to-face interaction and the transfer of (tacit) knowledge through shared practices.

Secondly, collaborative spaces are a reflect of the changes that work practices have experienced, in terms of de-materialisation, de-spatialisation and de-temporalisation. Advances in telecommunications and information technologies have deeply affected the way people work, offering more spatial and temporal flexibility, and reducing the dependence to physical co-location and materiality. Knowledge-based work has allowed the development of teleworking and the emergence of so-called digital nomads, breaking the classic organizational spatial, physical and temporal boundaries. In many cases, these changes have represented a profound and traumatic transformation of the work conditions, incrementing job insecurity, instability, and precarity. In this context, where workers are in a high need for professional networking and access to new knowledge and resources, the role of the space managers appear as crucial, especially in business-oriented spaces, like coworking spaces.

Thirdly, the emergence of the coworking and maker movements have been seen by policy makers as a new way to improve the territorial socio-economic development and enhance the urban regeneration (Boutillier, 2018). Initially, collaborative spaces appeared as a phenomenon characteristic of urban areas. They represented poles of attraction for people with common interests either around a hobby (in the case of maker / hacker spaces) or professional specialisation (as it is the case of many coworking spaces). Spaces act as agents of the "middleground" (Cohendet, Grandadam, & Simon, 2010) connecting creative individuals and formal organizations, thus contributing to the creative capabilities of cities. In the case of rural and peripheral regions, collaborative spaces have also been identified as a factor helping social cohesion and economic development. Contrary to urban areas, these territories lack the critical mass and needed diversity to gather large communities around a common topic, but they have the capacity of offering spaces that facilitate the gathering of

local entrepreneurs, breaking their isolation and contributing to the development of local ecosystems of knowledge sharing and collaboration.

The papers compiled in this special issue tackle these three structuring themes (among others). They all offer new perspectives on their analysis, thus representing a contribution on the understanding of collaborative spaces, concerning their internal knowledge and innovation dynamics, their impact in the innovation processes in firms, universities, and public institutions, and referring to the changes in the new ways of working.

The article by Laurent Antonczak analyses how mobile technology enables the interaction between new emerging players, intermediation platforms and individuals. Mobile technology represents virtual spaces of knowledge creation, assimilated to a virtual version of the knowledge-creation model and the 'ba' described by Nonaka and his colleagues. Technology broadens the concept of collaboration and innovation by allowing a higher autonomy of participants, detached from material and temporal constrains. It also represents flexible platforms of the middleground that allow the transdisciplinary collaboration that nurture the creative processes among community members.

Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay and Arnaud Scaillerez focus on the interests and strategies of salaried workers and entrepreneurs in coworking spaces. The authors identify the factors that facilitate the development of new businesses and collaboration, and the elements that contribute to create an environment conducive to the business interactions between space members and external firms. The results suggest that the physical infrastructures of the spaces, as well as the human and financial resources provided by the space, are factors facilitating collaboration. The authors also provide some insights about the strategies that a space might adopt to stimulate business activity. One of these strategies is to focus on shared values and a common ideology, thus reducing the cognitive distance and increasing the complementarity around a certain shared interest. Searching for similar or compatible business activities is also a way to stimulate common initiatives and collaborative projects. Another strategy consists on establishing a relationship of trust among members, to centre the activities on business-related goals, and to integrate activities of external firms in the space. The findings also underline the importance of the role of the space managers for the success of collaborations. Nevertheless, the authors alert about the risks of not reaching the desired collaborative environment, considering the fact that mere physical co-location or fulfilling the suggested pre-conditions are not guarantee of a successful business development.

Ferney Osorio, Laurent Dupont, Mauricio Camargo, Carlos Sandoval and José Ismael Peña, through the case study of Vivelab, a public innovation laboratory in Bogota, analyse the evolution of the space, from its initial conceptualization to the present days. The results reveal the factors that may enable or limit the sustainable development of a public collaborative space. The case illustrates how the implementation of a public space is the result of a strategic intention that is susceptible to change in time, and that its success or failure depends on the

capacity to adapt through time the strategic focus, the governance, and the innovation activities to the changing political, administrative, legal, financial, and social conditions of the environment. The article reflects on the adaptive character of collaborative spaces, that on the one hand, have to respond to the needs of users, and on the other hand, have to ensure their sustainability and coherence in constant negotiation with the environmental factors. That perspective also calls to the temporality of spaces, and it questions about the permanent or temporary role of spaces.

The article by Justine Ballon and Stéphane Veyer provides an understanding on the current mutations that the organization of work of entrepreneurs. Through the study of French cooperatives, the author takes an approach based on the notion of activity to analyse the socioeconomics of work. The study of cooperatives offers a convincing perspective about some of the current major changes in the workplace, concerning an increase in the autonomy and independence of freelancers, a higher participation in decision making and in the engagement in community activities. The three dimensions of cooperative work (occupational, community, and governance dimensions) represent the analytical framework to study cooperative work structures, that are based on self-organization and self-employment. In opposition to traditional industrial work, these structures enable members to collective own their means of production and better adapt their approach to work and its balance with personal life. Cooperative work activity depicts the characteristics common to freelancers, that benefiting from a larger flexibility and freedom that salaried workers, also face difficulties to ensure stable and sustainable economic sources.

Lorena Delgado, Daniel Galvez, Pedro Palominos and Laure Morel study the factors that lead to effective collaborative learning promoted in collaborative spaces. The article proposes a model based on five dimensions to enhance collaborative learning: the physical infrastructures (considering aspects as the ergonomics, and the design of the spaces), the technology (considering the training in the use of the equipment and the devices), the emotional dimension (based on mutual trust and a sense of community), the social aspect (and the integration of the user in a community), and the cognitive dimension (through the definition of individual roles and the guidance through the innovation processes). The article also provides useful insights about how to design a space in a university in order to engage the participation of the different stakeholders.

This special issue of the Journal of Innovation Economics and Management contributes to current academic conversations on collaborative spaces, and sheds some light about the current work and innovation practices that take place in these spaces. Furthermore, the different articles also provide some further understanding of the current changes both in the organization of work, and the work in organizations.

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