

Word from the Guest Editors

Coworking Spaces, a New Form of Collective or Socialized Entrepreneurship?

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Les espaces de coworking, une forme nouvelle d'entrepreneuriat collectif ou socialisé ?

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Los espacios de coworking ¿son una nueva forma de iniciativa empresarial colectiva o una forma de socialización?

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Coworking Spaces, a New Form of Collective or Socialized Entrepreneurship?

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The reflection on the call for papers for this thematic issue took place before the pandemic situation. As guest editors, we wanted to try to illustrate the role that a coworking space could play for an entrepreneur. In other words, to what extent could this type of place represent a source of resources for the entrepreneurial community? We wanted to see various proposals for definitions, a genesis of third places in general and coworking spaces more specifically. We also hoped to focus on coworking spaces, in different regions and / or countries, to highlight the complexity and diversity of the process, or the governance and management methods present in these places. Through the content of this issue these initial expectations seem to have been met, but beyond that, this issue also helps to provide more details on the profiles, professional trajectories and motivations of coworking space entrepreneurs (members / users but also the founders). It also demonstrates all the diversity of forms of collective learning existing within coworking spaces, but also the geographical issues (location of activities, mobility of individuals) of collective entrepreneurship.

In addition, well beyond our expectations, the proposals selected also demonstrate the diversity of situations that an entrepreneur can be brought to live, including in a coworking space, and that frequenting this type of place does not ensure, even if there is networking and entrepreneurial success. Very often put forward for these benefits, coworking spaces also have certain imperfections. Presented as places of freedom, some of the authors of this issue have shown that a hierarchy can develop in these premises. Used as an example of a place of collaboration and openness, some articles also describe the presence of forms of rivalry. In short, this thematic issue contributes to a better understanding of the operating methods of a coworking space and its potentially positive effect on entrepreneurship, but while qualifying the subject and highlighting that this beneficial impact of the place is not ensured at all times. The possible scenarios are numerous and the situations more complex than they appear.

Finally, at the time of publication of this issue, two years of pandemic have passed. The Covid-19 also seems to have redistributed the cards differently. Some entrepreneurial initiatives, just like some coworking spaces have ceased their activity, while other projects and other places have been created. The pandemic has further heightened and even, to some extent, trivialized the possibility of telecommuting from home and has questioned our vision of time, as well as the organization of traditional work. As some people and some projects are not necessarily suited to working from home, and we observe negative effects of working alone at home the coworking space can provide an interesting option for entrepreneurs, between the classic office and the home. Frequenting coworking spaces could therefore be a hybrid solution allowing telework, but without the risks of isolation that a worker or an entrepreneur who works from his home might feel. Coworking spaces can thus continue to exist, even in a post-pandemic world that we are eager to reach now.