### When technology is taken for granted: the paradox of co-working

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#### Co-working: a response to conventional understandings of work

- **Productivity** is decoupled from physical location and set hours (Gregg and Kneese, 2020).
- **Commitment** to work is a personal endeavor not associated to being physically at one's desk (Taylor & S. Luckman, 2018)
- **Self-regulation** has supplanted traditional forms of control, regulation and rewards (Fleming, 2009)
- **ICT** applications and platforms as the bricks that make possible the functioning of co-working spaces (Richardson, 2017)

#### ICT and the role of technology in co-working studies

- Co-working offices are workspaces enabled by digital technologies and sometimes producing 'born digital' businesses"
- "This work is thus 'digital' in that it occurs through software, hardware and connectivity **affording the possibilities** of smaller, self-organised producer units" (Richardson, 2017).

 ICTs are deemed critical variables (or enabling resources) for the diffusion of more flexible forms of work, outside of traditional workspaces

#### A vague use of the notion of ICT

Lack of explanations on how technology:

- Enables the functioning of co-working spaces
- Informs organizational design and practices within co-working spaces

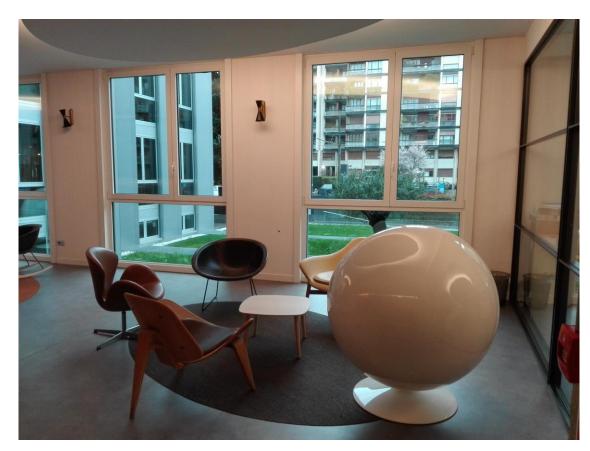
- What are the main debates around co-working?
- How is technology placed within those debates?

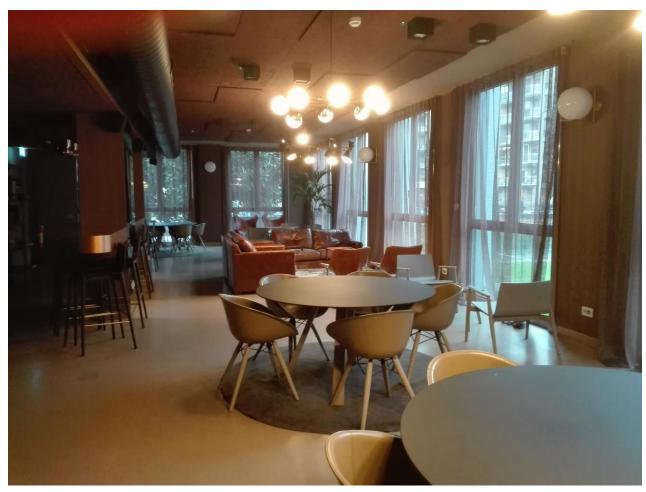
#### Research strategy and method

• A **scoping review** (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) → to "map" the broad phenomenon of coworking and its key characteristics.

- An exploratory review of academic articles on the topic (2005-2020).
- About 60 papers reviewed from different disciplines
  - e.g. economic geography, urban studies, communication studies, sociology, organization studies and management.

#### The collaborative dimension





Source: photos taken by authors

# Source: photos taken by authors

#### The aesthetic dimension





#### What is the *place* of technology within the debate on co-working?

ICT is described mainly in a cursory 'nominal' way.

 ICT is infrastructural, it so taken for granted to have become invisible.

 ICT is celebrated as enabling radical transformations, interlinked with future-oriented grand aspirations

#### Common views of Technology 1/2

#### 1. Nominal view

Generic terms – including: digital technology, technological change,
'digital platforms - are used as mere background information.

#### 2. Tool view

• ICTs are seen as tools. (ex.co-workers manage to reconcile their jobs and social relationships through technology)

Orlikowski and Iacono, 2001

#### Common views of Technology 2/2

#### 4. Proxy view

Key aspects of technology may be cap-tured through surrogate measures

#### 5. Computational view

The focus is on technical features of artefacts

#### 6. Ensemble view

ICT is analysed in association with organi-zational context of use

Orlikowski and Iacono, 2001

#### What is the *place* of technology within the debate on co-working?

View of technology	Conceptualization of technology	Examples from the content analysis
Nominal view	References to technology are either incidental or used as background information	Richardson, L., Sharing as a postwork style: digital work and the coworking office. Cambridge Journal of regions, economy and society, 2017. 10(2): p. 297-310
Tool view	Artefacts are expected to do what its designers intend them to do	De Paoli et al-2019. The spatial context of organizations: A critique of 'creative workspaces'. Journal of Management & Organization
Ensemble view	ICT is analysed in association with organizational context of use	Toivonen, T. and C. Sorensen The Creative Process in Coworking & Collaborative Work: Insights for Executives, Managers & Designers. 2018.
Proxy view	Key aspects of technology may be captured through surrogate measures	Clifton, N., A. Füzi, and G. Loudon, Coworking in the digital economy: Context, motivations, and outcomes. Futures, 2019. (in press): p. 1-16.
Computational view	The focus is on technical features (e.g. modeling capabilities) of artefacts	Kopplin, C.S., Two heads are better than one: matchmaking tools in coworking spaces. Review of Managerial Science, 2020. in press: p. 1-25

#### Limitations and next steps

- The review of co-working scholarship is not meant to be exhaustive or even necessarily representative
  - → Our review of papers need to be broadened to include up-to-date studies (after the health-emergence)

#### Further investigation

- the role of ITC artefacts as 'mediators' that organize and are organized (Holt, 2019)
- the impact of ICT on the daily activities of workers and experiences
- the way in which technology is configured raise issues of power and control.

## DIPARTIMENTO DI ECONOMIA, MANAGEMENT E METODI QUANTITATIVI

#### Thank you!

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#### EXTREME CO-WORKING SPACE



"Give me a shout when you're done with the space bar!"

