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The different shades of Co-working spaces: how culture change explains the market rules

Abstract

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing a deeper understanding of the links between the multiple layers in organizational culture and the different Co-working characteristics. The research presented here develops a new taxonomy of Co-working spaces by integrating results from qualitative semi-structured interviews supported by previous theoretical and empirical research. We conducted interviews with 44 owners or founders of co-working spaces. A thematic analysis revealed three different approaches to co-working, namely a profit-oriented perspective, a community-oriented perspective and a hybrid pattern that combines both perspectives. Drawing upon the interaction models, our findings contribute to a better understanding of different Co-working cultures in an increasingly competitive market. Accordingly, future research should validate the proposed model with complimentary methodologies (e.g., questionnaires) and longitudinal designs to track how Co-working culture persists or changes over time.

Key-words: Co-working; Community-Oriented; Organizational Culture; Profit-Oriented; Qualitative.

Introduction

With the financial-global crisis of 2007/08, and more recently the SARS-CoV-2 world pandemic, many employees were dismissed and forced into survival entrepreneurship mode, with an increasing number of people working remotely in different Co-working spaces across the world. According to the results of the 2021 Global Co-working Resources (2021) Survey, that number grew from 1,130 in 2011 to 20,000 Co-working spaces in 2020, and looks set to

pass the 40,000 mark by 2024. Also, the number of regular co-workers has grown globally from 43,000 (2011) to more than 1,933,331 members in 2020 (with the estimate for 2024 being 4,993,910, which represents a 158% increase on 2020). However, despite their rapid growth and notable impacts on the economy, Co-working spaces appeared recently in the literature. Are all these spaces the same? If they are different, what motivates the founders and managers of Co-working spaces to design distinct spaces that embody organizational cultures that are so different from each other? These are some questions we aim to answer in this study.

Co-working spaces can be more or less formal and integrate different types of cultures. The discrepancy theory explains the perceived difference between gains or performance and individuals' objectives or expectations (Cooper & Artz, 1995). This theory explains the vocation and motivation behind the choices and decisions that owners of Co-working spaces make in order to meet their initial goals and expectations, by taking into account the performance of their Co-working space. According to this theory, entrepreneurs or founders may differ in their vocations regarding the level of economic outcomes. The existing literature has developed typologies or classifications of Co-working spaces, including those specifically examining the question of social/ communally orientated spaces versus transactional/ economically orientated (c.f., Gandini & Cossu, 2021). Accordingly, we contend that Co-working spaces with an evident profit mission, a high-level of formality, a focus on closed spaces, confidentiality issues, and limited or no networking possibilities, all tend to reflect an orientation towards the economic growth/success of the organization. This perspective emphasizes the material aspects of the Co-working spaces, by mainly addressing the economic and sustainability demands of their owner and founders (Gandini, 2015; Garrett et al., 2017). Based on the discrepancy theory, we also identify a community-oriented perspective where the emphasis is on people's ideals, where human values are highlighted, and which is characterized

by dynamic co-workers, high group integration, regular non-co-worker access, and regular networking. Accordingly, the immaterial aspects promote the communitarian perspective of these Co-working spaces (Garrett et al., 2017; Gandini, 2015; Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021). However, the notion of “community” may have distinct typologies or spectrums, and different levels of social interaction (e.g., “good neighbors” vs. “good partners”) (c.f., Gandini & Cossu, 2021; Spinuzzi, 2012). Employees can have a different relationship with organizations and, according to Wilhoit Larson (2020), spaces can represent a gradient of organizational property. In the context of new ways of working, an employee can work in a place that despite not being purely organizational (e.g., an airport or coffee shop) can nevertheless become organizational because employees adopt the location to develop specific organizational tasks. Indeed, there has been an important debate around the new forms of organization and organizing (c.f., Blagoev et al., 2019) with important implications for the Co-working literature. In this current study, therefore, we conceptualize Co-working spaces as being more related to the approach of organizationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015). As places with high plasticity and dynamism where individuals can at times develop more formal relationships and at times more informal relationships.

In order to accrue further benefits and to ensure the survival of the Co-working spaces, founders and owners can introduce several change initiatives. This, however, may bring cultural inconsistencies, leading to some original artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions (Schein, 2017) having to be “sacrificed” in order to attract and retain co-workers. Although previous research has contributed a great deal to the study of Co-working characteristics, there is still a need to understand what lies behind the different reasons (i.e., vocations) of owners and founders of Co-working spaces for the architecture of each Co-working space. We leverage the discrepancy theory (Cooper & Artz, 1994) to explain the reasons that might drive Co-working owners and founders to develop different

Co-working perspectives. Moreover, it is still unclear how different layers of culture (Schein, 1992) influence the characteristics of Co-working spaces. To our knowledge, no framework currently exists in the literature to explain the different culture patterns in Co-working spaces. This study is one of the first attempts to complement the existing literature on Co-working spaces by studying the buyer–seller relationship in Co-working ecosystems and in creating added value through cultural changes. We begin with a conceptualization of Co-working, then we explain different types of Co-working spaces, and how Schein’s perspective on culture may explain the existence of such different characteristics.

Theoretical framework

Conceptualization of Co-working

Co-work concepts predate the labeling of Co-working spaces, as they are known today (Kojo & Nenonen, 2017). Although the creation of the modern concept of Co-working can be attributed to Brad Neuberg in 2005 to balance his lone work as a freelancer with a need to feel integrated in a community (Yang et al., 2019), other ways of sharing space and services, and of building work communities have been established (Kojo & Nenonen, 2017). As recently as 30th of July 2020, Starbucks (in collaboration with Think Lab Co.) opened a coffee Co-working business to the public in Ginza, Japan where they apply the same prices and products (Japan, 2021). This space has different floors and offers meeting spaces, booths for groups and modern cubicles specifically designed to promote individuals’ work. On visiting a Co-working space, we can find people working side by side, often in shared spaces. The sharing goes beyond the workspace, also extending to common (social) spaces, kitchens, restaurants and lounges for both formal and informal meetings. Thus, the concept of Co-working aims to create the conditions for unexpected encounters to occur with other workers who are working in the same or in another sector of activity. Such encounters could then

result in new ideas, innovative concepts and solutions to various problems, thus contributing to individual or professional goals (Jakonen et al., 2017).

In an article published in 2017, Garrett and cols describe the concept of "sense of community" developed in the 1980s by McMillan and Chavis (1986), which helps the reader understand the complexity of relationships in these new forms of work. The authors (2017) separate the sense of psychological community into four major dimensions: influence, affiliation, integration, and emotional connection. The influence dimension reports a two-way meaning in the relationship that is established between the members of a group and their relationship with members of other groups. Affiliation consists of the feeling of belonging to a collective. Integration is the perception that individual needs will be met by the resources available in the Co-working space. Finally, the emotional connection consists of a bond developed through positive interactions and a shared history with space members. Owing to the community characteristics of Co-working spaces, they end up providing community ecosystems that foster a greater sense of organizational integration, motivation and satisfaction, as well as lower rates of voluntary abandonment (Boyd & Nowell, 2014). The finding that there are different customer profiles of Co-working spaces, and the need for survival in the face of increased offer, has led managers of these spaces to develop a greater diversity of Co-working spaces.

Previous literature conceptualizes Co-working spaces as functioning as “surrogates” to traditional, employing organizations (e.g. Petriglieri et al., 2019). This approach is more closely related to the notion of partial organization. According to the initial concept developed by Ahne and Brunsson (2011), partial organizations exist when some (but not all) of the following key elements are present: hierarchy, rules, membership, monitoring and sanctioning. These elements can coexist with other types of social orders such as networks or institutions (Blagoev et al., 2019). Partial organizations are more focused on formal

relationships. However, this approach is quite rigid because employees can have a different relationship with organizations. In fact, Wilhoit Larson (2020) suggests that spaces can represent a gradient of organizational property. In the context of new ways of working, an employee can work in a place that despite not being purely organizational (e.g., an aeroplane or coffee shop) can nevertheless become organizational because employees adopt the location to develop specific organizational tasks.

Therefore, in the current study we conceptualize Co-working spaces as being more related to the approach of organizationality as defined by Dobusch and Schoeneborn (2015). According to that theory, social collectives cannot be considered in a simplistic way as either organizations or non-organizations. In fact, there is a more complex gradual differentiation since social entities can conceptually be organizational to different gradients or degrees at different times (Blagoev et al., 2019). In line with the conceptual approach of organizationality, we cannot conceive an organization as a static and formal entity where the rule of the five structural elements (i.e., hierarchy, rules, membership, monitoring rules and sanctioning) are always present (Ahrne and Brunsson 2011). In fact, in accordance with the organizationality approach, Co-working spaces cannot be organizational for all employees at all moments. In Co-working spaces, informal relationships and fluid interactions characterize the collective dynamics that mobilize the agents of these spaces for action. In sum, there are different gradients of organizationality that vary according to the characteristics and job descriptions of the Co-working members (Dobusch and Schoeneborn, 2015). This explains why Co-working spaces provide a continuum between job performance and leisure, which cannot be explained in a simplistic binary organizational and non-organizational approach to partial organization (Ahrne and Brunsson 2011). If we consider the perspective of the Co-working members, in order to understand the Co-working dynamics this contribution is important. However, there is a link missing in the literature that would aid understanding of

how the umbrella of organizationality helps to explain the reasons why providers of the Co-working spaces develop an entire organizational culture that will attract people to work in Co-working spaces and to retain them.

Different approaches to Co-working

Different drivers have pushed the evolution of Co-working concepts over time. First, we identify the regional development and the need for telecommunications, more economic efficiency and the sharing of office services. New generations of workers motivated toward a protean career (i.e., a career driven by the individual motivations and not by the organization) appear to be more concerned with their work-life balance and are seeking more attractive and flexible workspaces. Also, the literature reinforces that with the new ways of working and the emergence of more freelancers and outsourcing (Kojo & Nenonen, 2017), there's a need for more inspirational workplaces and for increased networking and support (Yang et al., 2019). Other authors mention the nature of the work and the growing adaptation to virtual work, as well as the need to identify talent sources in different geographical locations (Johns and Gratton, 2013). The world is also facing an increased occupational adaptation to the knowledge society (Gandini, 2015; Johns & Gratton, 2013; Parrino 2013), and the spread of entrepreneurship in small businesses (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2018). These drivers of change have induced Co-working providers to correspond to the demands in different ways, and thus produce a diverse array of Co-working spaces.

Cooper and Artz (1994) developed, within the discrepancy theory, the “goal-achievement gap theory” that explains how entrepreneurs react to levels of economic performance, and labels them the economic and the non-economic motivated profiles. Economically motivated entrepreneurs are less satisfied with lower levels of performance and are, therefore, more likely to exit the company. In contrast, non-economically motivated entrepreneurs are more resilient and more likely to make an effort to keep the company active

despite unpredictable results. The weakening of employment ties between workers and companies, and the emergence of new types of relationships has increased demand from independent knowledge workers for these types of workspaces (Peuter et al., 2017; Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021). This type of worker has particular social needs that Co-working spaces try to address in their “portfolio” by making immaterial aspects equally as important as technical and material infrastructures (Garrett et al., 2017). These immaterial aspects of Co-working concern enhancing social support and combating isolation (Merkel, 2019), promoting ideas and knowledge exchange and creating a collaborative learning environment (Yang et al., 2019), developing entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and developing an atmosphere favorable to the collective exploitation of business opportunities (Bouncken & Reuschel, 2018). Immaterial aspects more strongly promote the communitarian atmosphere of Co-working spaces, namely by endorsing a shared vision of the community in the space, creating moments and spaces for encounters, and engaging co-workers in community activities (Garrett et al., 2017).

In sum, the evolution of Co-working spaces suggests the existence of two major approaches to their management, one of which is linked more to material aspects, answering more economic and sustainability demands, while the other pertains more to immaterial aspects, promoting the communitarian perspective of these spaces (Garrett et al., 2017; Gandini, 2015). Since the conceptualization of Co-working has evolved over time, and different views about the concept can co-exist, this study began by putting forward the following research question. *Research question 1.* What features of Co-working spaces can reflect the different approaches to the concept of Co-working?

Organizational culture and Co-working spaces

“Socialization has been conceptualized as one of the primary ways in which organizational culture is transmitted and maintained” (Bauer et al., 1998; p. 162).

Organizational culture is a very complex topic in the managerial literature (Giorgi et al., 2015). In the current study, we will adopt the holistic way in which Schein (1992) understands the phenomenon of organizational culture. Accordingly, several levels of culture are considered. However, as some levels are less conscious, they are less tangible and visible and, as such, remain at a deeper level. In this sense, culture reflects a “coherent whole that encompasses dimensions such as climate, rituals, values and behaviors” (Schein, 1999; p.10). Accordingly, the analysis of organizational culture integrates three distinct levels: artifacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions. Artifacts comprise the first level of observation and integrates all visible characteristics of a group, such as the organization of the space, language, technology, products, creative aspects, personal styles, dress, emotional manifestations, as well as the myths and stories about the institution. The espoused values, at the second level, are associated with the values of organizations and the reasons underlying the behaviors and structure of the company. The espoused values relate to the core values that are reported by managers, and include strategies, objectives and philosophies. This level describes the personal relationships through which employees and supervisors develop strong or weak ties, and establish different patterns of communication about the reality of the organization. The third level, underlying assumptions, reflect the deepest layers of an organization, and take into account the history of the organization and the initial values of the founders. Thus, while looking into the important details referring to the past, it is necessary to identify the founders’ values, beliefs and principles, as well as the key decisions that were determinant with regard to the success (or failure) of the institution (Schein & Schein, 2018). In company with salient cultures, there are visible evidences about the expectations and assumptions that each member can infer about the acceptable and typical behaviors of a prototypical member (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Therefore, social identity appears when people consistently internalize the organizational culture and its collective values, norms or rituals as

their own (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The internalization of group prototypicality allows individuals to understand the assumptions and expectations that might help individuals achieve their own objectives. For example, if a customer from a Co-working place sees that bringing food from home and eating every day in a collective space (e.g., communal kitchen with micro-waves) is an opportunity to increase networking and consequently enhance their chance of achieving professional objectives, they may be more likely to adopt these behaviors consistently.

According to Kim et al. (2022) the functionality perspective considers that cultural changes occur due to environmental factors such as market trends, external rules, crises, regulations, industry characteristics or technology. In line with these authors, another perspective is the leadership approach, which considers that leaders have a huge influence on culture. This comprises two sub perspectives: i) the leader-trait and ii) cultural transfer perspectives. The leader-trait perspective argues that leader traits such as personality, values, or personal demographic variables such as gender or sex influence culture development. The cultural transfer perspective proposes that the leader's past cultural experience is an important antecedent of culture. According to this perspective, the leader introduces and develops a culture based on their previous cultural experience. Since leaders play a detrimental role in the culture development (Schein, 1992) and also since most of the co-working literature does not provide a comprehensive theoretical contribution of the owners of co-working spaces, we will bring the perspective of leaders to the Co-working and organizational culture literatures. Following Schein's (2017) model, the second aim of this study was to portray the organizational cultures of the Co-working spaces, in accordance with differing views about the concept of Co-working. Thus, *research question 2* was devised: How different approaches of co-working will have different patterns of translating into organizational cultures?

Method

Participants

The sample included the company owners and/or community managers of 44 Co-working spaces, who voluntarily participated in the study: 43.2% owners, 29.5% community managers, and 27.3% both owners and community managers (see Appendix for sample details). The participants were 73% male. Regarding professional expertise, 15.9% included managers, 18.2% experts in marketing, 13.6% engineers, 13.6% designers, 4.5% architects, 4.5% experts in the field of education, and 29.5% in other fields (e.g., consulting). With regard to the participants' academic qualifications, 57.8% were graduates (i.e., with a first degree); 15.6% postgraduates (i.e., with a master's or doctorate degree); and 24.4% did not report their qualifications. The Co-working spaces were located in the North (15.6%), Central (71.1%), and South-Central (11.1%) regions of Portugal (districts of Lisbon, Oporto, Braga, Aveiro, and Setúbal), and were founded between 2009 and 2019 ($M = 2015.18$; $SD = 2.49$). The occupation rate was equal to or below 50% in six of the Co-working spaces, equal to or below 75% in 12 of the organizations, and above 75% in 26 of them ($M = 77.22$; $SD = 22.57$). Half of the Co-working spaces revealed a high client turnover. The co-workers' control access was conducted through technological means (e.g., via app) in more than half of the Co-working spaces (61%). The majority of the leaders (70%) reported flexibility in adapting the services to the needs of the co-workers. Approximately half of the Co-working spaces (48%) provided virtual offices.

Instruments and procedures

The existing Co-working spaces in Portugal were initially identified. The leaders of the organizations were subsequently contacted, and those who accepted to participate in the interviews were included in the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in accordance with a previous script with open-ended questions about space management (e.g., motive for founding the organization), space description (e.g., type of shared spaces), rules

and control mechanisms (e.g., co-workers' access), and business sustainability (e.g., distinctive features compared to other competitor spaces). The interviews lasted from 20 to 50 minutes, and were audio-recorded through previous consent. The leaders of the organizations were interviewed by members of the research team in the Co-working spaces, and were subsequently transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

A theory-driven thematic analysis was conducted to identify and describe patterns or themes within the data, following a theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was guided in accordance with the Model of Organizational Culture and Leadership by Schein (2017), focusing on the model's three levels of analysis. Level one referred to visible structures and processes, and observed behavior (Artifacts). Level two involved the leaders' ideals, goals, values, aspirations, ideologies and rationalizations (Espoused beliefs, values and behavioral norms). Lastly, level three comprised the leaders' unconscious and taken-for-granted beliefs and values (Basic underlying assumptions). The main categories of analysis (first-order concepts) consisted of the aforementioned three levels of the model, and the initial sub-categories (second-order concepts) included dimensions which were identified in the data and, in accordance with the literature, could integrate each level (e.g., Formality at the Artifacts' level). The data was then segmented into statements or natural meaning units of the transcripts, followed by their coding. The analysis then evolved into a focused coding by reviewing and refining codes. Similar codes were merged into a single code and were renamed whenever necessary, and codes containing less prevalent meaning units were excluded. A total of 1393 natural meaning units corresponded to the final codes, resulting in the final coding structure (see Appendix for categories of analysis, their description and frequency).

Coding of the transcripts was performed by a researcher on the team, using NVivo 12. To test for interrater reliability, an additional independent researcher coded 10% of the total categories. Results revealed a strong agreement with a Kappa value of .89 (McHugh, 2012). The research team held regular meetings to debrief and verify coding, interpretations, and definition of concepts.

The second step of the analysis consisted of finding patterns in the cases by using matrix queries as a way of exploring which themes co-occurred in NVivo (Bazeley, 2013). This resulted in the selection of a set of features which could relate to relevant dimensions associated with Co-working, considering the three levels of Schein's (1992, 2017) model. Level one dimensions involved Communication styles, Control mechanisms, Level of formalism, Organizational integration, and Physical environment. Level two comprised the dimensions of Distinctive values, Mission, Relation with client, and Rules. Level three involved the dimensions of Idealization, and Inconsistency/conflict. From the initial 1393 codes, 1108 meaning units were used in this analysis: 572 in level one (Artifacts), 396 in level two (Espoused beliefs, values, and behavioral norms), and 140 in level three (Basic underlying assumptions). This allowed us to identify two predominant types of organizational cultures, reflecting distinct views about the concept of Co-working. Lastly, the most representative Co-working spaces of each organizational culture were identified from the 44 total cases. This selection was guided by the prevalence of features from the dimensions previously mentioned, for each level of the model. Specifically, the Co-working spaces that presented a high prevalence of features (70% or higher) from each type of organizational culture were selected as representative examples.

Results

Table I presents the thematic categories, and their frequency, along with the corresponding features, which reflected two divergent approaches to the concept of Co-

working, throughout the three levels of Schein's (1992, 2017) model. The frequency of Co-working Spaces (CS) that matched each feature are also presented. The CS that revealed features from both organizational cultures in specific dimensions (e.g., strict and flexible rules) were not added to the table. We identified two contrasting types of organizational cultures from this analysis. The first, (Organizational Culture A) focused on material assets, profit, and marketing, while the second (Organizational Culture B), was shown to be oriented to the community, and to networking and interaction between the coworkers.

 INSERT TABLE I ABOUT HERE

Organizational cultures A and B and corresponding Co-working spaces

Table II presents the CS which were identified as being the most representative of Organizational Culture A (OCA; $n = 11$) and Organizational Culture B (OCB; $n = 8$), as well as the description of their specific features, in accordance with the three levels of analysis of Schein's (1992, 2017) model.

 INSERT TABLE II ABOUT HERE

Level 1, Artifacts.

Communication styles. Results concerning observable communicative behavior related to networking showed that OCA Co-working spaces revealed a tendency for inconsistent or lack of formal and informal networking initiatives and behavior, along with confidentiality and privacy issues. For instance, the CS2 interviewee reported that 'The co-workers speak with me [leader], asking if there's any architect or whatever to do business, instead of asking other coworkers directly (...) the networking events have an unpredictable participation'. Also, the CS25 interviewee mentioned that 'People look for public spaces because it is trendy, but they always end up wanting some privacy'. In contrast, OCB Co-

working spaces revealed a considerable amount of networking initiatives and behavior of either type, formal or informal. For instance, the CS29 leader reported that: ‘Businesses between designers and programmers have emerged, and also involve lawyers, solicitors, travel agencies, which are very much sought after by the people here.’ Another example was the following statement: ‘Every month we have a social Friday, and we all go out to lunch in a restaurant. Networking arises naturally from this type of interaction, or just while we are having lunch in the kitchen.’ [CS3] Also, OCB leaders did not report any confidentiality or privacy issues that could contribute to block networking.

Control mechanisms. OCA Co-working spaces showed more restricted and limited access to non-co-workers, such as partners/colleagues, and friends/family. An illustrative example was the following: ‘They can receive people in their private office and in the Co-working room, depending on what is included in the contract. They can also reserve the meeting room at an additional cost.’ [CS33] Contrastingly, in the case of OCB, the access provided to non-co-workers was revealed as being more open and flexible. As an example, the C39 interviewee reported that: ‘Yes, for example, referring to colleagues, it has happened [receiving them in the space], they asked us, we let them, absolutely, no problem.’

Level of formality. Concerning formality, as embodied in clothing, manner of address, and emotional displays, OCA Co-working spaces revealed a greater tendency for a high level of formality. The following example reflects one of the Co-working space’s high level of formalism: ‘The space is premium, and the environment is quite heavy.’ [CS36] Conversely, OCB Co-working spaces showed a lower level of formality, as exemplified next: ‘No [formality]. I even ask them to take their shoes off when they enter the co-living space.’ [CS37]

Organizational integration. The integration of new co-workers revealed a tendency to focus on the individual in the OCA Co-working spaces, with few initiatives of integration in

the group to introduce new members. For example, the interviewee of CS35 reported that: ‘We only explain what we have to offer, as well as the client’s occupation area.’ While the results of the OCB revealed more initiatives of integration in the group than OCA, the individual focus continued to prevail. Still, community initiatives, such as networking behaviors, including meetings, group meals, and parties, were reported. The following sentence is an example: ‘There’s a community lunch, once a month or more, in which the companies introduce themselves and their businesses or projects.’ [CS23]

Physical environment. OCA Co-working spaces revealed a higher investment in closed spaces, compared to OCB, especially private offices for companies, as the following example highlights: ‘We don’t have open spaces, we did have but we closed it to just one company. (...) we have a kind of open spaces, but they all belong to the same company.’ [CS40] Although some of them also provided private offices for the co-workers, open spaces were particularly valued by the leaders of OCB, they were either work-related areas, or leisure areas (e.g., terrace). For instance, one of the OCB leaders mentioned that: ‘The fact that the entire area is an open space, including one of the meeting rooms, prevents formality from occurring.’ [CS3]

Level 2, Espoused beliefs, values, and behavioral norms.

Distinctive values. Results related to features which differentiate the organization from others showed that the OCA Co-working spaces focused mainly on material assets, such as subscription rates, facilities and accommodation. A statement by the leader of CS4 is an example: ‘We offer the lowest prices in the area’. In contrast, the results of OCB showed that the values of the leaders were mostly focused on human assets, particularly on promoting events and the interaction between people, and contributing to the development of the community. An illustrative example is the following: ‘Everything is open to the public, even the rooftop, and that really distinguishes it from other spaces.’ [CS23]

Mission. The leaders of the OCA Co-working spaces indicated that the founding of the organization was mainly motivated by profit, as the following example highlights: ‘I thought that if I rented the floor to only one or two companies, I would earn less. Using the Co-working concept doubles the profit.’ [CS30] In contrast, the motives which led to the foundation of the OCB Co-working spaces seemed not to be directly related to making a profit, but instead were related to self and professional realization, or to personal motives or needs. The following references are examples of both: ‘We needed facilities to interconnect several projects which link entrepreneurship with social support.’ [CS1]; ‘We don’t see this as a business, we only want to cover the fixed costs by having the house full, and make it a good place for us to work.’ [CS16]

Rules. The conduct and contractual norms of the organizations tended to be more rigid in the OCA Co-working spaces, which reported mostly strict rules, such as ‘Downstairs, watch out for phone calls. Use the phone booths.’ [CS2] On the other hand, most of the norms of the OCB Co-working spaces were found to be flexible. An illustrative example was the following: ‘There are no formalized rules. It is a family-friendly space. (...) I had a couple with a baby, and it was ok.’ [CS37]

Relation with client. The OCA Co-working spaces reported a preference for permanent and stable co-workers with long contracts. For instance, the interviewee from CS35 reported that: ‘I have long contracts, and that’s what provides me stability.’ In contrast, dynamic co-workers who integrate and contribute to the community seemed to be the main clients of the OCB Co-working spaces. The following example highlights their main target: ‘I prefer someone who contributes to the community, even if they stay less time. That’s the spirit which keeps people here. No one would want to come here if it wasn’t for that culture.’ [CS1]

Level 3, Basic underlying assumptions

Idealization. Results related to the underlying ideals of the OCA leaders focused either on marketing strategies, cost control, and customer retention (i.e., profit orientation), or on promoting the prestige of the community, by using strict procedures to select the co-workers, and/or by excluding those who did not fit in (i.e., elite orientation). For example, the leader of the CS25 reported that ‘I prefer to make some income without trying too hard.’, while the leader of the CS35 stated that ‘We attract premium people, and, for that reason, they end up behaving in a more professional and friendly manner, due to the clients’ professional experience.’ On the other hand, the ideals of the OCB leaders revealed a focus mainly on the networking between co-workers, and on the community’s development (i.e., people orientation). For instance, the interviewee of CS32 stated that ‘It is not a good thing for us to have only one company occupying an entire floor (...) it is crucial to have synergies in a Co-working space.’

Inconsistency and conflict. Inconsistent signals regarding what they do or pay attention to were frequently found in the discourse of the OCA leaders, as the following examples illustrate: ‘People do not know the concept [Co-working], so I need to advertise offices, and only then do I tell them that they are shared.’ [CS30]; ‘What’s cool in Co-working spaces is to be able to observe the different concepts, but we are mostly dedicated to comfort and to the functional part of the space. We would like to have more success investing in events, though.’ [CS41] These types of signals and conflicts were rarely identified in the discourse of the OCB leaders.

Hybrid/Combined Co-working spaces

The remaining 25 Co-working spaces (i.e., which presented a prevalence of features from each type of organizational culture lower than 70%) revealed a combination of attributes from both types of organizational cultures. An illustrative example of a combined CS was CS5. This organization’s level one features (Artifacts) included a low level of

formality; restricted access to non-co-workers; regular networking; no privacy/confidentiality issues; the organizational integration was focused on the individual; and priority was given to closed spaces. Level two features (Espoused beliefs, values, and norms) revealed a balance between stable and dynamic clients; the mission was orientated towards profit; the distinctive values focused on human assets; and a mixture of strict and flexible rules was identified. Lastly, level three features (Underlying basic assumptions) included ideals focused on people and on the community, and the presence of inconsistency/conflict. Moreover, contradictions were found between the three levels of analysis in 30% of the combined CS. Specifically, while the predominant features from level one corresponded to OCB, in level two and/or in level three they matched OCA. CS8 provides an illustrative example. Most of the level one features matched OCB (i.e., low level of formalism; regular networking; lack of privacy/confidentiality issues; group oriented organizational integration; and focus on open spaces). For instance, the CS8 leader reported that: ‘The first question I ask the client is whether I can address him informally’, and ‘Lunches on Friday in the shared kitchen, so they can get to know each other’. Nonetheless, CS8’s features from level two corresponded mostly to OCA (i.e., profit-oriented mission; values focused on material assets; and strict rules), as well as features from level three (i.e., customer-oriented ideals; and presence of inconsistency/conflict). The following statements reveal some of the inconsistencies found within this specific organization: ‘The co-working business is like McDonald’s, only our business is not to sell hamburgers but real estate’; ‘As a community manager I like the dynamic type. As an accounting guy, I appreciate long contracts.’

Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the overall results, which highlights how the two divergent approaches to the concept of Co-working can transfer to the three levels of the Co-working spaces’ organizational culture. Specifically, the continuum it presents varies from a perspective mostly oriented to marketing, profit, and material assets (i.e., office

facilities and amenities), to a perspective focused on growing the community, and on networking and the interaction between the co-workers. Each perspective is located at opposite ends of the continuum, where the two types of organizational cultures identified in this study sit (OCA and OCB). Different CS can be distributed over this continuum, ranging from OCA to OCB at opposite ends, and including the combined halfway CS. This distribution depends on the illustrated features of the organizational culture pertaining more to one or the other perspective on Co-working.

 INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Discussion

Co-working spaces are on the rise all over the world, with the Global Co-working Resources Survey (2021) forecasting an increase of 154% in only four years (between 2020 and 2024). Despite efforts to describe different models of Co-working spaces (e.g., Garrett et al., 2017; Yang et al, 2019), the literature fails to explain the different cultural layers and features of each Co-working space. Particularly, understanding the type of Co-working spaces and describing situations where managers develop efforts to adapt their initial vocation and cultural values to different groups and member profiles remains unexplored. There is evidence that efforts to change specific values or work routines are ineffective (Hartnell et al., 2019) and that all levels of culture should be aligned in order to harmonize the values and norms of Co-working spaces and the values and attitudes that characterize each member or company within the space (Schein & Schein, 2019). Accordingly, and taking into consideration other variables of the system (i.e., strategy, structure and leadership), Co-working managers develop direct efforts to change the culture and, with this, align the priorities and messages consistent with the intended objectives of their customers.

Theoretical implications

Research Question 1 asked how the different features of Co-working spaces can reflect different approaches to the concept of Co-working. Our results find similarities with the approach developed by Garrett and colleagues (2017); however, we extended this model in two different aspects. First, we bring the goal-achievement gap theory (Cooper & Artz, 1994) to the model developed by Garrett et al (2017), so that economically driven entrepreneurs are linked with the material concerns of the Co-working space (i.e., economic sustainability and profitability being the main focus). Non-economically driven entrepreneurs, on the other hand, tend to be more oriented to the immaterial dimensions, thus make a greater effort to promote a sense of community. Second, we added a third dimension to the existing theories (Cooper & Artz, 1994; Garrett et al., 2017) which, in fact, was the most representative dimension according to our findings. This dimension refers to a hybrid approach which combines a mix of both orientations (i.e., profit-oriented and community-oriented) in order to serve the different characteristics and cultural backgrounds of these Co-working members (Spinuzzi, 2012). This new dimension seems to emerge due to the discrepancy perceived by individuals between their own values and those of the organization (Dyląg et al., 2013).

These hybrid forms are an attempt to balance commercial viability with community aspirations (Schneider, 1987). In line with a study presented by Morand (1995), while behavioral informality may be instrumental when leaders want to develop innovative and organic work organizations, formality is more linked to the social construction of bureaucratic and impersonal work organizations. This goes in line with the concept of organizationality (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015), which explains how managers of Co-working spaces can achieve important organizational characteristics (Schoeneborn et al., 2019) by mobilizing a continuum of both formal and informal relationships (Blagoev et al., 2019).

Research Question 2 aimed to answer how different approaches of coworking will have different patterns of translating into organizational cultures. Through analysis of the

qualitative data, this study examined data supported by Schein's (1992) multi-layered model. To our knowledge, this is the first time that the culture of different Co-working spaces has been studied taking into account Schein's levels of analyses: artifacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions. These three original categories emerged in our analyses, suggesting the need to evaluate artifacts taking into account the communication styles, control mechanisms, levels of formality, organizational integration, and physical environment. Espoused values were associated with adapting services to clients' needs, distinctive values, mission, relation to the client and rules. Finally, the basic underlying assumptions at a deeper level would appear to be associated with the history of the Co-working space, idealization, and inconsistency and conflict. These findings provide a very important contribution to the business research literature since they explain the reasons behind the founding of Co-working spaces. Specifically, our results suggest that the main reason economically driven owners and founders establish Co-working spaces is for economic stability and/or growth. In contrast, the non-economically driven owners and founders seem to present two different types of reasons for founding the Co-working spaces. The first pertains to personal motives or needs, while the other focuses on self and/or professional realization, and is prompted by a vocation, which is defined here as an approach to a particular life role, oriented toward a sense of purpose (Duffy & Dik, 2013). Finally, these findings support the adoption of Schein's cultural methodology (see Schein & Schein, 2019) to identify and categorize the different Co-working spaces.

Practical implications

In practice, our study shows that the owners' motivations are indeed associated with characteristics that can bring more coherence to the communication around the existing Co-working spaces. Owners that have a clear economic orientation can attract possible

co-workers with messages related to sustainability, and the material features of the space. Maybe the target for these types of spaces could be linked with co-workers belonging to companies (Yang et al., 2019). On the other hand, non-economically motivated entrepreneurs can highlight the possibilities of social interactions, deepen the possibilities of exploring networks and create social bonds between workers, and even create specific social support initiatives (Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021). The possible intersection between the aspects of more sustainability and social ties, can be associated with more inclusive communication and the promotion of a more diverse work environment, in terms of its social characteristics, diverse occupations and mindsets (Garrett et al., 2017; Weeks et al., 2017).

Our study also establishes an integrated picture of the type of artifacts like communication styles, control mechanisms, levels of formality, organizational integration, and physical environment that can be integrated to promote specific values and possible Co-working cultures (Schein & Schein, 2018). Finally, our findings can explain to what extent turnover rates of Co-working spaces and the contractual loyalty between owners and coworkers can rely on the degree of awareness that owners have about their own motivations, and how they influence the characteristics of some artifacts. More precisely, with regard to the role they might have on influencing the social identities of coworkers, possible group cooperation, and the attraction and retention of co-workers (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

Limitations and future research

Some limitations of the present research should be addressed. First, the methodological choice of conducting a theory-driven study may have contributed to limiting somewhat the readability of the results to the scope of the selected model of analysis. Furthermore, only the leaders' perspective was included in this research. Future studies could benefit from combining different levels of analysis to study the organizational culture of the Co-working spaces. For instance, by conducting hierarchical multi-level analyses, it would be

possible to gain a better understanding of both the leaders and the co-workers' perspectives. Also, it would be interesting to analyze whether identical results can be found in different geographical contexts, or whether conversely, the results can be influenced by culture, since the present study covered only one country. Lastly, this was an exploratory study conducted with the aim of promoting new research leads and paths, without any intention to generalize. With this in mind, therefore, the results need to be cautiously considered. Nevertheless, important clues for further research have been provided. Future research might thoroughly explore the hybrid pattern presented in this study, as well as the cultural inconsistencies which were found in some Co-working spaces, and how they can contribute to modify original artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions to attract and retain co-workers (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008). Also, this relation could be further analyzed by including the reasons why the owners and founders establish the Co-working spaces, which were highlighted in this study (i.e., profit, personal motives/needs, and vocation) as a mediator variable. We suggest the need to develop measures and dashboard tools to monitor how the practice and governance of more affective Co-working spaces (Waters-Lynch & Duff, 2021) affect the culture and complex dynamics of these new forms of work. These analyses could provide a better understanding of the existing differences in Co-working spaces, as well as the different approaches that leaders take with regard to Co-working. Moreover, a longitudinal study centered on strategies used by the owners and founders of different Co-working spaces to deal with their inconsistencies would allow us to understand how and whether they would be able to maintain the survival of the Co-working space. This would explain how Co-working culture persists or changes over time (Schein & Schein, 2018).

Conclusion

The number of Co-working spaces is increasing exponentially all over the world in response to the needs and demands of a new generation of workers who face a new economy of encounters where digital technologies have enabled the development of different ways of working. This article develops a taxonomy of Co-working spaces grounded on their cultural characteristics and based on interviews with 44 Coworking space founders and/or community managers in Portugal. The main findings suggest that the culture of Co-working Spaces can be arranged on a spectrum (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015) from, at one end more transactional, profit seeking goals or, at the other end, more community-oriented goals. Drawing upon the multi-layer cultural perspective of Schein (1992), this study provides an interesting contribution to the Co-working literature by suggesting some cultural inconsistencies which, in our opinion, constitute a buyer-seller effort by managers and owners to meet the needs and resources of their Co-working members.

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Tables

Table I.

Defining features of organizational cultures A and B, and frequency of co-working spaces.

Dimensions	Organization culture A features	<i>n</i>	Organization culture B features	<i>n</i>	Total
Communication styles <i>f</i> = 155	Inconsistent and/or lack of networking and/or reported confidentiality/privacy problems	16	Regular formal and informal networking initiatives and behavior	28	44
Control mechanisms <i>f</i> = 59	Restricted and limited access to non-co-workers	23	Open access to non-co-workers	21	44
Level of formalism <i>f</i> = 74	High level of formality	17	Low level of formality	27	44
Organizational integration <i>f</i> = 32	Focus on the individual	30	Focus on the group/community	14	44
Physical environment <i>f</i> = 209	Priority given to closed spaces, although open spaces are also available	20	Priority given to open spaces, although closed spaces can also be available	24	44
Distinctive values <i>f</i> = 84	Material assets (e.g., location)	21	Human assets (e.g., community development)	16	37
Mission <i>f</i> = 58	Profit	21	Vocational or focused on personal needs/motives	23	44
Relation with client <i>f</i> = 52	Preference for stable and permanent clients	11	Preference for dynamic clients who contribute to the community	14	28
Rules <i>f</i> = 197	Strict	10	Flexible	15	25
Idealization <i>f</i> = 98	Customer oriented or elite oriented	17	People oriented	14	31
Inconsistency and conflict <i>f</i> = 39	Often reported	23	Occasionally reported	21	44

Table II.

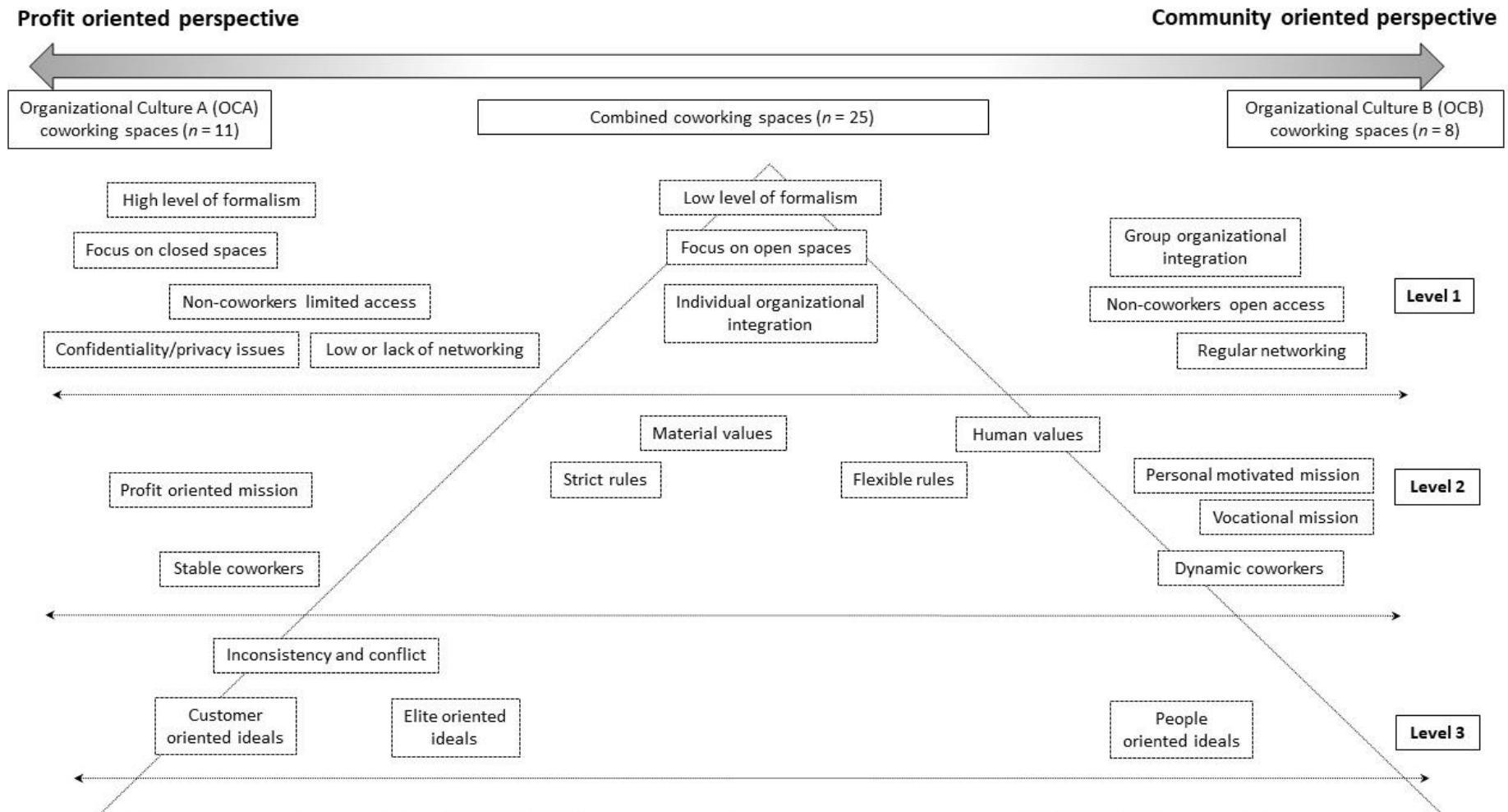
Description of the Co-working Spaces (CS) representative of organizational cultures A and B.

	Artifacts (Level 1)						Beliefs, values and norms (level 2)				Underlying assumptions (level 3)	
Co-working Spaces (CS)	Networking	Confidentiality /privacy	Non-coworkers access	Level of formalism	Organizational integration	Open vs. Closed spaces	Values focus	Mission orientation	Dynamic vs. stable clients	Strict or flexible rules	Ideals orientation	Inconsistency and conflict
Organizational Culture A (OCA)												
CS2	Inconsistent	Yes	Limited	High	Individual	Open	Material	Profit	Stable	Strict	Elite	Yes
CS4	Lacking	Yes	Limited	High	Individual	Closed	Material	Profit	Stable	Flexible	Customer	Yes
CS18	Regular	No	Limited	High	Individual	Closed	Material	Profit	Stable	Flexible	Customer	No
CS25	Lacking	Yes	Limited	High	Individual	Open	Material	Profit	Stable	Strict	Customer	Yes
CS30	Inconsistent	Yes	Limited	High	Individual	Closed	Material	Profit	Stable	Strict	Customer	Yes
CS33	Inconsistent	Yes	Limited	Low	Group	Closed	Material	Profit	Stable	Strict	Customer	No
CS35	Inconsistent	Yes	Limited	High	Individual	Open	Material	Profit	Stable	Both	Elite	No
CS36	Lacking	Yes	Limited	High	Individual	Closed	Material	Profit	Dynamic	Flexible	Customer	Yes
CS40	Inconsistent	Yes	Limited	High	Individual	Closed	Material	Profit	Stable	Strict	Customer	Yes
CS41	Lacking	Yes	Limited	Low	Group	Open	Material	Profit	Stable	Strict	Customer	Yes
CS44	Regular	Yes	Limited	High	Individual	Open	Material	Profit	Stable	Strict	Customer	Yes

Organizational Culture B (OCB)

CS1	Regular	No	Open	Semi	Group	Open	Human	Vocation	Dynamic	Flexible	People	No
CS3	Regular	No	Open	High	Individual	Open	Human and material	Vocation	Dynamic	Both	People	No
CS16	Regular	No	Open	Low	Individual	Open	Human	Personal	Stable	Both	People	No
CS23	Regular	No	Open	Low	Group	Open	Human	Vocation	Dynamic	Flexible	People	Yes
CS29	Regular	No	Open	Low	Group	Open	Human and material	Personal	Dynamic	Strict	People	No
CS32	Regular	No	Open	Low	Individual	Open	Human	Vocation	Both	Flexible	People	No
CS37	Inconsistent	No	Open	Low	Individual	Open	Human	Vocation	Dynamic	Flexible	People	No
CS39	Regular	No	Open	Low	Group	Open	Human	Vocation	Dynamic	Flexible	People	No

Figure 1. Organizational culture continuum.



Appendix

Table AI.

Sample characteristics

Co-working Spaces (CS)	Location	Year of foundation	Occupation rate	Leaders' qualifications	Leaders' professionalization	Leaders' role	Leaders' sex
CS1	Lisbon	Not reported	100%	Undergraduate	Management	Owner	M
CS2	Lisbon	2012	65%	Undergraduate	Management	Owner	M
CS3	Leiria	2014	63%	Graduate	Design	Owner	M
CS4	Lisbon	2013	90%	Graduate	Training	Owner	M
CS6	Lisbon	2017	Low	Not reported	DJ	Community Manager (CM)	F
CS7	Lisbon	2018	77%	Graduate	Management	Owner	M
CS8	Lisbon	2017	70%	Undergraduate	Design	Owner	M
CS9	Lisbon	2014	75%	Graduate	Marketing	Owner	M
CS10	Lisbon	2013	75%	Not reported	Not reported	CM	F
CS11	Oporto	2016	100%	Graduate	Architecture	Owner	M
CS12	Lisbon	2016	98%	Graduate	Teaching	Owner	F
CS13	Lisbon	2017	15%	Not reported	Not reported	CM	F
CS14	Braga	2011	88%	Graduate	Marketing	Both	M
CS15	Oporto	2014	83%	Graduate	Engineering	Both	M
CS16	Setúbal	2016	100%	Graduate	Design	Both	M
CS17	Aveiro	2011	97%	Not reported	Marketing	CM	F
CS18	Lisbon	Not reported	100%	Not reported	Not reported	CM	M
CS19	Lisbon	2018	30%	Undergraduate	Marketing	Both	M
CS20	Lisbon	2017	65%	Graduate	Management	Owner	M
CS21	Lisbon	2014	100%	Graduate	Engineering	Owner	M
CS22	Lisbon	2017	70%	Undergraduate	Engineering	Owner	M
CS23	Lisbon	2018	High	Undergraduate	Arts	CM	F

CS24	Lisbon	2009	95-100%	Graduate	Design	Both	M
CS25	Lisbon	2013	25-30%	Graduate	Telecom	Owner	M
CS26	Lisbon	Not reported	50%	Not reported	Investment	Both	F
CS27	Lisbon	2017	65-70%	Graduate	Engineering	Owner	M
CS28	Lisbon	2010	100%	Graduate	Design	CM	M
CS29	Aveiro	2015	98%	Graduate	Design	Owner	M
CS30	Oporto	2013	67%	Graduate	Architecture	Both	F
CS31	Lisbon	2019	98-99%	Not reported	Not reported	Owner	M
CS32	Oporto	2014	75-80%	Graduate	Engineering	Both	M
CS33	Lisbon	2017	90%	Graduate	Marketing	CM	M
CS34	Lisbon	2018	60%	Graduate	Management	Owner	M
CS35	Lisbon	2016	85%	Graduate	Marketing	CM	M
CS36	Setúbal	2017	100%	Graduate	Engineering	Both	M
CS37	Setúbal	2015	44%	Graduate	Marketing	Both	F
CS38	Lisbon	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	CM	M
CS39	Setúbal	2018	90%	Not reported	Tourism	Owner	M
CS40	Lisbon	2019	100%	Not reported	Not reported	CM	F
CS41	Setúbal	2014	81%	Graduate	Management	Both	M
CS42	Lisbon	2014	92%	Not reported	Communication	CM	M
CS43	Lisbon	2017	40%	Undergraduate	Consulting	Both	F
CS44	Lisbon	2015	80-85%	Graduate	Journalism	CM	F

Table AII.

Coding description of the categories of analysis and examples of natural meaning units.

First and second-order categories	Third and fourth-order categories	Criteria for coding meaning units into the categories and examples
Artifacts (level 1)		
Communication styles	Networking initiatives and behavior	Reported formal networking initiatives and behavior
	Formal networking	<i>'We talked to an inside company, which makes movies, and to another one, which works in funding consulting, gathered both and started to produce a documentary.'</i> [CS12]
	Networking initiatives and behavior	Reported informal networking initiatives and behavior
	Informal networking	<i>'Once a week we have happy hours on the rooftop, yoga, and massages.'</i> [CS23]
	Networking initiatives and behavior	Networking initiatives and behavior which are reported as inconsistent or lacking
	Inconsistent networking	<i>'We have complaints about the networking.'</i> [CS25]
	Confidentiality and privacy	Reported issues related to co-workers' need for confidentiality and privacy
		<i>'Portuguese people can't work with others next to them because of confidentiality issues.'</i> [CS29]
Control mechanisms	Access by non-co-workers	Restricted and limited access to non-co-workers (e.g., friends, associates, colleagues)
	Closure	<i>'The most important thing is that outsiders can't enter the space without previous authorization and notice.'</i> [CS18]
	Access by non-co-workers	Open access to non-co-workers (e.g., friends, associates, colleagues)
	Openness	<i>'(...) in big events we organize, like birthday parties or outside lunches and dinners, which we do a lot, we encourage that they bring their families because it is also a way to reinforce the bonds between everyone.'</i> [CS10]
	Access by co-workers	' access is controlled through technological means (e.g., app)
	Technological	<i>'Biometric access 24/7, and some CCTV cameras placed in strategic locations.'</i> [CS35]
	Access by co-workers	Co-workers' access is controlled through non-technological means (e.g., key)
	Non technological	<i>'They ring the doorbell, and the person responsible opens the door.'</i> [CS6]
Level of formality	Formal	High level of formality
		<i>'Most of the clients wear a suit and tie.'</i> [CS2]

	Informal	Low level of formality <i>'It is informal, there's no dress code, the environment is professional but you can wear shorts and flip-flops.'</i> [CS7]
	Semi-formal	Medium level of formality <i>'(...) it is mostly informal, or formal as needed.'</i> [CS15]
Organizational integration	Community orientated	The integration of new co-workers is focused on the group/community <i>'There's a community lunch, once a month or more, in which the companies introduce themselves and their businesses or projects.'</i> [CS23]
	Individual oriented	The integration of new co-workers is focused on the individual <i>'There's no process, I introduce the space, and we set a price.'</i> [CS25]
Physical environment	Closed spaces	Physical spaces which are closed and reserved just for some members of the organization (e.g., private offices)
	Private closed spaces	<i>'The other spaces work as private offices for people who want to rent a permanent office.'</i> [CS18]
	Closed spaces	Physical spaces which are closed and shared by the members of the organization (e.g., meeting rooms)
	Shared closed spaces	<i>'We also have phone booths, which are telephone booths that are acoustically prepared for telephone calls or calls via Skype.'</i> [CS2]
	Open spaces	Physical spaces which are work-related and open
	Work-related open spaces	<i>'The fact that the entire space is an open space, including one of the meeting rooms, prevents formality being created.'</i> [CS3]
	Open spaces	Physical spaces which are open and non-work-related
	Non work-related open spaces	<i>'The lounge has a TV where we gather to watch the games of the national soccer team.'</i> [CS17]
	Virtual spaces	Existence of virtual offices or addresses <i>'We privilege more our client search through virtual offices.'</i> [CS26]
	Distinctive features	Reported features of the physical environment which are unique <i>'The space used to be a textiles' factory. It is the garage of a building that was adapted.'</i> [CS19]
Espoused beliefs, values and behavioral norms (level 2)		
Adaptation of services to clients' needs	Adaptable	Services are adapted to the needs of the co-workers <i>'We adapt and try to be as flexible as possible.'</i> [CS1]
	Non adaptable	Services are not adapted to the needs of the co-workers <i>'(...) we provide everything that is contracted. In case it is outside of the contract, it is necessary to be cautious about the costs.'</i> [CS44]

Distinctive values	Focus on human assets	The organizations' values are focused on the community and on human assets <i>'The fact that it is open to the public with a community mindset. It is open to visitors, partners, and nearby companies.'</i> [CS23]
	Focus on material assets	The organizations' values are focused on the physical environment and physical assets <i>'Usually people are looking for accessibility (...) it is located near the subway, airport, bus stations, and for them this is interesting.'</i> [CS13]
Mission	Vocational	The organization's mission is focused on self-realization and/or professional realization <i>'(...) I couldn't continue to travel from one place to another all the time, so I decided to bring that world to me. Co-working had that feature, besides being an interesting project.'</i> [CS34]
	Profit	The organization's mission is focused on profit <i>'This space was founded as a business opportunity, ok?'</i> [CS31]
	Personal needs/motives	The organization's mission is focused on a personal need or motive <i>'I needed a place to work.'</i> [CS9]
Relation with client	Stability	Preference for stable and permanent clients <i>'Long contracts to guarantee economic stability.'</i> [CS16]
	Dynamism	Preference for dynamic and proactive clients <i>'I prefer someone who contributes to the community (...) it is important that people appreciate and communicate with others and share their experience.'</i> [CS22]
	Balance between stability and dynamism	Stable and dynamic clients are equally valued <i>'It's 50/50, I need them to pay my bills but I also need them to promote the sense of community.'</i> [CS55]
Rules	Conduct rules	Implicit norms of conduct which are shared by the members of the organization are strict
	Strict	<i>'(...) respect the internal security of each company, for example, no one can enter another office without consent, even if the door is open.'</i> [CS40]
	Conduct rules	Implicit norms of conduct which are shared by the members of the organization are flexible
	Loose	<i>'There are no rules, just guidelines, such as: use the ashtray for your cigarette.'</i> [CS5]
	Contractual and regulated rules	The norms which derive from written contracts or regulations are strict
	Strict	<i>'The co-working contracts are at least monthly, office contracts are at least for three months, and virtual office contracts are at least for one year.'</i> [CS21]
	Contractual and regulated rules	The norms which derive from written contracts or regulations are flexible
	Loose	<i>'There's no contract, which attracts a lot of freelancers because there's no customer retention.'</i> [CS28]

Basic underlying assumptions (level 3)		
History	Business expansion	The organization was founded with the intention of business expansion <i>‘What contributed to the foundation here in Portugal was the branding coming from Germany.’</i> [CS40]
	Family heritage	The organization was founded as a result of a family heritage <i>‘I inherited a family holiday house, and decided to occupy the house.’</i> [CS37]
	Individual entrepreneurship	The organization was founded due to individual entrepreneurship <i>‘(...) I always had that urge to build my own business.’</i> [CS34]
	Partnerships	The organization was founded as a result of a partnership <i>‘(...) both wanted a place to work, so they grasped the opportunity when it appeared, and assumed the management of the space.’</i> [CS11]
Idealization	Customer oriented	The ideals concerning the organization focus on marketing and profit <i>‘The co-work business is like Macdonald’s, only our business is not to sell hamburgers but real estate.’</i> [CS8]
	Elite oriented	The ideals concerning the organization focus on prestige and recognition <i>‘We intend to maintain this community of brilliant people.’</i> [CS24]
	People oriented	The ideals concerning the organization focus on the development of the community <i>‘This is not a work space which you enter and leave without knowing the person sitting next to you, without knowing what he does (...)’</i> [CS39]
Inconsistency and conflict	-	Leaders’ inconsistent signals regarding what they do or pay attention to, which can contribute to problems and conflicts in the organization <i>‘People are socially constrained and lock themselves in their rooms. They don’t have many common areas to socialize.’</i> [CS4]