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Entrepreneurship of an institutional field: the emergence of coworking spaces for digital business models

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Abstract

Coworking spaces have been proliferating world-wide in urban and rural areas while facilitating entrepreneurship and new, especially digital business models. Our research analyzes the worldwide expansion by drawing upon mechanisms from institutional theory. We argue that the sense of community, emotional activation, the local communities together with the digital linkages and the open office allowed coworking spaces to evolve as a real space for entrepreneurship. The common lifestyle and the high digital identity of the users further explain the emergence of this entrepreneurship field that shows high convergent forms of coworking spaces. The key divergence comes with different ownership models.

Keywords Coworking spaces · Sharing economy · Digitalization · Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Digital experts and entrepreneurs in the Silicon Valley initiated the concept of *coworking spaces* (Bouncken and Reuschl 2018), which rapidly proliferated around

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the world, mainly because the sharing economy (Richter et al. 2017; Huarng and Yu 2019) requires digital experts while needing the creative and social power through sharing office and work spaces (Kraus et al. 2019; Bouncken et al. 2020b). Researchers increasingly pay attention to the significant institutional changes through virtually mediated co-production and consumption of the sharing economy yet only start to recognize coworking spaces (Cheng 2016; Hamari et al. 2015; Albinsson and Yasanthi Perera 2012; Lamberton and Rose 2012).

In the basic form, independent coworking spaces provide their individual and institutional users a work-space, typically of desks and IT-infrastructure combined with a social space fostering interaction and communication, at minimum a cafeteria and lounge. Membership or fees (e. g. hourly/daily/monthly) fee allow the access a to the coworking space. Originally, coworking spaces have been set up by independent specific coworking providers (Bouncken and Aslam 2019). Recently, coworking spaces extend their offerings by lab space (e.g. fablabs) and shared work-shops, especially for R&D of start-ups. More services, more amenities (especially of R&D facilities), and the provision of contacts to and project work with incumbents stimulate economies of scale and scope for research and development, entrepreneurship, and new business models, mainly digital ones (Bouncken et al. 2019; Del Bosco et al. 2019). Independent coworking spaces might develop into a new institutional field in which entrepreneurship is key (Greenwood et al. 2010). They are a strong case for institutional change centering on institutional logics of more autonomous mutual experimentation and social interaction in shared facilities, too. Specific to the increasing entrepreneurial importance are the high dynamics of institutionalization due to the digital workers, the visibility and accessibility of tangible and intangible resources easing mimicry, and the relatively autonomous interactions among individual and institutional using own practices that may influence each other and play back on the coworking space provider. Yet, research on coworking spaces is very scarce but needed to uncover the novel institutional forces that might help to generally support entrepreneurship globally.

The purpose of this paper is to model what coercive, normative, and mimetic processes (Mahoney and Thelen 2010) and possibly novel isomorphism forces underlie the emergence, convergence, and divergence within and of coworking spaces. These then are also factors on entrepreneurship. Institutional theory allows to understand the actors in coworking spaces who are not seeking rational advantages of their entrepreneurial behavior and financial performance increases only. Converging and diverging exogenous and endogenous forces come from the global and national institutional framework, particularly from the digitalizing world (Laudien and Pesch 2019). They include individuals' need for personal interaction, communication of ideas and knowledge, and of institutional isomorphism as organizations tend to develop similar institutions as they influence each other and of similar contexts (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Our framework explains the emergence of entrepreneurship coworking spaces by the three key processes of institutional isomorphism: coercive isomorphism, normative isomorphism, and mimetic isomorphism that influence coworking space providers and users (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Convergence and divergence forces around the dynamics of the IT-world and social networks, the easy accessibility of tangible resources, especially the interior and intangibles and relationships develop a new institutional field of coworking spaces. The easily visible tangible resources form some basic factors of why coworking spaces spread so easily. Others are community and relationships to other organizations that drive the general idea of coworking spaces. Our framework specifies the normative and mimetic processes that build and drive coworking spaces and so contributes to understanding driving forces for entrepreneurship.

Theoretic background

Fundamentals of (independent) coworking spaces

Coworking spaces provide infrastructure and dedicated space to facilitate professional and social interaction which was found to stimulate entrepreneurship and creativity (Bouncken and Aslam 2019). The professional space comprises the necessary equipment to facilitate business related working. Depending on the specialization of a coworking space, the equipment can range from simple desks with Wi-Fi to fully equipped workshops. Cafeterias, lounges, and bars constitute the social space that drives networking, knowledge exchange, initiation of collaboration, also joint leisure activities (Gandini 2015; Bouncken 2017).

Coworking spaces are often set up in central, exposed, and attractive *locations*, matching an attractive interior to the external urban space. Public libraries can offer such places (Schopfel et al. 2015) or universities (Bouncken 2018). However, coworking spaces are also created in the countryside as centers of entrepreneurship (Fuzi 2015). The *interior* influences the atmosphere of coworking spaces and the interaction between the users (Bueno et al. 2018; Orel 2019; Waters-Lynch and Duff 2019; Bouncken and Reuschl 2016). The interior is purposefully designed to be more informal than traditional office concepts (Schopfel et al. 2015). Usage models range from hourly fees to all-inclusive membership offers (Bouncken and Reuschl 2016). Coworking spaces can extend their value creation and capture mechanisms through special services like coaching, trainings, events, or (start-up) consulting or the access to networks with externals like incumbents, venture capitalists, or business angels (Bouncken and Aslam 2019).

Incumbent firms are starting to take upon this institutional change while accessing the creativity environment of coworking spaces and experimenting with new organizational forms for innovation and entrepreneurship (Tracey et al. 2011). Incumbents can rent space for their employees in independent coworking spaces. Their employees then mingle in with other coworking-users in the social and work-space (e. g. freelancers, start-ups). Following a more strategic approach, incumbents (e.g. manufacturers as Bosch, BMW, Merck) also imitate the big IT companies (e.g. Google, Facebook) and set up internal shared work- and social spaces (Bouncken et al. 2020c). Very recently, consulting companies (e.g. Experience Center of PWC) are imitating the idea of coworking spaces and now provide a haven for novel ideas and projects in open work and social spaces for their clients so also facilitating internal entrepreneurship (Bouncken et al. 2016c; Kraus et al. 2019). The need for new approaches to entrepreneurship is strongly triggered by digitalization and new business models (Bouncken et al. 2019). Hence firms need to find new ways of seizing changes (Bouncken and Fredrich 2016a, 2016b; Bouncken et al. 2019).

Fundamentals of institutional theory

Entrepreneurship is in need of gaining legitimacy for attracting of resources and clients, which is complicated because of their liability of newness (Täuscher et al. 2020). For the question of entrepreneurs can achieve legitimacy we have to consider the fundamentals of institutional theory which broadly defines an institution a set of rules that

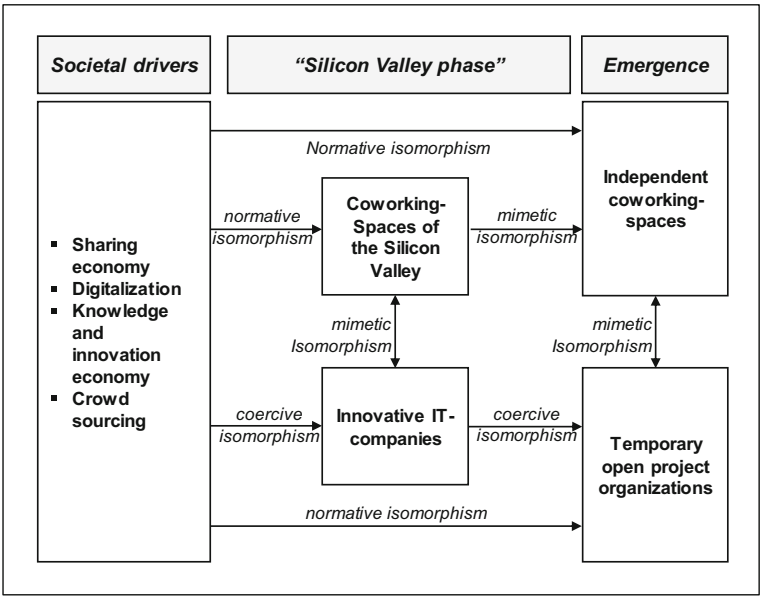

Fig. 1 Emergence of coworking spaces

govern behavior of actors (Selznick 1996). The multiple schools (Mahoney and Thelen 2010) cover institutional arrangements that range from legal-formal institutions (e.g. political or history institutional theory) to cognitive constructions and patterns (e. g. social constructive institutionalism). Especially sociological institutionalism concentrates on shared informal and tacit conventions that regulate behavior of humans (Schmidt 2008). Institutions require at least a partial shared understanding of

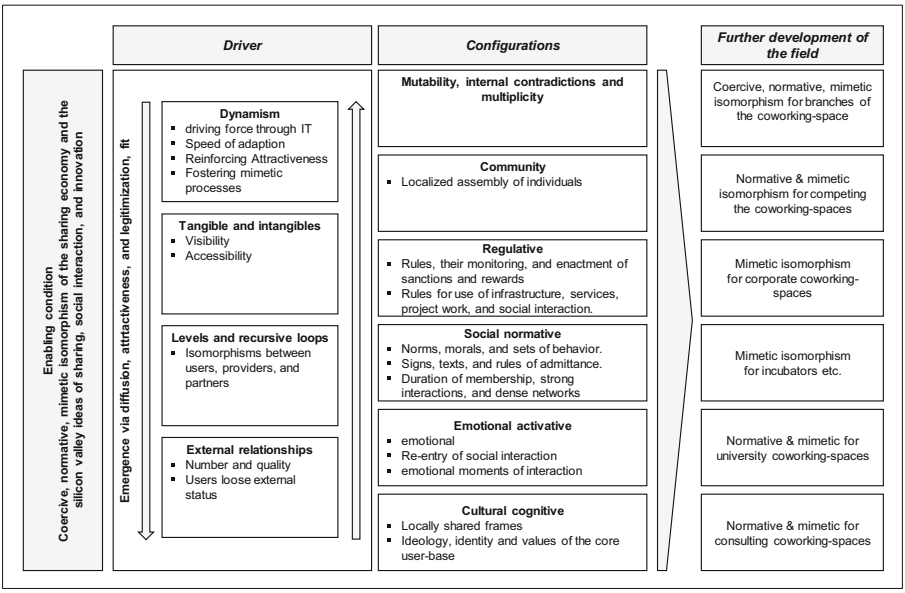

Fig. 2 Drivers of institutionalization: Convergence and divergence

individuals. Institutional organization theory explains why institutions emerge and spread occurring as similar institutions because influence each other and are influenced by similar or common external and internal influences (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The development of similar institutions has many formal and informal sources, culminating in three core forms of institutional isomorphism: (1) coercive isomorphism out of political players and the problem of legitimacy, (2) normative isomorphism imitated by professionalization, (3) mimetic isomorphism resulting from customary and commonly shared reactions to uncertainty (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 150).

Coercive isomorphism results from formal and informal pressures on others (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). When actors or organizations have limited access to resources or have to adhere to compliance rules they feel coercion directly or indirectly (Beckert 2010). Coercive isomorphism can pull actors towards existing models that become more common. It can inspire new models that then turn into increasingly common ones over time. Normative isomorphism explains to what the social context assumes appropriate or morally correct (Suchman 1995). Mimetic isomorphism focuses on uncertain situations and explains changes through the imitation of organizations that aim to achieve legitimacy (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Hambrick et al. 2004 provide an overview about studies in different fields attributing importance of inter-organizational social networks for mimetic isomorphism. Mimetic pulls actors towards toward prevailing institutional models (Beckert 2010). Still, imitation and legitimation depend on its environment, especially on cultural identities and the on political and economic system (Beckert 2010).

Institutional theory and its different variants generally lay emphasis on the supremacy of existing models, scripts around institutions in channeling behavior, thus constraining change (Clemens and Cook 1999). Sociological institutionalists focus on exogenous change by importing other, typically cultural frames or the emergence of broader political, legal, and market fields (Fligstein 1996). Where is the border, what is exogenous and what is endogenous? Hambrick and Mason 1984 use cognitive processes of managers to explain imitation. Managers use cognitive simplification processes when the environment is uncertain, complex and dynamic (Rosa et al. 1999). Managers in their simplification processes develop cognitive groups in which they categorize similarities and specify actions for those in category or group. Managerial decisions then follow on ‘characteristics’ or ‘reference points’ for a specific strategic group (Fiegenbaum et al. 1996). Legitimization needs influences managerial decisions. Legitimacy can be defined as an actor’s perception or the assumption that actions will be “desirable, proper, or appropriate” concerning a socially constructed set of “norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman 1995, p. 574). This develops a generalized perception about legitimacy often influenced by legitimacy providers which strongly interact in personal communication with others, use facts, and use or influence information sources (Barreto and Baden-Fuller 2006). Such actors influence the constitution of legitimacy-based groups against which other actors and firms are compared (Barreto and Baden-Fuller 2006). Legitimization forces might bring inefficient decisions following ‘normative rationality’, based on social justification less efficient then ‘economic rationality’ (Barreto and Baden-Fuller 2006. Barreto and Baden-Fuller 2006 assume that under high significant uncertainty and high legitimacy pressures, firms apply in mimetic behavior even to previously marked as inferior decisions. Among firms, symbolic organizational characteristics that are more deeply hidden in the firm

(Hambrick et al. 2004). Further, especially discursive institutional theory explains change by ideas and discourse (Schmidt 2008). Researchers explained processes of symbolic ceremonial transformation of organizations, for example by changes from myths in the institutional environment that move beyond the calculus of costs and benefits being associated by the diffusion of rituals and of roles (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

Independent coworking spaces as an institutional field

Mature industries experience several forces for isomorphism because they operate in a well maintained legal framework, within stable industry and supply chain structures. Professionals in those industries have overlapping models of institutions. Coercive and normative isomorphism are strong. Both established and new firms can observe and mimicry others (Castrogiovanni 1996). In contrast, new fields as the coworking space area are in the process of developing and transforming institutions. Legal systems are not complete, industry structures and role models are in development and transition. Looking at the field, normative and especially coercive isomorphism is relatively low. Actors try to find and mimic institutions that fit to their environment. Thus, managers and users of coworking spaces observe and mimic their environment, even adapt concepts from other backgrounds e.g. incubators or open-innovation and crowd. New institutions emerge channeling behavior and guiding value creation and capture models of coworking spaces and their users. Mimicry occurs when rules gradually emerge and are evaluated functional (Honig and Karlsson 2004). The emergence of the field comes with specific institutions and control of actors' behavior (Fligstein 1996). The emergence of a field builds on emergence, divergence and convergence and at least requires some homogenization. The environmental changes of the digitalization and the sharing trend trigger coworking spaces. Imitation and its degree is more likely to occur when the new model brings attractive solutions (Beckert 2010). Financial performance is not always visible, especially not in such an emerging field as coworking spaces. Alternatively, the size of a firm or high visibility and prestige can guide imitation (Haveman 1993). Attractiveness of institutional models is affected by socialization processes which inform routines and taken-for-granted institutionalized practices (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:152).

The speed of coworking spaces developing in the Silicon Valley and then in urban centers around the world increases their visibility and canalizes the attention of followers driving the fast diffusion and the development of similar concepts worldwide. Thus, entrepreneurship, mostly on digital business models, proliferates in diverse locations in the world (Bouncken and Aslam 2019; Bouncken et al. 2020b; Görmar et al. 2020). The diffusion also is triggered because the large and famous IT firms as googles used the ideas of the mall independent coworking spaces. Variance occurs as other actors, e.g. incubators, universities, and consulting companies become aware of the coworking institution (Wiener et al. 2020). Further, speed and attraction also comes from institutional complementarities influencing how well an institution works with other institutions in the environment, for example employment protection, intellectual property rights, rents, access to venture capital, national support and funding (Beckert 2010). Imitating and implementing an institution requires fit among the new and the

indigenous institutional set (Beckert 2010). This explains why coworking spaces strongly developed in China with the support of national funding and innovation policy (see fig. 1).

Coworking spaces underlie congruent and non-congruent isomorphism (Bager 1994) related to tangibles (e.G. *interior*) and intangibles (behavioral model, network relationships within the coworking space and with externals, community). In the process of non-congruent isomorphism coworking spaces will develop overlaps with other fields. Differences, especially in ownership structures and their targets (e.g. specialized coworking-providers, incumbent firms, incubators, universities) will build subfields of coworking spaces that can dissimilar overlaps to other field. For example, coworking spaces can focus on start-ups and thus have strong overlaps to incubators. They can focus on managing projects for external firms with the help of their users and thus have overlaps to consultancy. We thus expect different subfields or roles of coworking spaces with specific institutions of coordination, value creation, and value capture on the level of the coworking space and on the level of its users.

Theoretical model of institutional forces of coworking spaces

Speed out of the digital work background

The degree and speed of homogenization generally is influenced by social structural and informational conditions, because the followers need to know the desired model and some of its coercive forces while requiring some other support when implementing it. The availability of information and (virtual) social networks influence the diffusion of the institutional model (Beckert 2010). Users of coworking spaces with their IT- and digital background naturally work and exchange information world-wide. Their virtual and social networks allow the distribution of information and new trends in almost no time. Thus, users and potential providers of coworking spaces quickly become aware of the solutions explaining why the emergence of coworking spaces as a general solution of work and social space occurs under high dynamic. Thus, the network and IT-focus of coworking spaces and their users' background triggers the fast diffusion of coworking spaces as a new solution for entrepreneurship, especially for digital business world-wide (Cesinger et al. 2016; Bouncken et al. 2018c; Covin et al. 2020).

Layers and loops out of the flexible border among internal and external

Externals enter coworking spaces, become a member might attract others and then might leave and/or use other coworking spaces. External relationships cross organizational boundaries (Bouncken and Fredrich 2016b; Pesch and Bouncken 2017). They can improve legitimization and attractiveness and bring resources (Täuscher et al. 2020). Especially the young organizations of coworking spaces and their individual or entrepreneurial actor require legitimacy for their actions, specifically from other actors that provide physical, human, financial, or reputational resources (Dacin et al. 2007; Dacin 1997; Suchman 1995). Institutional theory explains that networks and relationships especially to actors that have significant high reputations and social status improve the (focal) actor's legitimacy and longevity (Dacin et al. 2007). Besides the

merits of coworking spaces' affiliations to reputable organizations on their legitimation and visibility, such relationships will influence their institutional logics. In the stage of the emergence of coworking spaces these influences will not only shape singular coworking spaces but also the field. Institutional theory has started to look on how relationships to institutions influence young firms and their institutional logics (Pahnke et al. 2015). Coworking spaces have several external ties and alliances with other organizations (Bouncken et al. 2016c; Pesch and Bouncken 2018). Coworking space form relationships to incumbent firms to offer them their creativity and innovation facilities by renting out their space or by running projects of incumbents in their space. Further, coworking spaces aim to integrate expertise of incumbents for training of their users or integrate incumbents for helping their start-ups or providing contacts to venture capital firms. The different partners and their different goals may significantly differ from one another and have diverse institutional logics. However, some institutional logics will influence the coworking space provider and its users. At the same time, the fit among externals and the coworking space provider and its users will set own selection and development processes and will guide how the coworking space members and users view their identity and strengths (Pahnke et al. 2015). The social and normative context influences the strategic and economic actions of coworking-providers and users.

The coworking space provider experiences isomorphism while observing the environment and learning about or imitating attractive solutions. The coworking space provider is also affected by the behavior of their users who have great autonomy with low hierarchical pressures, still facing potential competition and self-serving behavior (Bouncken et al. 2018a, 2018b, 2020a). The users act upon the coworking space providers' logics but also by drawing on models from the environment. Coworking-users also have a specific professional backgrounds and logics. These are partly overlapping because of similar professional backgrounds and thus potentially create shared logics (Bouncken et al. 2016b). Additionally, institutional coworking space users brings own rules that influences the work- and social space. Thus, external relationships bring resources but also influence institutional logics of other users and the providers and externals may become internal.

Autonomy but community

Studies indicate that processes of social influence are strong and durable when actors and their cognitive claims are embedded in attributions of organizational hierarchy or legitimation (Zucker systems of social ties; Carley 1989, 1991). Coworking spaces and their users do rarely operate in organizational hierarchy or strong organizational legitimation systems. The 'typical' form of independent coworking spaces provides high openness to membership and users' termination of their membership and with high degrees of autonomy of users. Coworking spaces will have official rules, formalized in codified language and texts. Some rules will remain non-codified. Other rules will exist informally in language, embedded in artifacts and design, and even remain largely invisible in behavior and mental sets. Coworking spaces are relatively flexible according to their open user base and membership models. Traditional firms build hierarchies and functional differentiation (e.g. managers vs. floor personnel, marketing vs. engineering) and impose further homogenizing forces by formal and informal influences (e. g. organizational rules, informal networks, collaboration in joint

projects). Coworking spaces have few forces of such normative isomorphism and instead provide autonomy to their users that are not their employees.

However, users of coworking spaces are influenced by some general rules of the space even though they mainly follow individual targets. The social context, its informal character, the processes, values, and norms of interaction in coworking spaces will develop some mutual models of behavior especially because of the direct interaction and colocation (Bouncken et al. 2020d). Reproduction of a specific solutions is strong when social ties are dense and rarely virtual, crossing spatial distance (Carley 1989; Feld 1991). In strong direct and dense networks, the diffusion of schemas has less variety and occurs with less interpretational variance. Change instead is more likely when "(a) models of action are understood to be discretionary, (b) social heterogeneity is high, and (c) social networks are fragmented and important social cleavages" (Clemens and Cook 1999, p. 451). The space is key of coworking spaces (Bouncken 2017). Actors in coworking spaces often come from similar jobs, educational background and economic sectors (especially creative and IT sectors) being influenced from similar former social embedding and cooperatives which increase the homogeneity of cooperatives in and of coworking spaces. Thus, coworking spaces also have converging forces of the dense networks, the similar professional background, and the personal contact within a coworking space. We propose that a specifically informal cooperative institutional framework emerges in independent coworking spaces. Processes of observation, imitation, and interactional regulation and as such conscious or subconscious collaboration breed pattern of behavior who actors internalize, at least partly. Another, overlapping source is the social interaction among users who develop joint teams in temporary or more stable teams or new ventures. In these cooperative processes rules and patterns develop, specific to the team and venture embedded in the coworking space. Thus, actors and their behavioral models may influence other teams and ventures by observation, by multi-membership, and by the dynamic processes of forming and leaving. Cooperation among members (even temporary) of new ventures might be specific because of pursuing economic targets (other than non-profit), private sharing of material and immaterial resources (other than public), the pursuit of interest of their members (different to shareholders), and the strong collective element due to close personal interaction (different to hierarchies). Thus, the "fathers and masters of cooperative organizations" (Bager 1994, p. 41) have some autonomy for decisions (e.g. value creation and value distribution among) based on their interests but they are also socially embedded in a cooperative institutional framework.

Organizations in general are not independent from their communities which include cultural cognitive (shared frameworks of interpretation), normative (moral standards) and regulative (formal and informal constraints) institutions (Marquis et al. 2007). Due to the less hierarchical organizations of users, coworking space will breed a community. Community develops within a specific tangible environment, specifically the interior of the coworking space, its location (e.g. a quarter of a city), the rules set by the coworking space provider, the personnel and its moral sets of the coworking space, the user base of the coworking space and their social interaction. Community emerges strongly through the presence and co-production of coworking space users. Even though coworking space providers might try to imitate the interior of another coworking space the can only partly manage and therefore imitate its community.

The community will cultivate logics (Lee and Lounsbury 2015) that may be strong but differing according to the in the values and ideals that of the local community.

Cultural cognitive institutional forces that build communities develop from the shared frameworks or mental models actors in a specific environment and situation. Cognitive templates differ among localities and that the local community sanctions practices (Marquis et al. 2007). Cultural cognitive forces for community in coworking spaces develop from the (local) shared frames of reference in the specific coworking space. Locally shared frames of reference emerge and are activated primarily from the local interaction among users of the specific coworking space and less from the employees of coworking-providers because they take a less active role in personal interactions. Coworking space users bring their individual frames of reference into visible behavior and into their interactions. The users' frames will differ, especially according to their educational and professional background, if they work for an organization, and their motives for using the coworking space. We assume that users of coworking spaces seek for autonomy, flexibility, inspiration, social interaction triggered by their creative and IT-backgrounds. These similar interests and frames or references will influence overlaps in ideology, identity and values that strongly influences the cultural cognitive institutions of the community. Thus, cultural cognitive institutional forces directly come from the users and their local interaction but also from the typical ideology, identity and values of the core user-base of coworking spaces.

Emotional activation forces state why a community develops in coworking spaces because users are excited and emotional the new work and social space. Emotional factors have a strong impact on the development and change of institutions (Voronov and Weber 2016). Users of coworking spaces might be highly emotional about the re-entry of social interaction into the digitalizing world. The open social interaction might bring stimulating emotional moments, yet also can trigger relationship conflicts which yet are influenced from the other community forces in the coworking space.

Social normative community forces are embedded in a moral base and guide what is right in a specific community (Marquis et al. 2007). Social normative factors are influenced by the rules set in the coworking space by the provider and adapted according to how they work. Coworking space providers will develop a set of organizational and social interaction rules. Also they will develop rules for project work, for workshops among the individual users and the corporate users as for incumbent firms. Social normative factors influence how users and other peers evaluate what happens in the coworking space what the users and the coworking space providers expect. Coworking space providers depend on the demand of their users. Users can be corporates. These powerful incumbent firms seek increases in creativity and in innovation projects by using coworking spaces. Clients from incumbent firms can serve as important peers and thus sources of normative community forces. Yet, coworking spaces depend on the autonomy and creativity of their users. Thus, normative forces from incumbent firms which traditionally bring expectations related to more rigid structures should not influence the social normative community too strongly. A more coherent community develops when expectations of more rule based behavior of corporate clash with the more flexible models of creatives, freelancers, and entrepreneurs. However, even the tension of expectations about more flexible vs. more rigid structures can build the community of a coworking space. Generally coworking space providers can influence the social normative forces by admittance and membership

rules, by providing signs and texts about desired norms and behavior. More duration of the membership, strong interactions, and dense networks among the different individual and corporate users will increase the strength of social normative forces on the community (see fig. 2).

Mutability, internal contradictions and multiplicity of rules in coworking spaces

Coworking spaces will exert some regulative forces refer to rules, the monitoring of conformity to them, the definition and enactment of sanctions, rewards to influence desired behaviors. This might steer or favor certain business models or entrepreneurial ideas (Kraus et al. 2019; Covin et al. 2020; Bouncken 2004; Clauss et al. 2020). Rules concern the admittance of what individual and corporate users and project structures among them. Further they will develop a set of rules including their monitoring-, reward- and sanction-systems for the a) use of the tangible offerings of the infrastructure and interior and services, b) the use of organizational offering e. g. project work structures, and of c) and of social interaction among individual users and corporate users. Institutionalization faces mutability, internal contradictions and multiplicity (Clemens and Cook 1999). Mutability explains that some institutions or their form is more open to change than others. Institutional statements, for example, can include terms and meanings that permit more or less change. An institutional statement is "a shared linguistic constraint or opportunity that prescribes, permits, or advises actions or outcomes for (both individual and corporate)" (Crawford and Ostrom 1995, p. 583) These statements typically are directed to specific actors, purposes, circumstances, and can include sanctions. The greater its must-rules, the greater is the accurate reproduction and thus constraint of change. When they demand or inhibit less, the greater they trigger heterogeneity, while also enabling innovation. In addition, a context of diverse, even competing statements urges actors to draw upon a conglomerate of statements developing a mixture that also triggers heterogeneity, re-combination, and innovation. Official provider-based formal and codified institutional statements regulate reproduction and heterogeneity of behavior. Different business models and concepts of coworking spaces might differ according to the content and the mutability of the statements. Under greater must-rules, users will either accept the constraints by official provider-based formal and codified institutional statements or leave the workspace. Under less must-rules, users might deliberately or unintendedly bring change to the coworking space that possibly changes also the provider-based formal and codified institutional statements. Yet, formal and codified institutional statements also can occur on the level of the users of the coworking space, especially when the users are multiple actors or institutional groups which need to regulate behavior among themselves and when dealing with externals. For example, they might have developed rules for communication, interaction and specifically for their team- or project-work or property rights. These user-groups also will have different intensities of must-rules and thus be more or less open to heterogeneity, re-combination, and innovation.

Change can come from instabilities that develop internally and that contradict prior arrangements (Clemens and Cook 1999). New situations might render models or scripts for behavior inappropriate even dysfunctional. Clemens and Cook (1999) bring for

such internal contradictions the example of a faculty-graduate student relationship of a faculty member with a student which can change into new colleague. The success (of the first institutional arrangement) in education demands the transformation of a supervisory into a collegial relationship. The greater an institutional arrangement allows or promotes contradictions the less it will allow reproduction and the greater it will generate change. Coworking spaces are an emerging novel work-concept that builds on prior arrangements of the individuals behind the coworking-provider and prior arrangements of the coworking space as a legal institution. Prior arrangements and ties to internal and externals might induce internal contradictions. For example, the success of a coworking space might inspire growth to new locations which requires finding new personal, possibly from the previous users which come with own experiences from the usage and insights for change. The success of coworking spaces in attracting externals (government, firms, research institutions) might increase the demand of other externals. The more external partners become involved the more internal changes occurs in the services, design, and rules of the coworking space. Especially, the open and autonomous interaction among users of coworking spaces brings internal contradictions on the level of the users. Actors might start with some informal conversations, then extend this to information and knowledge change, helping each other, working for each other and then moving into joint work-, team-, project-, and firm-relationship (Bouncken et al. 2016a; Ratzmann et al. 2018). Yet some status and power relations might come into play (Clauss and Bouncken 2019). The greater and more intense the collaboration and even legal arrangement or equity integration becomes, the greater will be the transformation. When actors perceive no alternatives and follow regularities than arrangements in a social environment become 'taken for granted'. Change might come from institutional contradictions emerging by tensions among multiple institutions within specific social environment, e. g. the coworking space.

The emerging novel work concept builds upon imitation processes of other coworking spaces around the world. Even though following the general concept of providing a space for work and for social interaction, the individuals of a coworking space provider will perceive multiple different forms of coworking spaces that they might imitate and implement. The multiplicity breeds different, incompatible, even conflicting schema of coworking-users and might induce less predictable behavior, and frictions among persons. Multiplicity specifically occurs on the level of users in coworking spaces. These actors follow some generic schema of coworking, yet they also find diverse institutions in operation in the different group of users, especially in start-ups or incumbent firms using the coworking space. Even well-socialized actors with similar internalized schemas e.g. of similar professional background will act less predictable when they encounter multiple, even competing institutions or unclear rules. Users of coworking spaces perceiving multiple institutions and the tensions among them might find institutions no longer inevitable (Sewell 1992).

Discussion and conclusion

Coworking spaces facilitate entrepreneurship all over the world. While they have been concentrating on urban areas first, they start to proliferate into rural areas too. Possibly, coworking spaces are a far fetching concept for business model development and

entrepreneurship in the sharing economy ranging from solo-entrepreneurs to incumbent firms (Kraus et al. 2019; Bouncken and Barwinski 2020; Bouncken et al. 2020b; Filser et al. 2020). One driver is the institutional isomorphism around digital work and allow their users to cope with the deficits of digitalization, its deficits of personal contact, and the needs of experimentation, knowledge exchange, and mutual knowledge creation in the information and innovation focused world. Another driver is the shared sense of community and the strong shared identity of coworking-users that show signs of a digital identity (Bouncken and Barwinski 2020).

Coworking spaces provide room for social and professional interaction driving institutional change. The dynamics, its flexible tangibles and intangibles, boundary crossing relationships, and recursive interaction loops across different levels from coworking space users, coworking space providers, and external organizations are pushing and reinforcing the isomorphic processes, leading to the institutionalization of coworking spaces. While the institutionalization of coworking spaces' rules and practices are from being final, important directions for their development emerge. Without explicitly drawing on the institutional theory, Capdevila (2015) suggests that coworking spaces over the opportunity to provide an institutional framework for organizing the interaction and collaboration between different actors.

This paper conceptualized drivers of coworking spaces as a new field for entrepreneurship (Ferreira et al. 2019) coming on different forms and topics. The basic logic, configurations, and institutions of coworking spaces are still evolving. Currently mimetic isomorphism is driving the development and diffusion of the coworking space logic as organizations try to imitate the hyped IT firm that implement internal coworking spaces. If the coworking space logic prevails, coercive isomorphism will force further actors to adapt. However, the future development will show if further organizations can realize the potentials of coworking spaces. Currently mimetic isomorphism is driving the development and diffusion of the coworking space logics.

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