

CREATIVITY IN COWORKING COWORKING SPACES: THE CASE OF LA CORDÉE

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Summary

Coworking spaces are seen as a new form of work organisation with no hierarchical relationships and, *a priori*, no shared objectives between members. However, in these third places there are many ad hoc, informal and sometimes organised social interactions. What's more, the open, social and knowledge-sharing characteristics of this type of space could be conducive to creativity. This article looks at how coworking spaces encourage creativity among coworkers. Based on a single case study, La Cordée, the results highlight three components that support creativity in a coworking space: the work environment, events and tools, and the state of mind of the members.

Key words: coworking space, creativity, mindset, benevolence, tools, space planning

CREATIVITY IN COWORKING SPACES: THE CASE OF LA CORDEE

New information technologies and the rise of the knowledge economy are profoundly changing working practices, with flexible working hours, working from home, a blurring of the boundaries between private and professional life, and a sharp increase in self-employment. Against this backdrop, coworking spaces offer self-employed workers and teleworkers new workspaces in which they can access a new form of socialisation and work community (Garrett, Spreitzer and Bacevice, 2017).

Considered a new form of work organisation, coworking spaces are said to encourage interaction between members, knowledge sharing, the development of social capital and creativity (Johns and Gratton, 2013 ; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, and Isaac, 2016 ; Waber, Magnolfi and Lindsay, 2014). They are also an environment in which workers initiate their own way of working, thus contributing to the development of their intrinsic motivation, one of the components of individual creativity (Amabile, 1997). Some coworking spaces include support services and activities dedicated to open innovation for start-ups and companies that locate their employees there (Fabbri and Charue-Duboc, 2016). Ultimately, coworking spaces could develop a workspace conducive to creativity.

However, while the coworking phenomenon has been identified as a new form of work organisation that is conducive to the creativity of its members, no empirical study has been carried out on how these spaces affect the creativity of coworkers. The question of how these spaces impact coworkers' creativity is increasingly important, given that more and more companies are considering sending their employees to coworking spaces or creating their own (Waber, Magnolfi & Lindsay, 2014). The aim of this article is therefore to answer the following question: *how do coworking spaces encourage coworkers' creativity?* It is based on a single case study, the La Cordée coworking spaces in Lyon, generalist spaces that promote a particular state of mind of sharing and benevolence between coworkers. With this article, we hope to contribute to the debate on the emergence of new forms of networked work organisation and on ways of encouraging creativity in organisations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coworking spaces, a new form of work organisation conducive to creativity

This new form of work organisation is booming, as it responds to the new needs of self-employed workers looking to break out of their isolation. In these places, social interactions take many forms: from occasional polite discussions to exchanges of information and knowledge, and even more sustained collaborations over time (Gerdenitsch *et al.*, 2016). Two populations reside in these places: (1) people who use these spaces as simple workplaces, as they might use a traditional work environment, (2) individuals who exploit the opportunity to be surrounded by other people to share and test ideas, obtain feedback on solutions and collaborate on joint projects (Garrett, Spreitzer and Bacevice, 2017; Spinuzzi, 2012). However, geographical proximity alone is not enough to activate information sharing and collaboration; it needs to be reinforced by organised proximity supported by the coworking space (Nadant, Marinos and Krauss, 2018). In coworking spaces, the development of the exchange of information, knowledge and collaboration would thus be encouraged by active support for socialisation: facilitators, information on coworkers present, socialisation events, communication tools, etc. (Parrino, 2013, Gerdenitsch *et al.*, 2016, Fabbri, 2016). In these spaces, socialisation can lead to the development of a real sense of belonging to a community,

with the implementation of processes for discovering the shared vision (endorsing), meeting social norms (encountering) and active involvement in the community life of the coworking space (engaging) (Garrett, Spreitzer and Bacevice, 2017). Thus, in these specific third places, multiple unplanned encounters develop, favouring serendipity and the creativity of coworkers (Johns and Gratton, 2013 ; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, and Isaac, 2016 ; Waber, Magnolfi and Lindsay, 2014) and open innovation (Fabbri and Charue-Duboc, 2016). Like the ‘creative cafés’ of the 19^{ème} century, although this new form of work organisation is not dedicated to creativity, the characteristics of openness, space for socialising and the community culture of some coworking spaces could be conducive to creativity.

Factors conducive to individual creativity in the workplace

Creativity is the activity of producing new, appropriate, useful and feasible ideas (Amabile, 1988). It results in new ideas for solving problems, achieving goals or creating new products and services (DiLiello & Houghton, 2008). The ability and aptitude to generate ideas defines the potential creativity of individuals, which can improve with learning (Baruah & Paulus, 2008). However, research into creativity has shown the crucial importance of intrinsic motivation for participation and commitment in the creative act (Amabile, 1988 ; Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin, 1993). Emotions also seem to play a role in creative performance by supporting the processes of deconstructing preconceived ideas and accessing memory (Isen et al., 1987). Similarly, well-being at work, a generator of positive emotions (Demo and Paschoal, 2013) could encourage individual creativity. The individual factors of creativity therefore depend on the context in which the individual evolves. This leads us to examine the contextual elements at group and organisational level.

Collective factors

“Throwing a glass of cold water on someone's contribution can stop the conversation dead in its tracks, whereas the exchange of ideas can take us to new and unexpected places” (Kelley and Kelley, 2016). This quote is a reminder of the importance of the people who directly surround a creative individual. If a person has been strongly criticised for expressing an idea or concept, they may develop a fear of failure and of being judged by others, and thus inhibit their potential creativity. Conversely, support from supervisors and members of the work group have a positive impact on an individual's creativity (DiLiello, Houghton and Dawley, 2011). Creativity in practice, the individual's perception of opportunities to use their creative skills, depending on the context and their interpretation of it, could therefore differ from potential creativity depending on the work context (DiLiello & Houghton, 2008).

Linked to the notion of collective support, Zhou and George (2001) identified three factors that encourage a worker's creativity and the generation of new ideas: (1) feedback from peers, (2) mutual help and support from colleagues, and (3) the perception that the organisation supports creativity. In a case study of the IDEO company, Amabile (2014) validates the importance of mutual aid between colleagues, and adds the notion of trust. Collaboration norms, the bedrock of a collaborative culture, foster collective creativity (Hargadon and Sutton, 1997). Requests for help, responses to these requests and moments when the requesters and helpers come together encourage the emergence of new ideas (Hargadon and Bechky, 2006). In the final analysis, trust is one of the components of a collaborative culture, which fosters moments of mutual support and the sharing of information and ideas between employees, leading to the emergence of new ideas (Barczak, Lassk and Mulki, 2010). Kucharska and Kowalczyk (2016) have also empirically validated a positive correlation between trust, knowledge sharing, collaborative culture and a team's ability to generate creative ideas.

Organisational factors

The creative climates developed by Ekvall (SOQ) and then Amabile (KEYS) on the basis of numerous field studies (Amabile *et al.*, 1996; Ekvall, 1991) give an indication of the organisational contexts that are conducive to creativity. From an organisational point of view, the SOQ and KEYS can be grouped into five organisational components which are conducive to individual and team creativity: (1) structure (e.g. degree of freedom, risk-taking), (2) resources (e.g., organisational encouragement and time dedicated to exploration), (3) visions and missions (e.g. interest in the challenge), (4) management styles (e.g. managerial encouragement, group support) and (5) work atmosphere (e.g. trust and openness, humour and fun). Creative climates are thus likely to act on creativity in practice, leading individuals to use their creative potential when they perceive a context favourable to the realisation of their creativity. Although coworking spaces bring together workers with different objectives in a non-hierarchical way, by offering specific organisational support in terms of structure (location and facilitation), resources (networks, events and tools) and work atmosphere (social and community space), an organisational climate conducive to creativity could develop.

According to initial studies on coworking spaces, these new workplaces develop numerous social relationships, high intrinsic motivation, mutual support and the sharing of ideas and knowledge. So, the most convincing elements in a coworking space conducive to creativity would be the structure and resources of the coworking space, the motivation of the coworker, the sharing of knowledge, creativity in practice and the collaborative culture. We propose to analyse the context of the La Cordée coworking spaces in Lyon, which have established themselves as creative places, in order to identify the components most conducive to coworkers' creativity.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to understand how this new form of work organisation fosters creativity among coworkers. Given the empirical and theoretical limitations of understanding creativity in coworking spaces, the study is based on an exploratory qualitative approach (Huberman and Miles, 1991) on a single case study (Yin, 2003). The case of La Cordée was selected because it had a large number of features typical of coworking spaces, but also a deviant desire to promote the creativity of its members. Semi-structured interviews and observations were the two means used to collect the primary data. In all, twenty-two interviews were conducted, recorded, transcribed and analysed. La Cordée's innovation manager, four coworking space facilitators, and seventeen members, with different statuses and seniority (see Table 1). Respondents had to meet the following three criteria: have been based in one of La Cordée's coworking spaces in Lyon and Annecy for at least three months, use the space at least half of their working time, and have already taken part in events organised by La Cordée. We observed behaviour and events in the coworking space over a period of ten days, during which we kept a log of our observations. We also used the company's internal documents (internet site, intranet, and communication media) as secondary data.

The interview guide, based on the state of the art, was built around four dimensions: coworker involvement and motivation, knowledge sharing, collaborative culture, and creativity in practice. However, as the coworking space is not a place dedicated to creativity, it is difficult to measure potential creativity. In this study, we were therefore interested in creativity in practice, which is the perception of opportunities to use creative skills at work to solve problems related to the current activity (Caniëls and Rietzschel, 2015; DiLiello and Houghton, 2008). The results were presented to the coworkers at a feedback session, which enabled the formulation of the results to be refined. La Cordée has thirteen coworking spaces across France and over

900 members. These workspaces are built according to common principles. They are made up of at *least* four environments: a convivial space, a quiet area, closed offices and an open fully-equipped kitchen. The premises are accessible at all times of the day and night. However, the coordinators of these spaces follow office hours, and when the Swiss Army knife (the name of the coordinator of the coworking space at La Cordée) is not present, the people roped in are self-managed. The Swiss Army Knives are the main players in group cohesion in general, and more particularly in bringing people together for lunch and tea.

Table 1 - Breakdown of the respondent population

ID	Type	Function	Status	Seniority
1	F	Coworking space coordinator	<i>La Cordée</i> employee	Junior
2	F	Coworking space coordinator	<i>La Cordée</i> employee	Senior
3	F	Coworking space coordinator	<i>La Cordée</i> employee	Junior
4	H	Coworking space coordinator	<i>La Cordée</i> employee	Senior
5	H	Web Developer	Teleworker	Senior
6	H	Web Developer	Independent	Senior
7	H	Translator	Independent	Junior
8	F	Web Analyst	Independent	Senior
9	F	Expert in sustainable development	Teleworker	Senior
10	H	Business manager	Teleworker	Junior
11	F	Undergraduate student	Student	Junior
12	F	Manager	<i>La Cordée</i> employee	Junior
13	H	Software developer	Independent	Senior
14	F	Education trainer	Independent	Senior
15	F	Publisher	Independent	Senior
16	F	Personal development coach	Independent	Senior
17	F	Translator	Independent	Junior
18	H	Ethical hacker	Independent	Junior
19	H	Business developer	Teleworker	Senior
20	H	Negotiator	Teleworker	Junior
21	H	Web advertiser	Teleworker	Senior
22	F	Architect	Independent	Junior

The analysis was carried out in three stages. We began by coding with the previously defined themes, while remaining open to possible additional themes. This method enabled us to detect new themes as we coded. This reduction in the mesh enabled us to triangulate the interview data with our observations in the field. The words and phrases that referred to a state of mind based on respect and benevolence were present in the speeches and in the facts, but were absent from our initial coding. We repeated the coding and analysis process, taking these new

codes into account. In a second stage, we carried out a new analysis based on the verbatim codes and our observation notes in order to define common categories among the respondents in relation to the creation of a context conducive to creativity in practice. We focused the rest of our analysis on these categories to identify the dimensions conducive to creativity in a coworking space.

RESULTS

The aim of this article is to help identify the dimensions that make coworking spaces conducive to creativity. We propose to group our results under three main headings: (1) a work environment conducive to creativity, (2) events and tools to stimulate creativity and (3) a state of mind conducive to creativity.

A working environment conducive to creativity.

In the course of this study, four dimensions of La Cordée's work environment that are conducive to creativity were identified.

A friendly, open place

In the La Cordée spaces, a large table is placed in the convivial area and serves as a shared office, dining table or games table. Coworkers appreciate the fact that there is no assigned space. They are free to sit wherever they like, at the shared desk, in an armchair or in a closed office. In addition to this freedom of movement, the premises are bright and welcoming. One coworker gave us her initial impression when she first arrived at La Cordée: *"I said Wow, because it's really nice, it's pleasant [...] I felt good straight away"*. (R-11). Members also have places to rest. The sum of these elements seems to make the working environment pleasant and helps coworkers to be more creative in their daily tasks: *"the layout of the spaces, for me that's an extremely important part of creativity in a shared space"* (R-4). During the interviews, the respondents indicated that the working environment at La Cordée enabled them to be creative and effective in solving problems. In particular, thanks to the shared desks: *"when I get stuck on a problem, all I have to do is lift my head from the computer and ask a question and I'm bound to get an answer from them"* (R-6). On the other hand, the kitchens are open to the social area, which makes them a central place where people meet up to chat and share a coffee: *"there's also everything to do with the layout of the space, which is important [...] Having a kitchen, with unlimited tea and coffee. The fact that we share meals and snacks together, these are moments of conviviality, and exchanges are created"* (R-1). The open, friendly layout of the coworking space encourages coworkers' creativity.

A wide range of profiles and experience

In these coworking spaces, we find a wide diversity of profiles: employees of all ages, professions and statuses. This mix is conducive to sharing experiences and points of view. For example, a communications student who was running out of ideas and writing articles every Friday about activities for mothers and their young children was able to solve her problem. With the help of the Swiss army knife at a tea party, the student asked the community for new ideas for activities. The coworkers gave her so many ideas for activities that she had to make a selection. The fact that different people were working together had a positive impact on solving her problem. These situations don't seem to be exceptional according to the roped party; it happens every day that people with different skills share information: *"There's always someone in the group who knows a lot and who will share their knowledge"* (R-8). We can

therefore say that the wide diversity of profiles and experience within the coworking space encourages the emergence of new ideas.

The absence of a hierarchical link

The people in these coworking spaces are usually self-employed, nomads or isolated teleworkers. This means that few people are in a hierarchical position. This leads to freedom of expression and encourages the circulation of ideas. Coworkers feel free to express their ideas, without fear of negative repercussions because they have no boss or colleague around them: *"we censor ourselves less, no one is there to monitor what we say"* (R-7). People are not afraid to express their opinions, which makes the exchange of ideas genuine and enhances their qualities: *"We don't have fixed hours and we don't report to the same boss. So I find that the exchanges are much more positive and, above all, they're not forced"* (R-8). Their creativity and ability to solve their problems could also be increased thanks to this freedom: *"To find the solution to the problem you're having, you feel freer to go out for two minutes, that's part of it, to take a step back, you feel less glued to your post as a result. I can adjust my pace more"*. (R-10). Members are convinced that they are freer to exchange ideas or opinions than in traditional workplaces surrounded by people from their organisations. The absence of hierarchical links in the coworking space encourages the sharing of ideas.

A place to disconnect

At La Cordée, only laptops and telephones link coworkers to their work. As soon as a coworker breaks away from these communication tools, their cognitive environment changes: *"sometimes there are bouts of stress in a company, it's only on my computer and in my professional contact, it's not at all with the outside environment (La Cordée) and so I think it allows you to disconnect at breakneck speed"* (R-9). It is therefore possible to disconnect from work thanks to the work environment and this would seem to have an impact on their ability to solve problems: *"When I was working at home, I'd come back to my PC and in fact I hadn't had the stimulus to think about anything else... Whereas here, if you want to take your mind off things... So all this really helps you in terms of problem solving, creativity, it's a thousand times better"* (R-6). During our observations, we regularly saw people working on their computers, and as soon as they took a break, they seemed to be able to cut themselves off from their work. These moments could serve as an incubation phase, giving the brain time to make links between the information that coworkers have accumulated during their active work phase. When they return to their workstations, these moments would encourage the illumination phase of the creative process. Wallas (1926) and thus provoke the emergence of new ideas. During breaks, the coworking space environment speeds up the process of disconnection, encouraging the incubation phase of the creative process.

La Cordée has created a place that is conducive to creativity by offering an open and friendly working environment conducive to the exchange of knowledge and ideas. In addition, the diversity of profiles and skills, as well as the strong sense of freedom of expression, meant that the exchange of ideas was more frequent and of higher quality. During breaks, this space also improved their individual capacity to disconnect, thus encouraging the incubation of new ideas.

Events and tools to stimulate creativity

Within the working environment, La Cordée provides coworkers with structured and formalised methods for harnessing the collective creativity of the community.

Group discussion events to address individual issues

In the various cordées, this creativity technique is called 'Tempête sous un crane' (Storm Under a Skull), an original name for an activity traditionally known as brainstorming. It's a tool

made available free of charge to members when they wish to formally call on the collective creativity of the community. The session lasts a maximum of 30 minutes and relies on an ephemeral multi-disciplinary team formed on the spot and disbanded after the session: *“storm under a skull, everyone takes part, and the aim is to get lots of people from different sectors talking to each other”* (R-4). The themes of the sessions are varied and their main objective is to come up with new ideas to solve a problem. Post-it notes are stuck in the Cordée to remind coworkers of the existence of this practice. During the interviews, respondents systematically indicated that the ‘storm under a skull’ helps them to generate new ideas. In addition to brainstorming, some groups meet for longer periods every fortnight to solve problems put forward by their participants. As soon as a problem is solved, the group starts thinking about a new subject. These events, like all the others, are open to all Cordée members. In this way, organising collective brainstorming events to respond to individual problems encourages the generation of ideas.

Group discussion events to address collective issues

The ‘café des échanges’ (exchange café) was set up by La Cordée *“to create synergy between the different areas of expertise present at La Cordée”* (R-3). Every month, coworkers can meet in a convivial space over a coffee to begin a collective reflection on a generic issue. The aim is to brainstorm with people from different specialisms about possible solutions to make day-to-day work easier. The ‘pros’ breakfast, unlike the ‘exchange café’, brings together players from the same business sector. The aim is to initiate a collective discussion, this time on issues specific to the sector concerned. For example, in a ‘exchange café’ on the issue of how to react when a customer does not pay their invoices on time, everyone gave their opinion and shared their experience for around thirty minutes. As the discussions progressed, the participants combined their practices and ideas to come up with more sophisticated ones. Without becoming conscious it, the group had just held a creativity session. By the end of the session, the participants had solutions for solving the problem with new practices. In this way, organising collective brainstorming events to respond to collective problems encourages the generation of ideas.

The provision of creative and fun games

La Cordée provides around ten games selected according to three criteria: the game must be (1) fast, (2) open and (3) creative. The aim is that the games can be played between the end of lunch and the start of work, that it should be easy to change players during the game and that they should help coworkers to develop their creative potential. A developer who has been a member for two and a half years, however, responded to the question *Do you feel able to generate new, appropriate and useful ideas?* with *“It’s something you develop every day, it’s silly but games like the ones you saw us playing at lunchtime, where you have to find the right word, you have to dig in your head, it forces you to look and the more you do it the more you’ll come up with new ideas”* (R-5). Games are always fun and friendly, so people work on their creativity unconsciously. A Swiss Army knife explains how creativity is supported at La Cordée: *“If we have to support them (the coworkers) in terms of creativity, it’s really in a free way, [...] whether it’s during lunchtimes, play times, board games, these can be creative moments”* (R-4). In the coworking space, playing board games is seen as an ordinary activity, whereas it is unusual in traditional workplaces. The availability of creative and fun games helps coworkers to develop their individual creative capacity.

With these events and games, La Cordée provides its members with the means to help them develop their creativity and productivity in their work. During these events, coworkers benefit from collective creativity to fuel their personal reflections. What’s more, certain events that are

not explicitly dedicated to creativity *ultimately* have a positive impact on participants' ability to come up with ideas.

A mindset conducive to creativity

La Cordée has created an organisational climate that is conducive to creativity by establishing a spirit of caring and mutual support. This state of mind is based on mutual trust, mutual help and sharing, and is supported by the coworking space facilitator.

The key word: kindness

La Cordée is not just a place to work, it's also a state of mind: *"another value is respect for others, benevolence, always being benevolent, never, never sinking into the negative aspects of always criticising, always taking a negative approach"* (R-4). During our observations, we were able to witness debates on more or less sensitive subjects, but they were nonetheless courteous and respectful. This general benevolence seems natural to experienced members, and comes as a surprise to newcomers: *"I'm quite amazed at the benevolence between people, it's incredible to be able to talk about so many different subjects and never hear one word above another, I've never seen that"* (R-3). The absence of fear of being judged encourages discussion: *"So I find that there's a kind of alchemy that works, without you needing to lay down too many rules. Because here, what's different from other places is the benevolence, which I haven't seen elsewhere"* (R-6). Respondents also feel that caring encourages the exchange of ideas: *"I regularly witness the emergence of new ideas thanks to caring exchanges with different people"* (R-2). The spirit of benevolence present within the community seems to be an essential condition for collective and then individual creativity to flourish.

The central role of presenters

They are responsible for managing supplies, invoicing, fitting out the space, welcoming new arrivals, day-to-day activities and networking. For example, they organise so-called "networking" events, such as professional aperitifs, or the events discussed in the previous section. The Swiss Army Knives are community leaders who unite the members around the values of La Cordée. With the aim of making the spaces pleasant, where members can socialise and exchange with other coworkers, the Swiss army knife plays the role of facilitator. These employees also ensure that all the members remain respectful and encourage dialogue: *"It's not in the spirit of La Cordée to make malicious criticisms, and if ever someone says a bit too much, the Swiss army knife will talk to the person to tell them that it's better to make constructive criticisms"* (R-5). In the end, the space facilitators help to foster good relations between coworkers, which is conducive to the discussion of ideas and the emergence of new ones.

Help and support for coworkers

The notion of mutual aid is present in the coworking space. It can be private, professional, real or virtual: *"if you need a van for a removal, you can ask on the site and people will often reply and give you a hand"* (R-8). Physically, coworkers can ask people around them for help. However, if no one close to them can answer their questions, they can turn directly to the community via the intranet. This platform is called 'the refuge' and is La Cordée's internal social network. Members can ask for help, ask and answer questions on forums, and suggest and register for events and training courses. These services are provided free of charge to help members of the community. Individuals are prepared to give up their time to help another coworker in difficulty: *"as soon as someone has a problem, I try to see if I can help or not"* (R-5). In these places, in connection with benevolence, relationships between coworkers are not

limited to 'give and take' relationships, coworkers appear to be altruistic: *"it's really the word sharing, you don't expect anything in return, I think that's really anchored at La Cordée"* (R-3). Selfless relationships reinforce the sharing of knowledge and skills, and the exchange of ideas and advice, all of which are conducive to collective creativity. In this way, mutual support between coworkers helps individuals to generate ideas.

DISCUSSION

Our results contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon of creativity in coworking spaces and show how La Cordée has developed a climate conducive to creativity. This climate is based on the physical layout of the space, which is open and friendly, a spirit of benevolence and mutual support, and creative development tools and events geared towards problem solving. These three main dimensions reinforce each other. The open, friendly environment supports a relaxed working atmosphere that encourages the sharing of knowledge and the spontaneous emergence of ideas. Creative events and tools stimulate the generation of ideas to solve coworkers' problems, and the spirit of benevolence and mutual aid encourages the circulation of knowledge and the emergence and socialisation of ideas. These results allow us to discuss three points: the role of the layout of the space and the role of the state of mind of benevolence and mutual aid in creativity and the enrichment of the concept of creative climates.

The role of space planning in creativity

Our results indicate that the design of the space, which encourages social interaction, has a positive impact on creativity through the sharing and mutual development of knowledge. The open, friendly layout of the coworking space and the proximity of coworkers from different professions and educational backgrounds encourage informal interaction and collaboration in solving specific problems. This spatial integration of diverse groups has been identified as a factor that encourages creativity in the workplace (Sailer, 2011). Here we see that it is also active in a workplace where, a priori, individuals do not develop common projects because they work for different organisations with no prior links. Conversely, the positive influence of the coworking space on the incubation phase of the creative process seems to contradict the results of Kristensen (2004). Kristensen believes that to encourage the emergence of new ideas during the incubation phase, individuals need to isolate themselves in a private space. Studies by Sailer (2011) and Martens (2011) suggest that the possibility of alternating between open spaces to increase interaction and isolated spaces to support concentration encourages employee creativity. An open and collective space does not therefore seem to be unfavourable to the incubation of ideas, insofar as there is a strong differentiation of spaces. In line with the study by Nadant, Marinos and Krauss (2018) on the role of proximity in coworking spaces, our results show that geographical proximity alone is not enough to stimulate creativity; it must be reinforced by problem-solving events and a spirit of benevolence and mutual aid.

The role of a spirit of benevolence and mutual aid between coworkers

The specific state of mind of benevolence seems to play a major role in the development of coworkers' creativity. This state of mind is close to the notion of *innovation mindset* described by Kuczmarski (1996) a state of mind that advocates respect for others, thoughtfulness and enthusiasm, thus creating a working environment that encourages creativity and, more specifically, collective creativity. This benevolent state of mind, within La Cordée, encourages exchanges and debates on ideas that provide individuals with new food for thought. In this way, benevolence reinforces the effect of the other dimensions - events and the layout of the

space - on the emergence of new ideas. As the results of Martens (2011), the psychosocial dimensions have an impact on the perception of the qualities of the place and on the creativity of the users of these places. Over and above the layout, the state of mind contributes to a positive perception of the coworking space, transforming the 'inevitable' moments of interaction into moments of information sharing and mutual support. Mutual support, a phenomenon already noted in a study by Capdevila (2016) encourages the resolution of complex problems and even increases productivity (Amabile, Fisher and Pillemer, 2014). In our case, self-help multiplies the opportunities for exchanging information and ideas, which in turn generates new ideas. Mutual support is not just a physical phenomenon; it also takes place in the virtual world via the 'refuge' digital platform. This internal social network at La Cordée enables all members to be interconnected with each other, to help each other and ultimately to encourage the generation of new ideas.

Enriching the dimensions of creative climates

Creative climates were developed for a corporate work context. We studied creativity in a new type of organisation, which brings together workers from different companies with no hierarchical links and, a priori, no shared projects. These results call creative climates into question insofar as they highlight elements that are not present in the 9 dimensions of the SOQ or the 8 dimensions of the KEYS: the role of the layout of the physical space, the organisation of events focused on creative work and the state of mind of benevolence. Adding these dimensions to the creative climates would make it possible to strengthen the organisational components of the creative climate by adding the caring and mutual aid dimension to the work atmosphere component, and to add the physical layout component and the processual component of events to support creativity. The approach is certainly qualitative and exploratory, but it suggests that the concept of creative climate could be enriched to take into account the development of new forms of work, particularly coworking, insofar as this type of space is also developing in companies.

CONCLUSION

The contribution of this article is threefold: (1) to link the emerging literature on coworking spaces to the phenomenon of collective and organisational creativity, (2) to identify the organisational components that are conducive to individual creativity, and (3) to enrich the debate on the spatial and cultural dimension of creativity. The case study of La Cordée enables us to highlight the importance of the context for creativity, both the physical organisation of the workspace and the state of mind of the workers. We show that in an organisation of individuals with no common objectives and no hierarchical links, it is possible to encourage individual creativity on a day-to-day basis, with an open and friendly space, events to support creativity and a mindset of caring and sharing. The results of this research can be used by managers of coworking spaces to encourage the creativity of coworkers and company managers who wish to develop the creative potential of their employees in an internal coworking space. They should therefore pay particular attention to the layout of the space, the events organised there and the state of mind that develops between coworkers.

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