Working from home: the new work environment of entrepreneurs?

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RGCS Seminar, Cass Business School
24th February 2017
Outline of presentation

• How are changes in work and technology reshaping workplaces, homes and cities?
• Home and neighbourhood as an environment for entrepreneurs?
• Motivations for coworking: networking, well-being, community.
• Home-based coworking models and practices.
• Overlap between the social and economic.
• Theorising home-work relationships: from boundary theory and ‘hybrid workspace’ to the home-work assemblage?
Increase in self-employment

Source: BIS, 2016
Freelancing is growing

Our survey rigorously screened respondents to determine the percent who earned freelance income in the past year. Results showed that **35% of the U.S. workforce is freelancing**.

Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' July 2016 estimate of the civilian labor force at 159 million, we estimate that the U.S. workforce currently includes **55 million people freelancing, an increase of 2 million since our 2014 survey**:

Source: UpWork survey 2016
Why self-employment?

Contributed to taking up current self-employment (all that apply)

- Being self employed is normal for job do
- Saw a specific gap in the market or business opportunity
- Previous job came to an end, including redundancy
- Needed to work around childcare or other commitments
- Could not get a job as an employee in type of work wanted and in local area
- Continuation of a family business
- Employer at the time wanted me to move into self-employment
- Opportunity to work around a health issue

Source: BIS, 2016, 7
The resurgence of homeworking

Number of homeworkers in the USA, 1960-2010

Source: Reuschke, Regions 2015, p. 7

Source: ONS, 2014, 2
NUMBER OF COWORKING SPACES WORLDWIDE
PROJECTION
AS OF OCTOBER 31, ANNUALLY

2015: 8,700
2016: 11,300
2017: 13,800

NUMBER OF COWORKING MEMBERS WORLDWIDE
PROJECTION
AS OF OCTOBER 31, ANNUALLY

2015: 510,000
2016: 835,000
2017: 1,180,000

Source: Deskmag, 2017
From homeworking to coworking?

• Coworking is linked with socio-economic, technological and cultural changes, including increases in home-based and freelance work.

• Coworking as a solution to social isolation (Spinuzzi 2012).

• Linked with innovation and economic diversity in cities (Capdevila 2012, 2013).

• Coworking spaces as ‘open source community spaces’ - values of collaboration, openness, sustainability (Lange 2011; Reed 2007).

• As a new type of urban sociomaterial infrastructure and an alternative way of organizing labour (Merkel 2015).
Motivations and priorities of coworking for freelancers

• Networking/collaboration
• Spaces and facilities
• Well-being
• Community-building
Models of coworking

- **Management structure**: top-down, facilitated, self-organized, informal.
- **Economic model**: for-profit, non-profit, collaborative/sharing economy, on-demand.
- **Spaces**: coworking spaces, business hubs, community centres, cafés, restaurants, homes...
- **Practices**: introductions, break activities, shared meals, networking, sharing skills, events.
Hoffice

- Founded in 2014 by Swedish psychologist Christofer Franzen.
- Invites freelancers or remote employees to work at each other’s homes - aims of boosting productivity and tackling social isolation.
- Events are free; use of Facebook groups to communicate.
- Links with the ‘gift economy’ and sharing skills.

Image: Amrit Daniel Forss
you meet
with a handful of people
at the home of your host
and setup your workplace

you kick-off the day
with stretching or a moment of mindfulness and a round,
where you state your day’s goals

you take a fun break
stretching, walks, games
and state your next 45min goals

you work
on your own projects

you eat
the food you brought or
you share your dishes
while growing a network
with fantastic people

you celebrate
that you have reached your day’s goals while having a great day in the Hoffice

Source: Hoffice
Vrumi: ‘opening up the home for work’

- Online platform enabling users to access workspace in homes.
- Payment ranges from £10/day for a desk/kitchen table to £300 per day for whole/luxury houses.
- Home as an ‘under-used’ space and potential source of income for homeowners.

Source: Vrumi
Cohome
L'environnement de travail qui vous convient, quand vous en avez besoin

Source: Cohome
Le coworking à domicile
Travaillez chez vous ou chez d'autres avec des professionnels de tous horizons
Rejoindre la communauté

“Home coworking: work at home or at home with professionals from all walks of life”
Coworking and the future of freelance work

• Are home-based coworking networks ‘scaleable’?

• Coworking in multiple spaces at different times – flexibility and affordability are key.

• Potential of coworking to contribute to neighbourhoods and cities.

• Relationships between home and work – from boundary theory to the ‘work-life blend’ and home-work assemblages.
Thank you

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Acknowledgement: This research is funded through the ERC Starting Grant to Dr Darja Reuschke, 639403
WORKANDHOME ERC-StG-2014