



SCHOOL OF  
ECONOMICS AND  
MANAGEMENT

# Coworking Spaces: Fuel for Entrepreneurship

A qualitative study on entrepreneurs' motives in entering coworking spaces and the interlink with motives in pursuing entrepreneurship

by

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# Abstract

**Purpose.** This research aims to investigate entrepreneurs' motives in entering coworking spaces (CWS), and how they are interlinked with entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career.

**Methodology.** The analysis and discussion of the gathered qualitative data in the form of twelve interviews helped to develop deep insights and form an understanding of the entrepreneurs' motives in entrepreneurship and in entering CWS.

**Findings.** The research found that the initial motives of entrepreneurs in entering CWS revolved around social intensity and evolved to motives regarding professional focus. Additionally, the study shows not only that the motives in both areas of this research evolve rather than remaining static, but also that synergies between these motives were found.

**Implications.** Motives in pursuing entrepreneurship are reflected in those entering CWS, but depending upon the entrepreneurs' experience in CWS, CWS can influence the motives in pursuing entrepreneurship.

**Contribution.** The study contributes to the academic understanding of how entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing entrepreneurship influence their motives in entering CWS, and vice versa. Additionally, this research obtained comprehensive results adding to the rapidly expanding phenomenon of CWS.

*Keywords: motives, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs, coworking spaces*

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# 1 Introduction

The introduction of this thesis is divided into four sections. First, the background of the research topic will be presented. Then, the problem statement as well as the aim and objective of this research will be explained. This chapter will be concluded with an outline that will provide further guidance for this thesis.

## 1.1 Background

In today's multifaceted and fast-paced world, digitalization and globalization, as well as new business models and technologies, constantly disrupt traditional and long-established norms and habits. New circulations of culture, capital, and people are enabled and facilitated, and the conception of places and materiality is redefined.

In line with these transformations, temporal, spatial and organizational structures increasingly change and affect the way people work nowadays. Advanced digital technology not only replaces many traditional industrial jobs but also modifies the way and the geography of doing knowledge-based jobs (Moriset, 2013). This shift allows people to pursue jobs that require different structures and enable more flexibility and variety. In 2019, globally 62 percent of businesses offered flexible workspace policies, and more than half of their employees worked outside the main offices for at least half of the week (IWG, 2019). Consequently, 85 percent of businesses with flexible working agreements increased productivity (IWG, 2019), and 58 percent of the employees stated that flexible working significantly improved the work-life-balance and job satisfaction (IWG, 2018).

The concept of flexible working includes not only the flexible determination and allocation of working hours but also the choice of working environments. Besides working at home or in public places, like cafés or business lounges, people increasingly choose to work in coworking spaces (CWS). Fueled by advanced digital technology and globalization, CWS bloom globally. The number of CWS increased from 600 in 2010 (Deskmag, 2019a) to more than 33,000 in 2019 and is predicted to swell up to 49,500 by 2022 (GCUC, 2019). Despite the exponential growth over the past decade, there is still room for growth in the future. Coworking spaces seem to be the fastest growing trend in commercial real estate, and recent predictions do not show

any indicators for a downturn in growth (Barrineau, 2019). Recent developments in flexible working serve as growth medium for CWS and help them flourish globally.

Before social distancing practices were put into place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, predictions stated that more than 2.68 million people would work in CWS worldwide by the end of 2020 – compared to 21,000 in 2010, this number has grown by the factor of 127 (Deskmag, 2019b). People working in CWS can primarily be categorized into freelancers, self-employed persons, and microbusinesses (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). Research found that stakeholders have diverse motives in entering CWS; some seek independency and free collaboration (Lange, 2011) or entrepreneurship and networking activities (Hite & Hesterly, 2001; Hughes, Morgan, Ireland & Hughes, 2011), whereas others mention different cultural and social incentives or revenue and income aspects (Spinuzzi, 2012).

## 1.2 Problem Statement

As the coworking phenomenon essentially reshapes the way people work and continues to influence the flexible work industry, scholars' interest in this relatively new topic is rising. So far, contemporary research has largely focused on peoples' general motives of entering CWS by placing the emphasis on the advantages and disadvantages which derive from such work environments. Therefore, scholars have a good understanding of how different stakeholders can benefit from working in specific types of CWS. Additionally, entrepreneurship and management literature has investigated the advantages and disadvantages of rather traditional business support programs such as incubators or accelerators, which specifically target entrepreneurs as the main stakeholders. In this regard, with the growing emergence of CWS, it has become apparent that entrepreneurs increasingly choose to enter this relatively new type of work environment despite having a diverse assortment of work places and business support programs. Consequently, this creates a gap in academic literature as scholars on the one hand have investigated CWS regarding their advantages and disadvantages for broad stakeholder groups and on the other hand have investigated the motives of entrepreneurs to enter work environments and business support programs other than CWS. However, it remains unknown what motives entrepreneurs lead to enter CWS and how they can benefit from such work environments.

Although literature on the benefits of coworking spaces exists for several user groups, it can be assumed that the motives of entrepreneurs to enter a CWS differ from other professionals who enter CWS. This can be justified by the distinct characteristics of entrepreneurs. As widely agreed upon, literature describes the entrepreneurial undertakings as the management of the combination of innovation, risk-taking, and proactiveness (Miller, 2011). The desire for independence, self-discipline and perseverance, responsibility, growth, and an orientation towards personal value (Scheiner, 2008) support the entrepreneur's willingness to take ambitious actions, and deal with failure (Xie, Lv & Xu, 2018). These characteristics differentiate entrepreneurs from other professionals and significantly influence their motives and decision-making. These motive-driven decisions in turn play a significant role regarding the choice of location and work environment that the entrepreneur uses for working (Bhansing, Wijngaarden & Hitters, 2020).

Considering the influence entrepreneurs' motives have on their decisions regarding working environments, far too little attention has been paid to the entrepreneurs' motives in entering CWS. Addressing this gap in academic literature is of crucial importance because it contributes not only to the greater understanding of the CWS phenomenon but also to entrepreneurial motives and decision-making behavior. Entrepreneurs drive the economic market by pursuing new business opportunities, driving competition, and enhancing productivity by the means of new and creative methods of managing supply and demand (Bouncken, Aslam & Reuschl, 2018). Thus, the opportunity to gain deeper insight into what motivates these vital economic players is of great interest among entrepreneurship and management scholars.

### 1.3 Aim and Objective

Contemplating the previously discussed points, the importance of closing this research gap amplifies. Therefore, this research aims to investigate entrepreneurs' motives in entering CWS, and how they are interlinked with entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career. The objective of this thesis is to collect and analyze qualitative data from entrepreneurs who work or have worked in CWS to fulfill the aim of this research. In this way, an in-depth understanding of the motives underlying the pursuit of an entrepreneurial career and motives in entering CWS is acquired. By analyzing and discussing the gathered data, an investigation on how they influence one another can be conducted. Further, the research helps to shed a light on the benefits entrepreneurs can receive from working in CWS. By investigating this research



gap, this thesis contributes to the academic understanding of entrepreneurial motives and the rapidly expanding phenomenon of CWS.

For the scope of this research, entrepreneurs are defined as founders, as well as cofounders and self-employed individuals, who have created their own brand or company.

## 1.4 Thesis Outline

The thesis is structured into six chapters. Chapter two will provide information by the means of secondary research about general motives of individuals pursuing entrepreneurship. Further, the concept of coworking will be presented, and CWS will be discussed in an entrepreneurial context. The research methods will be presented in chapter three. Chapter four will present and analyze the findings of the primary data collection. A discussion of these findings will be provided in chapter five, together with research limitations and implications for future studies. Lastly, the research will be concluded in chapter six.

## 2 Literature Review

Before gaining insights into the driving motives of entrepreneurs in entering CWS, it is essential to establish an understanding of the general motives of individuals to pursue entrepreneurship to better understand their entrepreneurial decision-making. Therefore, the first part of the literature review discusses motives in pursuing entrepreneurship, and the second part elaborates on the concept of coworking, including CWS and the link to entrepreneurship.

### 2.1 Motives in Entrepreneurship

Being an entrepreneur is seen as an aversive career choice, as the creation and establishment of a new venture is often characterized by increased uncertainty, impediments, failures, and frustrations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Hence, scholars showed a high interest in the driving motives of individuals in choosing and pursuing an entrepreneurial career path. Research found that motives determine the way entrepreneurs work and make decisions on a daily basis (Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd, 2019). However, motives differ per entrepreneur type and do not always remain fixed but often change or evolve during an entrepreneurial career (Wasserman, 2012). The authors found that internal and external factors significantly affect the entrepreneurs' motives, depending on the different predominant phases of the entrepreneurial process, namely, the initiation, growth, and exit. The following sections present how motives that drive entrepreneurs can be distinguished and categorized.

#### 2.1.1 Opportunity- and Necessity-Driven Motivations

Scholars argue that an important distinction needs to be made between necessity- and opportunity-driven entrepreneurship, which relate to the very distinct motivations of becoming an entrepreneur. The authors differentiate between the absence of work, and the choice of becoming an entrepreneur, seeking to exploit recognized opportunities (Williams, 2008). Although this dichotomy provides a basic understanding of the existential reasons why people seek an entrepreneurial career, it oversimplifies the complexity of motives and the rationale that they might change over time. Therefore, the motives can further be categorized into extrinsic and intrinsic drivers.

### 2.1.2 Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivations

The most commonly studied type of motivation is extrinsic, which is mainly associated with economic and financial incentives (Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd, 2019). Other extrinsic motives like ecological preservation, and work–family balance (York, O’Neil & Sarasvathy, 2016) received less academic attention. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), extrinsic motivation can be understood as the undertaking of an activity in order to attain some separable outcome. Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd (2019) state that economic motives not only reinforce the decision to start a venture but can also affect the form of entrepreneurship pursued.

In contrast to extrinsic motivations, intrinsic motives refer to the satisfaction of personal non-economic desires such as self-realization, independence, innovation, and recognition (Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd, 2019). Driving and controlling the growth of own ventures are named as the most prevalent motives in entrepreneurship (Amit, MacCrimmon, Zietsma & Oesch, 2000). Additionally, Hurst & Pugsley (2010) mention flexibility, freedom, fulfilling a personal vision, and reaching a status as important intrinsic motives for entrepreneurs.

Following a similar approach, Wasserman (2012) categorizes the entrepreneurial motives in either wealth- or control-oriented dimensions. The author explains that control-oriented motives like freedom in decision-making, and fulfilling a personal vision, as well as the wealth-oriented motives like gaining financial security are the most common motives among entrepreneurs to create a venture. However, he agrees that motives can shift and adjust over time.

Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd (2019) found that entrepreneurs who aim to organize for-profit firms are driven by economic motives, whereas entrepreneurs establishing non-profit organizations are mainly influenced by social intrinsic motivations. Early contributions from economists like Kirzner or Schumpeter identified the prospect of financial gain to be the primary motive for entrepreneurs during new venture creation. However, recent studies show that the desire to attain wealth proves to be of smaller significance in comparison to control-oriented motives (Amit et al. 2000) such as achieving independence, contributing to a greater good, and being innovative (Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd, 2019). However, since both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations determine the structures of a venture, the authors suggests considering a combination of them as it can increase the business performance.

### 2.1.3 Motives in the Context of Work Environments

Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd (2019) underline the importance of motives as they are proven to have significant influence on entrepreneurs' ventures. The authors explain that motives are the driving forces for entrepreneurs in taking decisions and actions regarding the evaluation of opportunities, the acquisition of resources, and the execution of entrepreneurial activities. The strengths and combination of motives may affect the entrepreneurial path substantially as they can lead the venture in different directions.

Bhansing, Wijngaarden & Hitters (2020) state that these motive-driven decisions are specifically important regarding the location and place that the entrepreneur uses for working. Places are not only related to creativity and entrepreneurship (Audretsch & Belitski 2013) but also essential components of an individual's identity, which includes its motives (Bhansing, Wijngaarden & Hitters, 2020). Cheng, Kruger & Daniels (2003) explain that places and locations help determine who we are and set guidelines of appropriate behavior. In line with this fact, sociologists McCall and Simmons (1966 cited in Bhansing, Wijngaarden & Hitters, 2020) found that motivations are central aspects in engaging in specific forms of behavior. Consequently, one can assume that entrepreneurs choose locations and places for working according to their motives.

Common places entrepreneurs select as working environments are accelerators and business incubators. Accelerators intend to stimulate the growth of ventures in their portfolio by supporting entrepreneurs with a range of resources like office space, access to technology, mentor networks, and entrepreneurial communities (Fankhauser, 2013). In return for this support, the accelerator gets shares of stock in the venture (Cohen & Hochberg, 2014). Incubators on the other hand follow a slightly different approach. Incubators aim to help new businesses grow by offering inexpensive office space and support services (Scillitoe & Chakrabarti, 2010).

A study by Brown, Mawson, Lee & Peterson (2019) found that the expected motives of funding and structured support through mentoring were of little significance to the entrepreneurs working in an accelerator. Rather, it became apparent that in opposition with the assumed motives to enter a business accelerator, entrepreneurs were significantly motivated by relational benefits that arise from working in an entrepreneurial environment (Brown et al. 2019). In this respect, entrepreneurs were mainly motivated to join an accelerator in order to expand their network with fellow peers and investors. Moreover, even though professional mentor support

was considered an important motive to enter, peer-based support presented to be a more significant motive. On this note, social benefits were stronger motivating factors than economic ones in the case of entrepreneurs entering an accelerator.

Regarding the motives of entrepreneurs in entering an incubator, it has been found that they are more closely linked to the perceived benefits which derive from this specific work environment. Especially high-quality equipment, professional consultancy services, and perceived image effects due to the location of the incubator count as popular motives (Schwartz & Hornych, 2008). Another study found that entrepreneurs' motivations to join a business incubator are diverse and involve the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills as well as education, financial support, and access to professional networks and technology (Lose, Maziriri, Choto & Madinga, 2017). In addition, the intention of internationalization and market growth have been mentioned as motives to join a business incubator (Hansson & Hedin, 2007). Consequently, it can be assumed that economic factors are stronger motivators for entrepreneurs to enter an incubator as compared to social benefits.

Besides joining accelerators and incubators, a new trend shows that entrepreneurs increasingly enter CWS (Deskmag, 2018). The next chapter provides an overview on the concept of coworking and CWS in an entrepreneurial context in order to establish an understanding of the phenomenon.

## 2.2 Coworking

This section focuses on the relevant concepts of coworking including CWS. In this regard, the user and benefits of CWS will be identified and discussed. However, to understand the development of this global phenomenon, it must first be understood how the general concept of coworking emerged and developed.

### 2.2.1 The Concept of Coworking

Coworking can be referred to as a collaborative activity in which individual professionals meet in an open plan office environment to “work alone together” (Spinuzzi, 2012). It has been addressed in literature as a global, widely urban phenomenon among independent creative workers, freelancers, micro-businesses, and entrepreneurs (Gandini, 2015). The evolution of

coworking has undoubtedly led to a shift towards more “knowledge-intensive” work and an acceleration of modern-day occupations (Gandini, 2015). This is also supported by Florida (2002), who states that the rise of the creative class has materialized in the emergence of urban start-ups and self-employed knowledge workers, who seek a communal work environment to overcome their loneliness and stimulate serendipity and social interaction with other workers. Correspondingly, literature suggests that these trends have caused increasing individualism and have led to the social isolation of professionals (Brown, 2017).

In contrast, coworking positively reinforces the distributed, interorganizational collaborative knowledge work. According to Spinuzzi (2012) this type of work includes independent contracting, freelancing, virtual teams, and peer production. This innovative way of working allowed a trade-off between a traditional work life within a communal environment and more independent professions, associated with freedom and autonomy, that would otherwise be practiced at home in isolation (Gandini, 2015). Therefore, coworking merges different elements of concepts in the labor market such as home-office, office communities, telework, virtual work, virtual teams, incubators, and communities of practices and thereby explicitly offers a cross-sectional working environment with more flexibility, independence, and social interaction (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016).

### 2.2.2 Coworking Spaces

CWS can be regarded as shared workplaces utilized by different sorts of knowledge professionals (Gandini, 2015). This widely accepted definition in the managerial research domain has been adopted and altered by several scholars. For instance, Capdevila (2013) defines CWS as “localized spaces where autonomous professionals work, who are open to sharing resources and their knowledge with the rest of the community” (p. 3). Another definition portrays CWS as “open-office plan environments in which people work alongside other unaffiliated professionals for a fee” (Spinuzzi, 2012, p. 399). This clearly highlights the emphasis on spatial environments and work locations, but also the way in which coworking users behave in such settings. Therefore, Bilandzic and Foth (2013) stress the close interaction of people working in CWS, engaging in social learning as a result of sharing the same workspace for their creative activities. For this reason, they perceive CWS as public community centers for peer collaboration and creativity around digital culture and technology. Moriset

(2013) further contributes to this definition by looking beyond the spatial layout of CWS and rather regarding it as “an atmosphere, a spirit and even a lifestyle” (p. 7).

Considering these definitions, it becomes apparent that scholars are emphasizing the link between the social and geographical use of space which occurs in CWS. Therefore, it can be concluded that CWS not only provide their users with a physical workplace but also with human and social capital, which evoke a feeling of belongingness to a community and thus diminish their social isolation. In this respect, CWS have been recognized as a third place, which is a place outside the home or office where people interact and socialize in a free and informal manner (Brown, 2017; Moriset, 2013). Brown (2017) states that CWS clearly aim to create a synergy between informal (social) and formal (productive) aspects into a new work environment. The author explains that this new habitat encourages social interaction and support, mentoring, networking, idea generation, knowledge sharing, and collaboration.

Despite the widely adopted view of scholars on CWS being supportive and inspiring work environments, recent studies have criticized this primarily value-oriented interpretation of CWS. In his study, Gandini (2015) found that CWS are a loose modality between collaboration, competition, and cooperation. Moreover, Bouncken, Laudien, Fredrich & Görmar (2017) have questioned the cooperation within CWS, especially regarding entrepreneurs. Although CWS encourage knowledge and idea exchange, learning, and collaborative work, and therefore contribute to value creation, it simultaneously bears competitive risks of value appropriation (Bouncken et al. 2017). Thus, so-called cooperative tensions have to be carefully considered with respect to CWS.

### 2.2.3 Coworking Space Dimensions

CWS can have different classifications, divided into their users, co-presence and collaboration, infrastructure, and community aspects (Gandini, 2015). Similar to these classifications, Spinuzzi (2012) categorizes differences of CWS into “design, interior, flexibility of opening hours, place, homogenous values and the professionalization for the classification.” In line with the mentioned categories are Bouncken’s & Reuschl’s (2016) defined six dimensions of coworking: coworking users, social intensity, institution of the CWS provider, physical assets, availability, professional focus, and competition. These dimensions will be discussed in detail and provide a structure for following parts of this paper.

### ***Coworking users***

Deskmag (2018) found that the main users of CWS are freelancers (54%), entrepreneurs and their employees (20%), and dependent contractors (20%). Gandini (2015) and Spinuzzi (2012) expand these categorizations by also considering self-employed individuals and consultants as CWS users. According to Bouncken & Reuschl (2016), coworking users can mainly be classified into freelancers, self-employed persons, and microbusinesses. Besides minor differences regarding the CWS users' professions, the authors agree upon the fact that CWS users have different characteristics, competencies, and goals. Gandini (2015) states that CWS users are often multi-skilled and work in different fields, although the author admits that a combination of creative and digital competencies is common.

Independent from skills and competencies, Deskmag (2018) found that globally 84% of the users utilize CWS for regular work, but also for meetings, networking and events. Other scholars state that CWS users especially seek entrepreneurship and networking activities in CWS (Hite & Hesterly, 2001; Hughes et al. 2011). According to Lange (2011), independence and free collaboration play important roles in these regards for CWS users. The main reasons for individuals to work in CWS imply revenue and income aspects or cultural and social incentives (Spinuzzi, 2012). Bouncken and Reuschl (2016) state that CWS users' characteristics and goals can significantly affect their behavior in CWS and influence the community. The authors refer to three CWS user types established by Bilandzic and Foth in 2013:

- Utilizers who take advantage of the CWS's equipment, space, and technological infrastructure;
- Learners who actively exchange and acquire knowledge and attend events; and
- Socializers who seek acknowledgement and recognition.

### ***Social Intensity***

Irrespective of the profession and competencies, most CWS users share similar values regarding social interactions, which play an essential role in CWS (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016; Spinuzzi, 2012). Already in 2011, Lange found that individuals who appreciate the community aspect, networks, and open-source projects increasingly utilize CWS. In a global survey in 2018, Deskmag found that social interactions such as an enjoyable atmosphere (65%), interaction with others (60%), the community (60%), and like-minded people (55%) remain the most important factors for individuals in choosing a CWS.



Bouncken and Reuschl (2016) emphasize that social interactions can enable exchanging knowledge and views, learning from each other, creating new projects, and increase inspiration, and therefore stimulate users to work in CWS. In addition, CWS offer users a higher flexibility regarding team constellations or creation and work processes – especially in comparison to established hierarchical organizations. In line with these findings, Spinuzzi (2012) argues that CWS enhance social relations including feedback, trust, learning, and collaboration between professionals that have different competencies.

### ***Institution of the Coworking Space Provider***

Another dimension by which CWS can be categorized is the institution of the CWS provider, which describes the affiliation to other organizations or institutions. Bouncken and Reuschl (2016) explain that “CWS providers have public, private, or semi-private–public forms and exhibit different levels of dependence to other institutions of power or legal relations to other organizations, institutions, or public authorities” (p. 325). They mention that the organizational form and affiliations of CWS affect the type of coworking user and their autonomy, objectives, and tasks, as well as the accessibility and culture of CWS.

### ***Physical Assets***

This dimension primarily describes the availability and design of a CWS, along with the equipment, technical infrastructure, and supplies. Through these aspects, CWS users can lower administrative duties without renouncing to access good locations. CWS are mostly divided into working areas including meeting rooms, offices or open desks spots, and social interaction areas such as cafés, lounges, or kitchens. The latter mentioned areas promote the interaction between users (Spinuzzi, 2012; Bilandzic & Foth, 2013), and therefore contribute to social interactions and their benefits discussed under *Social Intensity*. In addition, the technical infrastructure, implying factors such as internet connection or software, and equipment like printers, hardware, or office materials, are considered in this dimension (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016).

### ***Availability***

Availability concerns accessibility models and opening hours of CWS. Membership or subscription models determine monthly, weekly, daily, hourly, or flexible accessibility as well as the usage of the CWS infrastructure and services users can make use of. Accessibility and availability aspects can significantly affect the group of users and their work routines (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). Proximity, characterized by a close distance to the user's home (58%) or a well-connected transport opportunity nearby (44%), is stated as second important reason for choosing a CWS (Deskmag, 2018).

### ***Professional Focus and Competition***

The composition of professional CWS users can impact collaboration and competition among them (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). Through offered activities like events, trainings, or presentations, CWS providers and users foster networking or cross-linking, as well as knowledge exchange and mutual support. Consequently, the actions have the potential to create or shape a specific community which also relates to the previously discussed advantages through social relations (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016).

Other factors supporting social relations are co-presence and overlapping attitudes of CWS users, which can lead to various capabilities, and similar understandings of life. Research shows that these factors can improve CWS users' social integration, wellbeing, and satisfaction. This can improve the users' work-life-balance and therefore benefits the economy (Moriset, 2013). Gandini (2015) found that a strong community with similar expertise and the same professional backgrounds promotes social relations and improves performance (Gandini, 2015). Hughes, Ireland & Morgan (2007) explain that such specific culture can increase trust and offer guidance among CWS users.

## 2.3 Coworking Spaces in an Entrepreneurial Context

As literature found close relation between CWS and entrepreneurship, this section will present previous findings about this topic. The following sub-chapter first focuses on the relation between CWS and the concept of entrepreneurship, and then portrays the entrepreneur as an individual in CWS.

### 2.3.1 Entrepreneurship in Coworking Spaces

Social interactions in CWS foster the exchange of knowledge and ideas, which can increase entrepreneurial activities among the users. It can contribute to finding members for teams and projects or recognize opportunities (Hughes, Ireland & Morgan, 2007; Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016). Entrepreneurial performance of CWS users particularly increase when they utilize social connections to learn from each other and jointly improve the generation of ideas, or when the CWS is connected to incumbent companies (Hughes et al. 2011). Clark (2007) states that CWS transmit a start-up-lifestyle as well as stable social connections and interactions that foster new projects and contacts. Research shows that the agglomeration of entrepreneurship in CWS is similar to incubation centers, yet in comparison, community aspects are of higher importance in CWS (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016).

### 2.3.2 Entrepreneurs in Coworking Spaces

Related to the social aspects discussed in the previous section, CWS users can benefit from social ties and networks. These factors also give entrepreneurs the chance to connect and expand sophisticated networks that can provide access to others' knowledge and skills (Hite & Hesterly, 2001) and therefore represent a relevant force for incubation, which creates support for the entrepreneur (Hughes, Ireland & Morgan, 2007). By bringing together entrepreneurs, some CWS focus on the incubation aspect to foster business development and funding opportunities and consequently enable fast venturing (Kambil et al. 2000).

Through the collaboration and interaction within CWS, a creative and innovative atmosphere is crafted. However, social dynamics can also bear risks for entrepreneurs. Bouncken, Aslam & Reuschl (2018) found that stress, exploitation, conflicts, and distrust can occur through abusive or harmful social ties. The authors add that these factors can negatively influence

entrepreneurial self-efficiency and passion, which jeopardizes the benefits of CWS for entrepreneurs. However, they suggest solutions for these challenges in the form of provided mentoring, coaching, or the established entrepreneurial communities.

The literature review creates a fundamental understanding of the differences in entrepreneurs' motives to pursue an entrepreneurial career and clearly indicates the influence those motives can have on the entrepreneurs' decisions regarding work environments. Methods to deepen this knowledge are presented in the following chapter.

## 3 Methodology

This chapter presents the research methods of the study, including the approach and design that underpin this research. The methodology further explains the methods used for the data collection and sample selection, as well as the data analysis. Aspects of validity and reliability as well as limitations are discussed in the end of the chapter.

### 3.1 Research Approach

The paradigm of this research is composed of an epistemological orientation of interpretivism that stresses the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As this study aims to investigate entrepreneurs' motives in entering CWS, and how they are interlinked with those in pursuing entrepreneurship, the social component of human interaction and the way they make sense of reality needs to be considered. According to Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2016), interpretivism describes a subjective research approach, as the researcher is involved by interpreting the gathered data. This approach is related to qualitative research methods like interviews with smaller sample sizes and focus on in-depth information and insights. The authors state that it is necessary to understand the differences among humans in their role as social actors. As individuals and working environments differ and individuals create a unique social phenomenon, it is important to understand and reflect upon different aspects of the phenomenon from the interviewees' perspectives for this paper. Due to these reasons, an interpretive view is appropriate for this thesis.

The research approach of this study is primarily guided by the insufficient theory of motives of entrepreneurs in the specific context of entering CWS, as it holds the main objective of generating theory through research findings rather than testing existing theory. This aspect applies to the research topic as only limited theory exists in this study area. Therefore, the exploratory nature of this thesis requires an inductive research approach. This approach proves to be suitable considering that the theoretical framework serves as a fundamental basis to understand the research problem but does not exclusively tie the final outcome to existing theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Rather, their connection varies and helps in order to place the implications of the research into an academic context. In this regard, according to Bryman &

Bell (2011) this inductive stance provides the contingency to draw specific observations into generalizable deductions, which will then be placed in a theoretical context. The underlying approach of this research was first laid out by Glaser & Strauss (1967 cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011), who placed the emphasis of the grounded theory methodology on the generation of theory which is grounded in the data, and hence emerges from the research findings.

## 3.2 Research Design

In consideration to the structural aspects of the research approach, this study adopts a qualitative research design, as study designs in this paradigm are appropriate for exploring the variation and diversity in any aspect of social life (Kumar, 2014). This research aims to explain observations and place them into a theoretical context; thus, a qualitative design is suitable (Kumar, 2014). In addition, this paper exploits attitudes and behaviors to attempt the acquisition of in-depth insights from research participants (Dawson, 2009). All of these aspects need to be considered in order to understand how entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing entrepreneurship are interlinked with those in entering CWS.

In line with the qualitative research design, case studies serve as a tool for in-depth exploration of a case, which is often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This research paper benefits from a multiple case study, in which multiple individuals define the different cases. This choice enables us to gather insights into the situations in a group of entrepreneurs from which the cases have been drawn, and therefore enhance the representation found in this study. Details about the cases are discussed in the next section. The fact that this research area has a very limited scope necessitates more study to correct the lack of understanding of the link between entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career and their motives in entering CWS. This motivated us to gather holistic and thorough insights through multiple case studies. This paper aims to identify unique and shared concepts across the selected cases of entrepreneurs. We analyzed multiple different entrepreneurs who currently work or have worked in the same CWS, but who possess different demographical, psychographic, and behavioral characteristics to find patterns in their motives to pursue an entrepreneurial career and/or enter a CWS. Concluding, all discussed reasons demonstrate that this research design is of immense relevance regarding the research objective.

### 3.3 Data Collection Method

For this paper, multiple sources of data were gathered to acquire a wider understanding of the studied phenomenon. The basis for this thesis was provided through literature and studies regarding motives in entrepreneurship and CWS, which helped to set the research frame and get an understanding of themes related to the researched topic. Based on the literature, a research aim was established to guide through the empirical data collection. Reviewing existing literature also supported the discussion, as the findings of the gathered data could be linked and compared with existing research.

Literature suggests that in grounded theory, methods such as focus groups and interviews are preferred for data collection (Dawson, 2009). Examining the motives of entrepreneurs to pursue entrepreneurship and to enter CWS, this research required data collection through semi-structured interviews, as they are known to be useful in exploring intensely and extensively to gain in-depth understandings of a phenomenon (Kumar, 2014). To obtain specific information, which can be compared and contrasted with data gathered from other interviews, it was crucial that the same questions were asked during each interview. The semi-structured framework, however, allowed a certain degree of flexibility to keep an open approach in terms of content, questions, wording, and order, to ensure that important information could still arise. This type of interview, therefore, placed a greater emphasis on the generality of the interviewees' individual perspectives and provoked open conversations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This was our aim as we gathered relevant insights to answer the research questions. The interview guide used during the empirical data collection ensured consistency and continuity throughout the interviews. It contained important concepts to investigate the entrepreneurs' decision-making. The interviews were structured into two main parts: first, focusing on the motives of the interviewees to pursue entrepreneurship, and second, the motives in entering a CWS. We decided to include the first part as, according to literature, the motives in entrepreneurship can determine the entrepreneurs' actions, such as entering a CWS in the context of this research. It was important to understand the background and reasons why individuals pursue an entrepreneurial career to investigate if there are parallels to the decision in entering CWS. The interview guide shows the questions asked, but also sub-topics which we hoped to gather information about. In order to allow the interviewees to tell their stories, including motives, without being influenced or biased by the questions asked, these sub-topics were not discussed initially (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2013). However, in the case of an interviewee not

mentioning these points, we asked questions regarding the sub-topic to check if they were not relevant for the interviewees or if they had just forgotten to mention them. In line with this approach, the researcher also avoided specific terminology in order to enable the discovery of new theoretical concepts. To avoid biases, only the main topics of the interview were shared with the individuals before conducting the interviews. The interview guideline was updated and extended after each interview according to the topics that arose.

### 3.4 Sample Selection

The interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs who decided to enter a CWS who served as relevant and various individuals. The most crucial factor for participating in the research is the profession as entrepreneur. The socio-demographic characteristics, the entrepreneurial stage of the individuals and the size of their team were not specified, as they would limit the variety of the findings. The interviewees qualified for the participation in the study if they are currently working or have worked in at least one CWS. In order to be able to unify and compare the different cases, one specific CWS was selected, namely Mindpark. Considering this fact, all entrepreneurs currently work or have worked at Mindpark in the past, connecting the interviewees through one additional criterion. Considering that CWS differ significantly, we could ensure the comparability of the cases by choosing one specific CWS. Due to this decision, we aimed to increase the focus on the individual cases instead of evaluating different CWS.

Due to practical and accessibility reasons, we decided to select a CWS close to our living and working location, Lund. As the interviews initially were planned to be conducted in person and we had contacted people involved in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, including entrepreneurs and CWS, the Skåne area in Sweden was chosen. This region is also known for its developed entrepreneurial ecosystem, which increased the chances to find suitable interviewees. In line with this decision, Mindpark was selected as this CWS is well established and popular in this region, having three locations in Helsingborg, Malmö and Lund, which the users have access to. Mindpark offers conference space, offices, and desks for companies as well as one-person businesses and entrepreneurs. It also includes an open working space in form of a café accessible for non-members. Mindpark members work in the fields of IT, communication services, graphic design, legal advice, and life science, and they value the spirit of community and creativity (Mindpark, 2020), thus enhancing knowledge sharing through events and arranged breakfasts, lunches, and after-works.



Due to the spread of Covid-19, the interviews could not be conducted in person, however, the decision to focus on Mindpark was still useful as we could take advantage of their professional networks. The interviews were conducted via the digital video call platform Zoom. This was the best alternative to personal contact because body language, gestures, and expression could be observed as well.

In order to contact the research population, Mindpark's managers granted access to the CWS social media group, which contained most members working or having worked at Mindpark. Besides that, the managers recommended some entrepreneurs who might be interested in participating in the research. Both ways offered access to a great number of potential interviewees. We followed the accidental sampling approach in which individuals that are close at hand or easily reachable were selected, rather than carefully selecting and analyzing in advance (Kumar, 2014). Considering this approach, we confirmed via LinkedIn that the prospective interviewees were entrepreneurs. After that, interview invites were sent to multiple different individuals, and interviews were scheduled on a first-come-first-serve basis. For this study, no particular sample size had been predetermined, as interviews were conducted until the point of saturation had been reached and no new information had been gathered, which is usually indicated by repetitive and negligible data (Kumar, 2014). According to these guidelines, we stopped scheduling new appointments after having conducted 12 interviews.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, the interviews were recorded, organized, and reconfigured in written transcription. In line with the inductive research approach, a thematic analysis was conducted, in which themes emerged from the data (Dawson, 2009). This was achieved by closely following a coding technique for the presentation of data that emerged through a content analysis, which follows the grounded theory according to Strauss and Corbin (1990 cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011). In specific, an open coding approach was adopted to examine, compare, and conceptualize the data in order to assemble and convert them into categories. Words and sentences that were perceived as meaningful and contributing in respect to the studied phenomena were highlighted. At a later stage, an axial coding technique was applied to identify the underlying central phenomena by linking the categories to contexts, consequences, patterns of interaction, and causes which derived from the theoretical framework. Specifically, this was completed by dividing the findings into different themes according to emerging subjects as well

as the provided theory in the literature review. In this respect, the main coding categories, such as motives to pursue an entrepreneurial career and motives to enter a CWS, were formed and included several sub-categories. This coding technique also assisted in identifying and establishing a link among specific coding categories. In essence, the data analysis contributed to simplify the intricacy of the qualitative findings. The software Atlas.ti assisted in performing the open and axial coding by categorizing the data for interpretation and deduction.

### 3.6 Validity and Reliability

The degree of validity refers to the appropriateness, quality, and accuracy of the adopted procedures to find answers to the research questions (Kumar, 2014). The main challenge in providing a valid interpretation and description of the valid data is caused by factors such as our subjectivity based on preferences and experiences (Dawson, 2009). In order to ensure no false interpretation of the interviewees' responses, we paraphrased their statements and claims and asked for clarification during the interviews to avoid misinterpretation. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), the research validity can also be secured by strategies such as peer debriefing, during which impartial peers examine the researchers' transcripts, findings, and methodology. Afterwards, feedback is provided to enhance credibility and ensure validity. For this research, the methodology was not only validated by our supervisors but also discussed with peers conducting similar studies. We also utilized peer debriefing within the data analysis and interpretation. First, we separately coded and interpreted the gathered data, then compared our results and analyzed their correspondence. This approach is also in line with triangulation, which not only describes the use of the same data set collected from multiple sources but also the data's examination from different perspectives to achieve the best research result (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Due to our separated and individual analyses, interpretation, and comparison, a better understanding of the problems, phenomenon, and situations could be achieved (Kumar, 2014). Moreover, the correct interpretation of the data has been ensured by applying the method of member checking. This has been done by presenting the data analysis to the interviewees to ensure whether the findings are accurate and representative of their answers.

### 3.7 Limitations

The research design does not go without limitations, as the study is restricted to individual case studies within one specifically chosen context, namely the CWS Mindpark in Southern Sweden. Consequently, the findings of this study can be regarded as representative for this particular environment, but may not be true for other CWS contexts, as certain aspects that characterize Mindpark make this CWS rather unique. Moreover, it can be argued that case studies and, more specifically, semi-structured interviews are not representative and create a challenge for replicability, as they are highly subjective and allow for different interpretation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, the replicability of this study may be restricted. Lastly, regarding the sampling method, interviewees were either recommended by the CWS management or contacted through Mindpark's social media group, which partly limited the choice of interviewees in this study to the responses that were received.

This research process is determined by the methods chosen and justified in this chapter. The results of applying the methodological choices are presented in chapter 4.

## 4 Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings, which have been drawn from the coded interviews. To gain a better understanding of the multiple cases, the entrepreneurs' background information is provided in table 1. To ensure confidentiality, the names of the interviewees have been changed. The categorization into solo or team shows that some entrepreneurs held different experiences, for example working alone and/or self-employed, and then founding another startup and having a team later on.

Table 1: Interviewees' Background Information

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Entrepreneurial experience</b>	<b>Entrepreneurial Industry</b>	<b>Mindpark Location</b>	<b>Solo/ Team</b>
<b>1</b>	Julia	Female	47	Swedish	~ 20 years	Design, Architecture	Malmö	Solo
<b>2</b>	Priya	Female	32	Indian	~ 02 years	Culture	Helsingborg	Solo/ Team
<b>3</b>	Dimas	Male	37	Ukrainian	~ 17 years	IT, Tech	Helsingborg	Multiple Teams
<b>4</b>	Fares	Male	42	Saudi	~ 04 years	Culture	Helsingborg	Team
<b>5</b>	Julius	Male	28	Swedish	~ 10 years	Tech, Design	Helsingborg	Solo/ Team
<b>6</b>	Emil	Male	28	Swedish	~ 04 years	Life Science	Lund	Team
<b>7</b>	Neal	Male	66	Danish	~ 21 years	Innovation	Helsingborg	Solo/ Team
<b>8</b>	Rob	Male	41	Swedish	~ 09 years	IT, Tech	Helsingborg	Solo/ Team
<b>9</b>	Niko	Male	38	Swedish	~ 05 years	Textile	Helsingborg	Team
<b>10</b>	Paul	Male	43	Swedish	~ 07 years	Diverse	Helsingborg	Solo/ Team
<b>11</b>	Carol	Female	42	Swedish	~ 08 years	Design	Helsingborg	Solo
<b>12</b>	Eline	Female	31	Swedish	~ 02 years	Design	Helsingborg	Team

The interview structure provides the framework for this chapter, thus, the individuals' motives to pursue an entrepreneurial career will be presented prior to the findings regarding those in entering CWS. The findings within those sub-topics are structured according to relevant patterns regarding the research themes. A summary of the findings can be found in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Motives in Entrepreneurship & Motives in Entering CWS (initial vs. evolved)

	Name	Motives in entrepreneurship		Motives in entering CWS	
		Initial	evolved	initial	evolved
1	Julia	Necessity, Absence of market	Freedom, Flexibility, Independence	Social stimulation, Finding clients	Social stimulation, Inspiring environment, Finding clients, Network & events
2	Priya	Necessity, Unemployment	Independence, Self-realization	Social stimulation, Finding clients	Social stimulation, Inspiring environment, Professional advice, Peer learning, Flexibility & convenience
3	Dimas	Necessity, Unemployment, self-realization	Opportunity, Self-realization, Personal vision, innovation, freedom, independence	Social stimulation, Lack of alternatives, Amenities, Accessibly	Network & events, Flexibility & convenience, Professional advice, Peer learning
4	Fares	Necessity, Unemployment, Self-realization, Innovation	Personal vision, Innovation	Social stimulation, Physical assets	Physical assets, Social stimulation, Professional advice, Peer learning, Flexibility & convenience
5	Julius	Opportunity, Freedom, Independence, Flexibility	Opportunity, Freedom, Independence, Flexibility, Innovation	Social stimulation, Physical assets	Social stimulation, Physical assets, Network, Peer learning
6	Emil	Opportunity, Innovation, Self-realization, Personal Vision	Financial Security	Social stimulation, Accessibility	Social stimulation, Network & events, Inspiring environment, Accessibility, Flexibility & convenience
7	Neal	Opportunity, Self-realization, Innovation, Independence, Flexibility	Opportunity, Self-realization, Personal vision, Innovation, Independence, Flexibility	Social stimulation, Inspiring environment, Lack of alternatives	Social stimulation, Peer learning, Network, Flexibility & convenience
8	Rob	Opportunity, Self-realization, Innovation	Flexibility, Self-realization	Physical assets, Professional advice, Lack of alternatives, Inspiring environment	Physical assets, Social stimulation
9	Niko	Opportunity, Independence, Freedom	Opportunity, Independence, Freedom, Innovation, Self-Realization	Physical assets	Physical assets, Network & events, Peer learning, Professional advice, Flexibility & convenience
10	Paul	Opportunity, Freedom, Independence, Flexibility, Self-realization	Innovation, Flexibility, Independence, Self-Realization	Social stimulation, Inspiring environment	Social stimulation, Inspiring environment, Peer learning, Flexibility & convenience
11	Carol	Opportunity, Flexibility, Freedom, Independence	Opportunity, Financial security, Flexibility, Freedom	Social stimulation, Finding clients, Lack of alternatives	Social stimulation, Finding clients, Lack of alternatives, Peer learning
12	Eline	Opportunity, Personal Vision, Self-realization	Personal Vision, Self-realization, Flexibility	Social stimulation, Physical assets	Network & events, Flexibility & convenience, Professional advice, Social stimulation

## 4.1 Motives in Pursuing an Entrepreneurial Career

The first part of the interviews aimed to gather information about the entrepreneurs' motives to pursue an entrepreneurial career. The results show that individuals got into entrepreneurship under different circumstances and with different approaches. Therefore, the interviewees can be categorized into the categories of necessity- or opportunity-driven, which is discussed in the first two sections of this chapter. The third part focuses on the driving intrinsic motives the interviewees linked to an entrepreneurial career path, considering all interviewees irrespective of the diverse ways that led them to entrepreneurship.

### 4.1.1 Sliding into Entrepreneurship

Contrasting common assumptions that individuals actively choose entrepreneurial career paths, this research found that some interviewees became entrepreneurs by coincidence or because they had no other choice. The interviews showed that the personal situations and circumstances they were facing prior to their decision to act entrepreneurial differed. Julia had difficulties finding a suitable job as there was no position on the market which combined her desired tasks and actions. She explained that there was no market for what she was doing, so she saw herself forced to become self-employed and established a brand that matched her skills and job desires. Fares told that he immigrated to Sweden, considering himself highly qualified and experienced. However, he reported that he could not find a job due to several cultural aspects. Dimas was fired from his job and struggled to find a new employment. Even if the situations differed, Fares and Dimas described these situations as depressing setbacks, and therefore decided to start their own businesses to work again and earn money. Moving to Sweden from another country, Priya faced similar challenges. She felt as if she was in another world and faced problems finding employment. Consequently, she started working as a freelancer and then coincidentally met other individuals that asked her to join the founding team of a startup. She highlighted:

I would never have imagined that I would be doing this to be honest. I always thought I'd be somebody who would work in an organization under somebody and probably have people under me.

Even though these individuals initially had no plan to pursue entrepreneurship, it is important to note that their views changed tremendously. It seemed that these individuals could fully

identify with the role as entrepreneurs. A particular shift took place in Dimas's case. Acting out of necessity, the interviewee turned into a serial entrepreneur, always searching for opportunities to start new businesses. This approach of beginning entrepreneurship is seen as a free decision, and therefore the opposite of a necessity-driven motive. The next section will provide further detail about opportunity-driven decisions and present other prevalent attempts of entrepreneurs to pursue entrepreneurship.

#### 4.1.2 Starting Entrepreneurship due to Recognized Opportunities

The interviews found that the majority of the interviewees chose an entrepreneurial career path due to the fact that they recognized and acted upon an opportunity. The individuals' initial intentions and personal situations played an important role in this respect, the main difference being that some individuals sought to exploit diverse opportunities with the specific purpose to become an entrepreneur, whilst others spotted an opportunity in their field of work or expertise and then decided to become entrepreneurial. In both cases, the alertness to recognize opportunities was high. However, the approach differed between those actively searching versus those discovering it.

In line with the former mentioned category of entrepreneurs, Emil and Paul were particularly interested in entrepreneurship and, therefore, actively searched for inspirations and potential business ideas, followed trends, and sought inspiration from different sources. Their curiosity and interest in entrepreneurial activities motivated the individuals to evaluate and exploit a variety of potential business ideas. In contrast, individuals like Neal, Niko, Rob, Carol, Eline, and Julius are associated with the latter acknowledged group of entrepreneurs. Working in specific fields and industries, they discovered a need or potential, and then decided to seize the opportunity and pursue an entrepreneurial career. Niko explains that "it was more like an opportunity, and we love doing things and trying things ... so this is a good idea, let's try it." However, becoming an entrepreneur was not seen as the main motivation. It is important to acknowledge that all of the mentioned interviewees in this section, except Paul, were employed at the moment they decided to start an entrepreneurial activity for the first time. The individuals worked in corporate settings that were not at all associated with entrepreneurial activities. In line with this aspect, the majority of the interviewees had reputable job positions and great financial securities. Considering this fact, it is interesting to examine the motivations that led to the shift from a corporate employment to entrepreneurship.

### 4.1.3 Driving Forces to Pursue Entrepreneurship

Surprisingly, it became apparent that the vast majority of interviewees were not motivated by economic or financial aspects. Rob shared that he “had a better salary than the Swedish prime minister” when he was employed and then spent his savings while running a startup, inciting troubles paying his rent at a later stage.

The results show that the majority of interviewees were striving for self-realization. The desire to fulfil one’s own potential, grow, gain experience, and learn were essential factors in this respect. Besides many interviewees stating entrepreneurship to be a part of their identity, in Emil’s words, “it’s in my blood”, Paul analyzed:

It's because of a curious mind. I want to explore new things and new ideas, and I want to learn more. And I think I would be quite bored to work with the same things forever. I'm too curious to just stay at one big company.

In line with this statement, Neal explained the shift from a fixed employment to an entrepreneurial career and stresses the meaning entrepreneurship has for his person:

I was tired of what I was doing. It's excitement. It's doing something which is exciting compared to maintaining a career. ... And if you are a creative personality and doing what is exciting, it is important to feel that you're alive. I live for my work. It's a part of my identity. I don't take it off when I get home.

Motives of self-realization were often linked to the interviewees’ personal visions. The entrepreneurial process from opportunity recognition to execution of the idea was enhanced by the individuals’ personal vision. Emil explained that one core value of entrepreneurship is “about the idea and how to get there, the vision.” Other interviewees’ answers demonstrate that working towards the achievement of a personal aspired goal provides a sense of purpose and compensates the negative sides of entrepreneurship, such as higher risk or more work. Eline explained that running a startup implies “to do everything,” and that “some days can be so tough,” but that the belief in the idea creates drive and energy to stay motivated.

Other prevalent reasons of the interviewees to pursue an entrepreneurial idea are freedom and independence. All entrepreneurs stated that working for themselves and on their own, without having a boss or a facing hierarchy, are driving factors for an entrepreneurial career. All interviewees agreed that these aspects are particularly important regarding decision-making



processes. The control and autonomy in decision-making and determination of work, for example through “pulling all the strings” (Emil) and the fact that “you don't have to wait for others” (Neal), were mentioned in every interview. Comparing these benefits, Niko expressed his feelings about prior corporate experiences in comparison to his entrepreneurial career:

I got quite frustrated about these big bureaucratic and political things. When you think you have a good idea, you have good arguments and you're still not allowed to try it out because of some stupid corporate bullshit.

The interviews also showed that freedom and independence were applicable on flexibility aspects. A recurrent topic in the interviews was the flexible working time. Interviewees explained that an entrepreneurial career enables them to create and determine their own schedules and thus decide when, where, and how they work. For half of the interviewees, this factor was of particularly high importance, reasoned by travelling or frequent changes in working locations and their families and hobbies. Paul stated:

When I want to surf, it's usually in the daytime when I was supposed to be at work if I was employed. So now I can go surfing in the day [sic], and work in the night [sic], it's work life balance. And I have kids and a family, and sometimes I can work from home with my kids if they're sick, or I can tweak every day as I want. I enjoy that a lot.

Another finding of the interviews focuses on innovation. The interviewees mentioned that the opportunity they exploited was linked to innovative aspects. Pursuing entrepreneurship, the individuals created more effective processes, services, or products. Additionally, innovative thinking was named regarding the process of idea generation or finding solutions. It became apparent that the entrepreneurs moved from theoretical approaches to practical action by proactively executing their ideas and taking actions. Julius highlighted that, in his opinion, entrepreneurship is about enjoying facing problems or challenges and finding solutions by having an open mind. Rob stated, “you always have to explore and invent and try to find new approaches to reach out and always continue trying things.”

Despite the overall positive opinions and statements regarding entrepreneurship, some interviewees also see negative aspects regarding this topic. Neal mentioned that the high degree of responsibility can bear higher risk and uncertainties such as income. Carol agreed with the uncertainties and shared that she had several sleepless nights fearing financial instability. Similarly, Eline mentioned the high work load and significantly increased stress levels.

There is strong consensus on the advantages and benefits of entrepreneurship that led the individuals to entrepreneurial careers. Surprisingly, the discussed intrinsic motives are applicable not only to individuals that were motivated by opportunities but also to necessity-driven interviewees. A clear shift in motives can be seen in all four cases. Initially, being pushed into entrepreneurship, they were confronted with the advantages and benefits which they now name as main motives to pursue entrepreneurship. Having asked Dimas about the development of his view on entrepreneurship, he answered, “I think it's like a drug. I cannot live without it,” and further explained that he founded and supported several startups and cannot imagine being employed anymore – which demonstrates the radical development from being employed to pursuing entrepreneurship. The other interviewees clearly agreed with these motives and would not consider being employed again in the near future.

## 4.2 Motives in Entering Coworking Spaces

Understanding the entrepreneurs’ circumstances was crucial to gain insights into their motives in entering CWS. During the interviews, it became apparent that motives of entering a CWS changed over time, depending on interviewees’ experience with a CWS environment. Therefore, it can be differentiated between users who entered a CWS for the first time, and users who had already gained experience in CWS. For this reason, the findings will be structured into initial motives and evolved motives.

### 4.2.1 Initial Motives in Entering Coworking Spaces

In the interviews, the entrepreneurs were asked to describe their work situation and environment prior to entering a CWS. This allowed us to gain an in-depth understanding of the underlying issues, which transformed into motives to enter a CWS.

#### *Escaping the Social Isolation*

One of the most propulsive initial motives was escaping social isolation, which was mentioned by all entrepreneurs who worked from home prior to entering a CWS. The majority of entrepreneurs who worked from home said that they felt secluded and lonely due to no social interaction with others. This was mainly because of the entrepreneurs’ private circumstances,

as some had moved from another location, and therefore had limited or no social contacts. Priya and Fares, who both moved to Sweden as immigrant entrepreneurs, commented that working from home made them feel isolated, unmotivated, and unproductive because they “literally didn’t see anybody” and had no social interactions. Moreover, Carol stated that the strongest motive in joining a CWS was to “be in a social gathering with other people, be away from home,” as she felt lonely and vulnerable being a solo entrepreneur.

Julius added to the notion of the consequences of experiencing no social exchange by stating that working from home was stressful. Talking about this issue, he mentioned:

Being kind of isolated without any social interactions made me feel unsatisfied with my day when I went to bed. I was not being able to relax because I still had a lot of energy left in my body and in my mind, so I thought that I have a reserve for social interactions, and I never emptied it. So, I was feeling a bit annoyed sometimes, like restless.

These statements suggest that the lack of social interactions had severe effects on interviewees’ mental well-being, which in turn created negative impacts on their work quality.

### ***Seeking More Productivity, Focus, and Inspiration***

Those who responded to this issue felt that being socially secluded heavily influenced their productivity and impacted their focus and inspiration. For instance, Rob stated, “I can’t focus at home. I’m much more productive when I’m sitting upright in a position with other people.” This view was echoed by Neal, who stated that working from home is “like doing your homework,” which is not very inspiring. Moreover, working from home was described as distracting and boring by some interviewees, which also led to a lack of focus and concentration. Subsequently, they searched for a new workplace. Neal explained:

Because you have to be somewhere, you cannot sit at home. And people say you may get the idea sitting at the kitchen table, but to run a business and to survive and stay healthy, you have to get out of your home. If you stay at home and work, eventually you will dry out.

However, Carol did not experience a lack of focus and concentration at home, quite the contrary. In an interview, she expressed how she realized her strong need for social meetings, despite enjoying working from home:

You are super efficient when you work from home, at least I am. But people need social meetings with other people. Like having a break, talking about something else. I think that's super important. And I didn't think it was that important, but it is.

This implies that even though working from home can be productive and efficient, social interactions are needed in order to create and experience variety in the everyday life.

### *Alternative Workplaces – Cafés and Private Offices*

In the attempt of searching for an alternative to the home office, some individuals tried to work in cafés. Although this change of scenery served as a temporary solution in some cases, interviewees mentioned that it is not a sustainable long-term solution. Rob, Neal and Eline who occasionally worked in cafés prior to working in a CWS, reported that at first glance this type of environment seems to be social, as many people gather for different reasons. However, they quickly noticed that this surrounding was distracting and created difficulties in holding meetings.

The entrepreneurs were asked whether they considered workplace alternatives besides cafés prior to entering a CWS. Interestingly, all individuals agreed that renting a private office was not a considerable alternative. This reasoning was justified by the fairly expensive leases, inflexible renting contracts, high responsibility, and still limited social interaction. It became apparent that especially solo entrepreneurs did not consider renting a private office due to high costs, whereas small entrepreneurial teams seemed to reason this conscious decision with the high administrative effort. Carol, among other interviewees, explicitly stated: “It was expensive and I had to save money.” At Mindpark, the interviewees could work free of charge in the open space area or purchase flexible memberships. Neal mentioned that he enjoyed the freedom he gains from CWS, as he can “pay by the hour,” which allows him to change work locations flexibly. Dimas, who works with multiple entrepreneurial teams as a serial entrepreneur, expressed:

When you rent an office, you need to take care of that. In terms of time, I think it costs you more. Just small things like, who buys toilet paper? There are plenty of problems with for instance a toilet that doesn't work, a printer that doesn't work, coffee being finished.

It can be drawn from this quote that the responsibility and administrative effort can be seen as additional expense factors, which assumedly not only increase costs but also distract from the entrepreneurial core work. Despite the more obvious reasons of why entrepreneurs choose not to rent a private office, such as lack of sufficient financial resources, Neal expressed another possible explanation. He argued that a new culture and lifestyle is emerging, which CWS are part of. “You can separate the old culture and the new culture. And having an office all by yourself in the building belongs to the old culture,” he stated. Therefore, it can be presumed that entrepreneurs who are part of the new culture are generally not as interested in renting private offices.

### ***Inadequacy of Amenities***

Another issue that was identified by the interviewees regarding working from home or in a café was the inadequacy of amenities, such as a proper desk, an office chair, additional monitors, or a printer. In the interviews, it became apparent that this resulted in physical problems, which was another motive to enter Mindpark. Fares stated, “I worked from the couch, and I had really bad back pain at that time. I remember that we had decided to move our work to Mindpark.” Other concerns were disclosed by Rob, who said that working from the couch led to a poor body posture, which in turn affected his productivity. In accordance with other interviewees, Julius emphasized that spending about eight hours a day in front of his computer requires a professional and ergonomic set up. “I need a big screen, and a proper chair. Otherwise I will feel like an old man when I go home.” Therefore, physical properties and office amenities are additional motives, which led some of the interviewed entrepreneurs to enter a CWS.

### ***Finding Clients***

Another finding of this study is that especially solo entrepreneurs who did not have previous or limited coworking experience were motivated to find clients for their business, which eventually resulted in entering a CWS. However, mainly being driven by establishing social contacts, finding new clients was regarded rather as an add-on than a driving motive. In this regard, Priya stated the fact that “obviously you get more projects to sort of succeed,” which motivated her to keep going but at the same time highlighted that her main motive was to avoid a feeling of isolation. Similarly, Carol and Julius mentioned that they acquired some business through being introduced to or meeting potential clients. On the contrary, Neal disagreed with

this fact: “You don't find clients in coworking spaces. Because most of the people working in coworking spaces, they're kind of poor. They have a startup, but they don't have money.” However, he revealed that CWS can connect you to a network outside the CWS, which implies that you need to move outside the CWS to find customers. Even though this was not a main motivator of the interviewees, it shows the potential that social interactions can have on establishing professional business contacts.

#### 4.2.2 Evolved Motives in Entering Coworking Spaces

In addition to the initial motives of entrepreneurs in entering a CWS, this study found other motives, which play a significant role in the decision-making of entrepreneurs to join such a work environment. These findings suggest that entrepreneurs who had previous experience in CWS or similar environments had disparate motives in comparison to interviewees who entered a CWS for the first time at the point of data collection. These additional motives will be presented in the following section.

##### *Intensified Social Aspects*

The findings show that those entrepreneurs who experienced working in a business accelerator, incubator, or different CWS prior to entering Mindpark were motivated by intensified social aspects, which include small social interactions such as inspirational encounters but also intensified aspects such as the exchange of knowledge, expertise and ideas, and peer-to-peer learning. It seems as if this is something the interviewees have experienced in similar work environments and therefore had a stronger motivation to further engage with the concept of coworking. Talking about his previous experience in an incubator, Niko emphasized the peer-to-peer learning by saying, “we were learning a lot from each other ... we had a lot of interesting people coming and sharing experiences with us.” Eline stated that in CWS, “you can actually learn from each other” due to the fact that other startups have gone through a similar process and can give guidance through their personal experiences. Through sharing and exchanging ideas, interviewees also received valuable input and advice from others, which helped them to make important decisions regarding their startup or work. In this respect, Emil stated that “from having a lot of social interactions you get second opinions, you get a lot of advice like ‘you should run this way, or this way,’ which is always good.”

Additionally, Emil explained how he could benefit from being surrounded by like-minded people: “There are a lot of nice people to be around, with the same crazy ideas. So you become who you surround yourself with, which is important.” Moreover, Rob mentioned that surrounding yourself with other startups is helpful in terms of having a reference, which provides a benchmark to track a startup’s performance. All interviewees who had previous coworking experience agreed that the strong community aspect and an inspiring environment that encourages social learning and exchanging ideas and allows one to be surrounded by “equal minds” (Emil), were important motives that played a role in entering Mindpark. Emil states that these are similar aspects compared with the ones that are provided in an incubator or accelerator. In an interview, Niko stressed the interface between business support programs and CWS, which motivated him to enter Mindpark:

The strength of the community, the willingness of sharing experiences and mistakes and learnings is definitely the strongest thing. And also, I think, just the fact of being part of something. ... I think that this is definitely a fact that I felt, and I know a lot of people appreciate.

Furthermore, Rob talked about his prior experience in a more tech-focused CWS in London and indicated the interconnectedness between independent start-ups and workers within the CWS: “So we were sitting with other start-ups and of course, you got to know them after a while, it felt like you were working with them even though you weren't.” This highlights the feeling of collegiality and belongingness, which he also looked for at Mindpark. There, he perceives his fellow coworkers as his colleagues, although they don’t work together. Thus, experiencing this cooperative atmosphere was an important motive to enter Mindpark. In accordance, Paul shared his perception and a possible explanation for the extraordinary and encouraging atmosphere:

I think because it's the coworking space spirit that makes it feel like we are all colleagues, but we are not really colleagues. But we can talk about anything because we are there for the same reason. You don't have to go through the get-to-know-phase, you can just talk to people because they are working there as well. The coworking space is one thing everyone has in common.

This increased feeling of being part of a professional group or context due to the coworking community and the atmosphere was a significant requirement and therefore strong motive in

entering Mindpark. However, a contrasting view was provided by Fares, who joined an incubator focused on social entrepreneurship after joining Mindpark. In his opinion, a clear distinction needs to be made between an incubator and a CWS: “They are two different things. I don’t see the connection.” This may be due to the fact that the incubator didn’t provide him with office space and a great number of social events and interactions, as he acknowledged seems to be the norm for the industry he operates in.

### ***Professional Networking and Organized Events***

Even though the intensified social aspects were compelling motives of some interviewees to enter Mindpark, it became apparent that the active search for professional encounters and a specifically aimed focus on organized events were important factors in choosing a CWS. Besides engaging with his coworking peers on a personal level, Dimas also had professional intentions. In the interview he reported that besides building personal relationships, he is also building a business, and he does so through sharing knowledge and experiences.

It is interesting to note that the interview findings often indicated that social and professional motives are intertwined, as the social interaction provides access to social and human capital that coworking users can utilize for their business development. Although Dimas has a specific motive of building his business, he does not exploit the provided resources for his own benefit, but in turn contributes to the professional network with his own expertise. This relates to the aforementioned atmosphere and feeling of compassion for one another among CWS users and eliminates a feeling of competitiveness.

Other reported motives regarding the professional environment of the CWS were the organized breakfast, lunch, and afterwork meetings and the speaker or pitching events, which seemed to be important criteria in deciding to work at a CWS. These gatherings were mostly perceived as very inspiring and educational. Eline found it very inspiring to hear about other people’s experiences and opinions, even when she didn’t agree with them. In her opinion this stimulated curiosity. Fares also perceived the events as inspiring, as they helped him to “think out of the box.” Commenting on the type of events being organized at Mindpark, Dimas mentioned that he benefited from “knowledge gatherings” as well as networking, in which he either increased his knowledge and skills or stimulated new contacts. Moreover, Neal affirmed the significant role networking plays and how entrepreneurs can benefit from the available human resources within CWS:



I believe in networking. I believe that you can put together a team of people, that may not be the team that you have to work with forever, but a team that has the skills you need to solve a job or to run a workshop. And you find these people in coworking spaces. That's where entrepreneurs are.

This portrays the strengths and possibilities that networks within CWS hold. Entrepreneurs can benefit from the availability and accessibility of human and social capital. Though only temporarily, quick solutions can be found. This was also supported by Julia, who enjoyed the short ways of communication and therefore the possibility to make quick decisions and find solutions. In this respect, she found CWS to be “very, very fruitful.” Eline shared a similar view, as she entered previous CWS and Mindpark with the main motive of networking: “That's why I'm both a Minc and Hetch, especially for networking and meeting people. People that can help you.”

### *Open Sessions*

Beyond fostering personal and professional connections with fellow coworkers, entrepreneurs at Mindpark could also benefit from so-called open sessions. Some interviewees disclosed information about how they utilized these free consultation hours with professional lawyers, architects, funding agencies, and other experts. Due to a cooperation with the municipality of Helsingborg, Mindpark is able to provide entrepreneurs, even those without a membership, with free business advice. Priya presented a very positive attitude towards these free consultations, as she believes they are great learning opportunities. Fares also made use of these sessions: “They have a lawyer that has an open sessions and I met him and asked some questions.” In addition, members of the CWS can offer their services, knowledge, and expertise in a free open session, which people had to sign up for. Dimas offers open sessions for the CWS community every Tuesday. Like many of the other interviewees, he does so due to the satisfaction he receives from helping other people in the coworking community. During the interviews however, it became apparent that this was not a decisive motive of entrepreneurs in entering a CWS, but rather merely a benefit.

### *Cross-Disciplinary Environment*

What underlies the unique atmosphere within the CWS, which has been described as very inspiring, supportive, motivating, and encouraging by the majority of research interviewees, is the vast variety of individuals and the diversity of professions, which leads to a diverse business knowledge and industry expertise of the members. As already implied in the previous sections, this cross-disciplinary environment holds many benefits for entrepreneurs, as it encourages the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and expertise and results in peer-to-peer learning. Most interviewees perceived this aspect as a strong motive in their decision to enter a CWS. Some felt that the interplay of professions and industries created an advantageous dynamic in the CWS. Julia, a strong supporter of the cross-disciplinary environment, emphasized:

This cross-discipline is great because it's very innovative. It's easy to get to know a bank person, a union person, a movie production person, or anybody that is selling a product, an architect – because it's so easy when you bump into somebody.

This demonstrates that access to specific industry knowledge is easily accessible in the CWS by simply starting a conversation or being referred to someone. In this way, the accumulated expertise within the CWS is obtainable and usable by all members. Similar thoughts were expressed by Emil, who stated that he perceives the mix of professions and industries as a “big value,” because he enjoys receiving others’ opinions and perspectives and finding out what he has in common with his fellow coworkers. Moreover, Neal shared how he could benefit from the diversity in the CWS:

I'm a futurist and I want to be kept on my toes. You will switch between different cultures, between people of different ages, between different companies, between different industries. That's how things don't come into routine.

The qualitative data shows that the majority of interviewees highly appreciated the professional diversity in the CWS. A few who were operating within specific sectors mentioned that they couldn't benefit from the cross-disciplinary aspect as much, due to their need of very specific industry knowledge. Rob talked about his previous experience at a tech-focused CWS and how he could benefit from “people doing the exact same thing,” which led to a nice exchange due to the feeling of “being in the same boat.” About his experience at Mindpark, he stated:

Mindpark is very different because it doesn't have a tech focus. It is diverse. There's a comedian sitting not too far away from me, an architect there, someone arranging meetings. There's a mechanical engineer, like no one is doing the same thing. Sitting at this coworking space, it's more for the social aspects, than any exchange of experiences.

Even though this slightly contradicts other interviewees' responses, it demonstrates that there is a high awareness among the interviewees of other members' professions and activities. In Rob's case, the motive in entering a CWS had changed due to terminating his startup and working as a solo entrepreneur.

### ***Flexibility and Convenience***

Considering the flexibility and convenience that the CWS offers, it became apparent that entrepreneurs with teams were more considerate of the available administrative offers and scalability solutions than solo entrepreneurs. A variety of opinions were expressed in this matter. Some interviewees were motivated to enter Mindpark because of its convenient locations across the Skåne region in southern Sweden. Emil highlighted that "motivators for joining Mindpark were their network, their friendly atmosphere, and the locations across western coast in Skåne." Moreover, additional to the accessible location in Helsingborg, Dimas pointed out the convenient offerings at Mindpark:

For me, it was logistically better to sit there just because there is food in the morning, breakfast events that I want to visit, and then in the evening other networking events, which is perfect. And in between those I can sit and work with my stuff, so it was natural to go there.

Furthermore, few interviewees pointed out the unlimited accessibility. Members with a fixed desk or office membership can access the working areas around the clock. Even though this wasn't a main motive to enter the CWS, as they rarely utilized the office space outside of working hours, it was a feature that was "nice to have" (Emil). Another benefit was highlighted by Neal, who made use of the postal service at Mindpark. With his membership he could use the address of the CWS as his professional business address, which was a requirement in entering Mindpark.

Another interesting finding was the needed possibility to grow within the CWS in line with scaling the entrepreneurial business. Interviewees who had been working on their venture for a longer period of time noted that they required more quiet space for concentration, storage space, and the possibility to customize their work space. The main benefit of renting a flex desk, fixed desk, or small office within the CWS was the increased productivity and focus while still being part of the coworking community and network. As Eline stated, “if you want a private office, you can rent an office space at the coworking space. So then you're still part of the community.” In line with this, Emil emphasized another benefit of renting an office within the CWS, stating “I think that's the flexibility. So we were in a stage of growing so you can go up and down the offering. ... The value with this Mindpark offering is that you can easily change.” This indicated that the rental contracts are highly flexible and entrepreneur-friendly, as they allow individuals to scale their business and easily transition between different office spaces, depending on their needs. In accordance with the increased flexibility, Eline stated that depending on the entrepreneurial phase they are in, they can adjust their workspace easily:

The one that suits us best right now, in the idea phase where you don't need to commit so much, is the open space. You can just come and go, and you can meet people and get some advice.

Therefore, it can be assumed that in the beginning of the entrepreneurial undertakings, teams need more interaction, idea exchange, and advice from their peers, whereas when they are more seriously executing ideas and scaling the business, they require more focus and concentration that a more private work space provides. Priya and Fares approved this finding. As their business became more serious, they needed a private space to fully focus on the team and the operational execution. Fares explained how their work ethic changed after winning an office for a month in a competition at Mindpark:

We noticed that the productivity of the team increased. The productivity of the team is our return on investment. So that's the reason why we took it and rented the office for a longer time.

In this way, entrepreneurs can easily experiment with different workspaces without taking a lot of risk, due to the high flexibility of memberships and rental contracts. When the interviewees were asked to comment on the financial comparison to renting an independent office, they did

not know whether it was cheaper or more expensive. However, they perceived the coworking community, events, and gatherings as additional value, which they were willing to pay for.

### 4.2.3 Characteristics Influencing Motives in Entering Coworking Spaces

During the interviews it became apparent that the above-mentioned motives were affected by the interviewees' characteristics. As portrayed in table 1, the sample shows a high diversity in terms of demographic characteristics such as age, gender and nationality, that were considered to find out whether they influenced the motives. However, in this study no clear link was found. Yet, considering the team size, patterns emerged. In this respect, solo entrepreneurs were primarily motivated in seeking social stimulation and becoming part of a community, as it was the case for all solo entrepreneurs in this study. Small teams however, were rather motivated by having a suitable office space, whether it was in the form of flex desks or a small private office and being part of a professional network. This was notable in the cases of Fares, Emil, Rob, Niko and Eline. It seems that there is a shift of motives occurring as the venture matures and becomes more professional. Thus, depending on the venture growth stage, more professionalism, focus, productivity and storage space is needed, which is why small teams eventually decided to rent a desk or an office in a more professional setting within the CWS.

The findings show that the entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing entrepreneurship as well as in entering CWS are not static but evolve over time. It became apparent that there is an underlying emerging pattern, which indicates the synergies between the motives and the entrepreneurs' actions. These findings also allow for interpretation which will be addressed in chapter 5.2.

# 5 Discussion

This chapter first discusses the analyzed findings in relation to the theoretical background presented in the literature review. Thus, this chapter places the findings into an academic research context by creating connections and discovering differences between the results of this research and existing theory about entrepreneurial motives as well as CWS. Second, relations between entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing entrepreneurship are compared and related to their motives in entering CWS.

## 5.1 Findings in Relation to Existing Literature

Literature states that the motives that drive entrepreneurs to pursue an entrepreneurial career determine the individuals' daily method of working and making decisions (Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd, 2019). This fact stressed the importance to investigate these motives to understand the entrepreneurs' actions, such as working in a CWS.

The findings show that interviewees were motivated to act entrepreneurial mainly by recognized opportunities, but also out of necessity, which is in line with Williams (2008). However, research found that necessity-driven individuals grew into the field of entrepreneurship and enjoyed what they were doing. The fact that these interviewees cannot imagine being employed again and rather exploit other opportunities in entrepreneurship, contrasting to their initial plans, shows that their motives have clearly changed. Wasserman (2012) stressed the fact that motives are not fixed but can evolve or change over time, which is approved in this paper. We assumed that the reason necessity-driven individuals became entrepreneurs would be closely related to economic or financial reasons, such as the pressure to find a job and earn money due to unemployment. It seemed like entrepreneurship was an alternative way to earn money and work, which would describe extrinsic motives. However, results show that those individuals were not motivated by financial incentives, but followed intrinsic motives.

As literature states, extrinsic motives are the most common reasons to start an entrepreneurial career (Murnieks, Klotz & Shepherd, 2019). This paper, however, proves the opposite. Intrinsic factors were valued over extrinsic ones not only by the previously mentioned necessity-driven entrepreneurs but also, surprisingly, by all other interviewees as well. Even if their motives

remained intrinsic over time, minor shifts could be detected. This development may be explained by increased experience in entrepreneurship. It seemed like the individual became accustomed to the advantages of entrepreneurship and gained awareness about the aspects they value the most. While we are aware that the image of reasoning own behavior with intrinsic factors might be favorable to admitting to a solely financial drive, interviewees gave several examples that strengthen their statements of being truly intrinsically motivated. Nevertheless, the entrepreneurs agree that extrinsic factors such as financial security are essential for creating an entrepreneurial career. These findings are in line with Amit et al. (2000), who reported that the desire to attain wealth has less importance than intrinsic control-oriented motives. In line with this fact, findings and literature agree that non-economic desires like independence, freedom, flexibility, or self-realization regarding entrepreneurial careers are the driving motives to pursue entrepreneurship (Hurst & Pugsley, 2010).

Reflecting on the key findings of this study, it can be concluded that the central motives of entrepreneurs in entering a CWS revolve around the social stimulation, the community, and thus the exchange of ideas, expertise, and knowledge among members, which lead to peer-to-peer learning, inspiration, and a feeling of belongingness among equal minds. These findings relate to the coworking dimension of social intensity, which have been found to play a significant role in CWS (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016; Spinuzzi, 2012). Furthermore, a study by Deskmag (2018) found that an enjoyable atmosphere with like-minded people, interactions with others, and a strong community are the most important motives in entering a CWS, a phenomenon found to be true in the specific case of entrepreneurs in this study.

Another finding showed that entrepreneurs were also driven by motives which involved professional events and networking gatherings and physical assets, as well as the flexibility of being able to change the workplace. These can be related to the dimensions of professional focus and physical assets mentioned by Bouncken and Reuschl (2016). Accordingly, this includes the fostering of networks, cross-linking, knowledge exchange, and mutual support as well as the equipment and technical infrastructure of a CWS. The found motive of collaboration among entrepreneurs and the quick access to human and social capital is also supported by previous studies, which further state that through cross-sectional interactions, entrepreneurial performance of CWS users can be increased (Hughes, Ireland & Morgan, 2007; Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016).

Additionally, this study found that flexibility and convenience are strong motives for entrepreneurs in entering CWS, which closely relates to the dimensions of availability (Bouncken & Reuschl, 2016), and thus, the location and opening hours (Deskmag, 2018). However, this study also found that a strong motive for entrepreneurs was to have the possibility of growing and scaling their business by easily being able to change the work space and move between different office sizes. In this regard, the flexibility of memberships and rental contracts constituted another significant motive. Interestingly, the dimension ‘Institution of the Coworking Space Provider’ was not regarded as a strong motive.

Consequently, the data from the interviews clearly shows that the majority of entrepreneurs who entered a CWS for the first time were strongly motivated by feeling lonely and secluded as well as experiencing a lack of focus, inspiration, and productivity. Therefore, they were longing for social contact, interaction, and exchange with other people. All respondents share the opinion that social aspects were a main motive in entering a CWS. To highlight the importance of this desire, Rob stated, “humans are herd animals. We want this feeling of belonging to a group of people I think.” The single most striking observation to emerge from the findings, however, was that the motives in entering a CWS change over time, according to the accumulated experience of the entrepreneur with CWS or similar environments as well as the entrepreneurial phase the venture is in. Therefore, two significant conclusions can be drawn from this study. Primarily, the research showed that initially all entrepreneurs were motivated to enter a CWS due to their need of social interaction, which became especially apparent during interviews with interviewees who had joined a CWS for the first time. In this respect, escaping social isolation was the driving motive to enter a CWS. In addition, this study found that entrepreneurs who had previous experience, were fully integrated into the coworking community, or had progressed with their venture had additional motives, which mainly included the professional focus, networking and events, and flexible accessibility. This was proven by entrepreneurs who entered a CWS for the first time when entering Mindpark, as they mentioned that through their experience their motives shifted to those latter-named.

After reviewing and discussing the findings, parallels between the motives in pursuing entrepreneurship and entering a CWS can be drawn, further discussed in the next section of this chapter.



## 5.2 Interlink between Motives

The previously presented and discussed findings indicate that the motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career as well as the motives in entering CWS are not static but evolve over time. However, we found interesting patterns that indicate how both motives are interlinked.

### 5.2.1 Motives in Entrepreneurship are Reflected in Coworking Spaces

Literature states that the motives in pursuing entrepreneurship influence the motives in entering CWS. This research underlines this aspect: Intrinsic motives of entrepreneurs in pursuing entrepreneurship are reflected in their motives in entering CWS. The research indicated that CWS offer benefits that are in line with the entrepreneurs' motives in entrepreneurship. For example, CWS enhance self-development and learning opportunities due to social contact, which implies peer learning, as well as professionally organized events and workshops, which aligns with motives concerning self-realization. Another important aspect seems to be the independence, freedom, and flexibility that CWS provide to users. Entrepreneurs can customize their working environment by determining when, where, how, and with whom they want to work or collaborate – which is a significant difference to an employment outside entrepreneurship. In this respect, the decision-making process was also highly valued by entrepreneurs. CWS support quick decision-making due to the exchange and access to human and social capital that can facilitate decisions and progress. CWS provide the key to many resources that entrepreneurs need and, therefore, can significantly contribute in scaling a startup.

As stated in the findings, the experiences entrepreneurs gain in CWS lead to an evolvement of their initial motives in entering a CWS. Remarkable, however, is that those experiences in CWS seem to affect the motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career significantly, explained in the next chapter.

### 5.2.2 Coworking Spaces Affect the Motives in Entrepreneurship

Surprisingly, it became apparent that not only are the motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career influencing the motives in entering CWS but also a reverse influence could be found.

As Wasserman (2012) stated, internal and external factors can affect the entrepreneurs' motives significantly. This research found that CWS play a significant role in this respect. Entering a CWS and experiencing the benefits seems to fuel the entrepreneurs' motives. As explained in the findings, CWS promote entrepreneurship by removing traditional framings of business and implementing new work methods, reducing the threshold for cross-disciplinary networking, learning, and collaboration, and building a strong community. Like no other environment, CWS manifest entrepreneurial spirit and symbolize a work environment in which entrepreneurs can follow their entrepreneurial spirit and thrive. These factors can be seen as fuel that strengthens the entrepreneurs' motives to pursue entrepreneurship or, in other words, fuels the entrepreneurial fire that indicates that they burn for entrepreneurship.

This finding is particularly underlined by entrepreneurs who initially started an entrepreneurial career out of necessity. By entering a CWS and experiencing the benefits, they turned into intrinsically motivated entrepreneurs that could not imagine being employed again. The interviews clearly showed that the gained experiences in CWS significantly contributed to the evolvement of their motives in entrepreneurship. An evolvement in their motivation to pursue entrepreneurship could also be seen as their transformation into opportunity-driven entrepreneurs. Even if their motives did not change as drastically as described in the cases before, it was found that their motives were strengthened or shaped.

Concluding, CWS have the potential to influence the motives in pursuing entrepreneurship significantly. This finding shows that there are strong synergies between the entrepreneurs' motives to pursue entrepreneurship and those in entering CWS.

### 5.3 Limitations

This study has potential limitations. First, due to the lack of academic literature regarding the motives of entrepreneurs in relation to CWS, the theoretical framework was built on rather general concepts about entrepreneurial motives. These concepts served as a framework for this research, however, could only be applied in part in respect to entrepreneurs' motives in entering CWS. Moreover, this study solely focused on one specific CWS, namely Mindpark, in Southern Sweden. This entailed a limitation concerning the professional focus, as the CWS is known to host a cross-disciplinary audience. Existing literature indicated that CWS with a specific industry focus might differ from CWS with a broad orientation. In addition, due to the relatively

small sample size of the research sample, the results serve only as an indication for a larger population and should not be perceived as representative. The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Skåne region is often observed as unique due to several business support institutions and available funding from municipalities and the government. This could have possibly influenced the motives of entrepreneurs in entering CWS, as the offerings of Mindpark were partly subsidized.

## 5.4 Future Research

Considering the above-mentioned limitations, implications for future research can be made. Therefore, future studies should investigate the motives of entrepreneurs in entering CWS in the context of more diverse CWS, which also focus on more specific industries. In this way, the differences in motives of entering spaces with a broad professional focus and a specific focus can be studied in order to gain a better understanding of specific entrepreneurial motives. Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that there are significant differences between CWS in large and small cities due to the number of members and distinct offers. Therefore, in future investigations, it might be possible to focus on CWS in different geographical areas.

## 6 Conclusion

Despite the increasingly growing number of entrepreneurs working in CWS, there is a lack of understanding of the entrepreneurs' motives in entering CWS. Addressing this gap in academic literature is of crucial importance because it contributes to the greater understanding of entrepreneurial motives and the CWS phenomenon. As entrepreneurs drive the economic market by pursuing new business opportunities, driving competition and enhancing productivity (Bouncken, Aslam & Reuschl, 2018), gaining deeper insights into what motivates these vital economic players is of great interest among entrepreneurship and management scholars. Literature suggests that the motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career determine an entrepreneurs' actions and decisions, thus, this research aimed to investigate the entrepreneurs' motives in entering CWS, and how those are interlinked with their motives in pursuing entrepreneurship.

This research found that intrinsic aspects such as self-realization, freedom, flexibility, and independence are the main motives for entrepreneurs to pursue entrepreneurship. The findings show that these motives are reflected in the entrepreneurs' motives in entering CWS. Additionally, this research found that the motives in entering CWS depend on the entrepreneurs' previous experiences in working at CWS. Entrepreneurs entering a CWS for the first time were primarily motivated by social interaction due to the fact that they worked in an isolated state before. Working at a CWS, this research found that entrepreneurs experience the advantages and benefits CWS provide which significantly increases their awareness of the potential CWS hold. Therefore, the initial motives in entering a CWS evolve. The initial social motives remain the driving factors, however, they intensified through the community. By exchanging ideas, expertise, and knowledge between members, peer-to-peer learning, inspiration, and a feeling of belongingness among equal minds is created. Subsequently, the evolved motives in entering CWS revolve around the professional focus, including networking and events and the flexible accessibility.

In addition, it was found that not only the motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career influence those in entering CWS but also a reverse influence was approved. Due to the characteristics and benefits of CWS, these work environments have the potential to influence the motives in pursuing entrepreneurship significantly. Consequently, there are strong synergies between the entrepreneurs' motives to pursue entrepreneurship and their motives in entering CWS.

Ultimately, the study contributed to the academic understanding of how entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing entrepreneurship influence their motives in entering CWS. Reversely, this research shows that CWS can affect the entrepreneurs' motives in pursuing an entrepreneurial career significantly. Due to these synergies, this research obtained comprehensive results showing that the motives in pursuing entrepreneurship and entering CWS are not fixed but evolve over time. These results also add to the understanding of the rapidly expanding phenomenon of CWS. Concluding, this research demonstrates that CWS act as fuel for entrepreneurship and therefore, explain why they reshape the way entrepreneurs work.

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