Hoffice: Social Innovation through Sustainable Communities, Collaboration grant SA2016-21

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Background, purpose and goal
The project aimed to collect empirical data about Hoffice[1] (Home + Office) a co-working methodology which has gained popularity in Stockholm over the last years. The Hoffice network was founded in Stockholm in 2014 with the main goal to help its members access and make collective use of physical resources which are otherwise only individually used. Hoffice embodies a set of social practices and routines enabling the creation of self-organized co-working spaces, and it nurtures values such as sense of community, trust and reciprocity.

The project aimed at investigating how Hoffice could be extended to contexts such as public libraries and supported by social networking sites and digital platforms. The project relevance lies in the possibility to combine the role of digital platforms in matching people, together with the role of face-to-face interaction in creating and nurturing supporting communities.

The design and organization of participatory, shared, activities envisioned in this project has been an example of social innovation as it has provided a context to rethink the role of online platforms as a means: i) to establish relationships between people, and ii) to enable them to come together in order to share goods, skills and various resources.

Short description of the project implementation
The project has entailed the following activities between April 2017 and February 2018

- Interviews with active Hoffice members;
- Participant observations of Hoffice events;
- Online observations of what activities are carried out online, in the Hoffice Facebook group;
- Observations of Boffice (Bibliotek+Office) events, that is Hoffice events organized in public libraries with the goal to facilitate networking for self-employed people and small business;
- Workshop 1: a focus group focused on the experience and related challenges of taking part in Hoffice, as well as strength and weakness of the network;
- Workshop 2: focused on how the expand Hoffice to other settings were maintaining social continuity and connections to peers and colleagues are paramount;
- Workshop 3: focused on designing new digital platforms for the Hoffice network.

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[1] www.hoffice.nu

Expected added value for the applicants and external partners

Value for the researcher/academic partner:

- The production of a corpus of data illustrating Hoffice practices, core values and norms;
- An exploration of how the Hoffice concept can be scaled in public libraries. Here studying Boffice (Bibliotek+ Office) has been important to explore the role of the public sector (Solna Stad and Solna Library were partners in the project) in facilitating sharing initiatives and how cities can tailor and appropriate social platforms to achieve social cohesion;
- The main investigator of this project has become member of the Research Group on Collaborative Spaces, a European network on coworking spaces: https://collaborativespacesstudy.wordpress.com
- A project proposal to study Hoffice in the context of Network Hospitality studies has been submitted to the British Research Council (The proposal was lead by Sheffield Hallam University).
- The project has received considerable media attention, thus increasing the visibility of research and the role of academia in contemporary society. The interview with Airi Lampinen can be found here: https://www.hbl.fi/artikel/forskare-overskatta-inte-airbnb-ekonomin-gor-saker-med-dina-vanner-i-stallet/

b. **Value for the external partner:**

- A collection of data and guidelines on how to scale and adjust the Hoffice methodology and working practices to other contexts;
- A body of concrete design ideas to lead the design of digital platforms to support the organization of Hoffice events.

Problems and unexpected positive effects

A problem encountered during the project was the closing down of Buddler, the start-up that was supposed to design the new Hoffice platform and that was included as a partner in our original proposal. This forced as to rethink technology design and how the replication of Hoffice in other contexts could be supported by tailoring existing apps and platforms.

Unexpected and positive outcome of the projects have been:

- The adoption of the Hoffice methodology and working practices in other countries. An active group has been created in Hertfordshire (UK) as a local adaptation of the Stockholm Hoffice.
- The Hoffice case has been included in a collection of case studies on the sharing economy collected in the context of the European Sharing&Caring COST Action: http://sharingandcaring.eu/node/394

How can the project's results be disseminated to or copied by other actors?

The involvement of Solna Library, and the organization of Boffice events there, has been fundamental to introduce the Hoffice methodology and working practices in public spaces and to disseminate them among people who were not aware of the Hoffice network before.

Representatives of the Wallenberg Academy took part in the second workshop we organized. This was instrumental to explore how Hoffice could be adjusted to different settings.

A number of publications have resulted from this project, thus drawing much both in in academic journals and highly ranked conferences:

- Airi Lampinen, Chiara Rossitto, & Christofer Gradin Franzén, (2019). Scaling Out, Scaling Down: Reconsidering growth in grassroots initiatives. In: Travlou, P. and Ciolfi, L. (Eds.). Ethnographies of Collaborative Economies Conference Proceedings. University of Edinburgh, 25 October 2019. ISBN 978-1-912669-11-0. Paper No. 2.

- Rossitto, C. & Lampinen, A. (2018). In Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW). *Co-Creating the Workplace: Participatory Efforts to Enable Individual Work at the Hoffice*. In the CSCW Journal, Vol. 1, No. 36. Springer, pp. 947-982. **The David Martin Best paper award at ECSCW 2018.** DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10606-018-9319-z

- Rossitto C., Pinatti De Carvalho F., Ciolfi L., Lampinen A., Gray B. (2017). *Nomadic Cultures Beyond Work Practices*. In the International Reports on Socio-Informatics (IRSI), Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 5-14.

- Rossitto C, Lampinen A, Gradin Franzén C. (2017): *Hoffice: Social Innovation through Sustainable Nomadic Communities*. In International Reports on Socio-Informatics (IRSI), Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 49-55.

- Lampinen A., Rossitto C., Gradin Franzén C. (2017). The Hoffice Network: Socio-Technical Innovation for Sustainable Self-Organizing Communities. Presented at the COST workshop on "Digital Platforms for the Collaborative Economies", August 28, Sheffield, UK. http://sharingandcaring.eu/event/cost-workshop-digital-platforms-28-august-2017