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## Introduction to this collection

John McKendrick, Stephen Dobson,

In addition to the positioning paper offered by the editors, this collection comprises four substantive papers, each of which seeks to make a particular contribution to understanding play space in the entrepreneurial city and which, together, present as a complementary set. We feel that the themes addressed in this special issue deserve particular attention in entrepreneurship research and have sought to underline the need for further exploration of the intrinsic value of play and playfulness in this field. By connecting to the urban environment, we extend creativity and play into the shared, social realm and explore how our choices in organizing human life through space may support or indeed inhibit entrepreneurial thinking and enterprise. While this special issue may appear somewhat marginal to the more established field, we feel that the complexities of play space open a multitude of questions about playfulness as a form of transgression which may be an increasingly significant democratic right to both acknowledge and celebrate (especially in the context of a global rise in authoritarian politics) for its role at the heart of innovation and expression. As such, the nature of available space and our ability to experiment, play, explore and shape it are offered as necessary conditions for realizing and creating opportunity.

Based on carefully framed readings of the promotional literature and business commentary, *At work in the toybox* explores entrepreneurship in two celebrated applications of play in the workplace, that is, the Googleplex and Lego's Serious Play. Although both represent high-profile applications, they differ in the way in which play is used as a tool of intrapreneurship. The Googleplex purports to embed play in the work environment, understanding that it is an activity that is germane to effective work by promoting work–life balance in the workplace, achieving this through the seamless creation of multiple play spaces alongside work spaces. More than this, play in the Googleplex is presented as reflective of the wider company's values and orientation, that is, as much a company philosophy, as an activity in company time and space. This wider resonance of play to the company's unique selling point also applies to Lego's Serious Play, although here the application is a product and process that enables other companies to re-envisage themselves. The tensions between the productive

visions of play that underpin these examples are explored with regard to rhetoric and conjunction of imaginative play as a frivolous activity.

The blurring of 'work and play' in business events is explored in *At work and play*, with a view to better understanding the role of play in the creation of entrepreneurial outcomes, the characteristic of a playful event environment and how physical space can shape playfulness. Having reviewed the emergent literature on play as an event design tactic, an exploratory case design approach is adopted to appraise the different ways in which play is used to realize entrepreneurial goals in three very different types of business event, that is, a gathering of a diverse group of creative thinkers to inform the work of a global floor textile company, a gathering of senior managers within the National Health Service in the United Kingdom to reflect on workplace design and a participatory event convened by a charity (Cathedral Archer Project in Sheffield, United Kingdom) to afford staff the opportunity to experience a night in the life of a homeless person in the city. Reflection on the purposeful creation of playful circumstances is used to propose four emergent event design principles.

Grass-roots movements in the entrepreneurial city is more directly concerned with the wider impact and possibilities of play space, addressing the central question of how city governments and municipalities can stimulate grass-roots initiatives towards an entrepreneurial city in a playful way. Identifying the Neubad of Lucerne (Switzerland) as a case that potentially comprised the three enablers for initiatives towards an entrepreneurial city (playful approaches as planning, brokering of new connections as a grass-roots network and temporary use of iconic buildings), the early development of the redevelopment of the city's public swimming pool is appraised. The strong focus on entrepreneurialism as a grass-roots movement both challenges and complements the applications of play that are presented elsewhere in this collection.

Finally, *Values added in speciality coffee*, as befits the subject matter of this collection, adopts a playful approach to theorizing an understanding of the rise of the third wave in speciality coffee shop provision. The playful approach to theorizing entrepreneurial activity is the key contribution of this article, utilizing the metaphor of songlines to identify and explore values in what is presented as a complex business environment. More than this, however, playfulness is not only

proposed as productive when infusing the mindset of the observer who seeks to understand values, the article also aims to highlight how playfulness is also a theme to be observed in the speciality coffee shop as an important social nexus in the modern creative and playful city.