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RÉSEAUX, COMMUNICATION ET TERRITOIRES

## **New workspaces, third places and teleworking in a post-Covid world: what contributions to the sustainable city and to the resilience of territories?**

*Guest editors of the issue*

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The purpose of this special issue is to examine the contribution to territorial and local development of the "new" workplaces that have emerged in response to the evolution of the labor market following the recent crises: the economic crisis of 2008 and the health crisis of Covid19. Can these places contribute in an experimental, experiential or in a more systematic way to the renewal of sustainable and integrated urban planning practices?

### **Workspaces: new practices and new places**

Workplaces are experiencing changes associated with a quadruple revolution: economic, digital, social and territorial. In recent years, more accessible internet connectivity, the growth of mobile digital services and new relationships to work have generated significant transformations. Thus, in the light of digitalization, alternative workplaces and practices are stimulated by the diversification of productive, traditional or creative economies.

Such workspaces include, but are not limited to, coworking spaces (henceforth: CWS), business centers, new shared offices within private companies and public infrastructures, shared-space residences, coliving spaces, hackerspaces, markerspaces and FabLabs. The health, social and economic crisis triggered by the Covid pandemic has not only accelerated some of these changes, but also generated new ones. We can mention the rise of teleworking, the investment in second homes or the departure from the metropolitan cores to small towns and areas considered as isolated, peripheral, or marginal.

We believe that CWSs and other third places are the most concerned by this call for papers, because they gather a very large diversity of forms. Their availability allows for remote work while contributing to the consolidation of communities anchored in physical and virtual space. From the outset, CWSs have welcomed employees as well as self-employed workers who no longer intend to homework alone, but rather want to find a socio-territorial anchorage while reducing commuting and better manage their family and professional life.

While the majority of studies focus on the economic, managerial and sociological dimensions of the new workspaces, recent publications show that they are also tools for town and country planning. In the field of urban policies, what will be the capacity of spatial planning to foresee

or support these emerging movements that are making the city? This raises the question of identifying the socio-spatial and economic effects of new workspaces in the built environment, and their implications for public policies at different levels (local, regional, national).

### Workspaces and sustainable urban development

The objective of this call for papers is to document and question the forces, conditions and challenges of new workspaces for the development and resilience of territories. In a perspective of adaptation to new productive conditions, companies, entrepreneurs and public authorities are grasping the values associated with the origin of the coworking phenomenon: eco-responsible approach, accessibility, openness, community, collaboration/cooperation. On the research side, the proliferation of initiatives leads us to ask the following questions:

- How do these shared values contribute to making the city sustainable? Is it merely a strategy of green washing? Or are these workspaces sources of inspiration and experimentation for the creation of a resilient, fairer, and more integrated city, strengthening the digital, ecological, democratic, and urban transitions?
- To what extent some of these new workspaces are supporting urban living lab approaches? How, in turn, do public policies support certain trends that are observed on the field: regulatory urbanism, urban projects, transitional, tactical or temporary urbanism, etc.?

The articles should explore various aspects of sustainable urban development. Thus, for example, one could focus on one of the following thematic entries:

- **Circular city:** How are new workplaces laboratories of the circular city? The dimensions of requalification of old buildings (wastelands), urban regeneration (land sobriety), rehabilitation of buildings (rural areas), shared waste sorting (business parks), or experimentation with frugality could be investigated.
- **Mobility:** How do CWSs and third places contribute to strengthening active mobility or decarbonizing them, by promoting demobility or alternative modes of travel (carpooling, cycling, walking, etc.)? What are the differences between workplaces in metropolitan areas and those located in sparsely populated rural areas?
- **Multifunctionality:** Through their possible openness to the urban space and the promotion of ancillary services, can we identify the drivers and barriers to the contribution of new workspaces to urban, functional, or morphological diversity?
- **Amenities and externalities:** How can we measure and evaluate the territorial effects of small spaces that gather a very tiny share of workers? What are the direct and indirect effects of CWSs and other avatars of the digital revolution on neighborhoods and local urban planning? Does these new workspaces have implications for the "15-minute city"?
- **Public spaces:** Does the opening of a third place facilitate the requalification of the surrounding public spaces and does it always lead to the appropriation of common spaces by people from different backgrounds? Do these spaces contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of workers and residents, and on what scale?
- **Territorial cooperation:** How does the renewal of workplaces allow small and medium-sized cities or certain rural areas to (re)develop? Do they contribute to a territorial rebalancing and to new center/periphery dynamics? What are the regulatory mechanisms behind this?

On each of the aforementioned dimensions, and not to limit the contribution of the issue to a very positive vision of the phenomenon in progress, critical postures regarding the risks linked to the implementation of these new workspaces and third places are welcome. We are thinking about considerations linked to new theoretical trends (gender studies, intersectionality in urban planning) or approaches that have already been explored and that point out a speculative real estate bubble, case of land grab, the eviction of low-skilled activities and low-income people, gentrification processes or a threat to the Right to the city, etc.

This dossier aspires to cross urban studies and sustainability studies. Human and Social Sciences (planning, geography, urbanism, architecture, economy, sociology, management, anthropology ...) are expected to respond, in order to integrate issues of spatial scale, temporal dimensions and the ongoing renewal of dialogue between stakeholders. The research results can cover all geographical areas (Europe, Asia, America(s), Africa...), from big cities to small ones, from central to peripheral areas. While the micro-scale (neighborhood, municipality, urban area, catchment area) seems at first glance to be the one that will be addressed through the diversity of case studies anchored in the field, analyses at other scales (territorial networks, Regions, Province, State) will also have potential to contribute usefully to the debate.

### **Schedule of responses and publication of selected articles in English and French**

- [Circulation of the call for papers FR/EN](#): December 15, 2021
- Submission of an abstract of the paper to the editors (500 words): January 30, 2022
- Submission of the full paper (version 1): March 30, 2022
- Anonymous peer review and notification to authors: May 30, 2022
- Major/minor revision of the article (version 2): July 30, 2022
- Feedback to authors (possibly version 3): September 30, 2022
- Publication of the special issue on the Netcom website: November 30, 2022

Instructions for authors of the journal are available here [ici](#).

Abstracts and full papers should be sent to [divya.leducq@univ-tours.fr](mailto:divya.leducq@univ-tours.fr) and [ananian.priscilla@uqam.ca](mailto:ananian.priscilla@uqam.ca).