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Introduction to the Evolution of New Working Spaces



**Ilaria Mariotti, Elisabete Tomaz, Grzegorz Micek,
and Carles Méndez-Ortega**

Abstract The chapter briefly describes the book structure and the contents of the chapters. Two sections compose the book: the first describes the main typologies of NeWSps and the evolution of this phenomenon, and the second focuses on NeWSps location and its evolution. The chapter also describes the methodological approaches to explore NeWSps, and underlines to what extent the book fills the gap in the literature on NeWSp typologies and geographical patterns.

Concepts such as “third place” [1] are used to study alternative workspaces that facilitate informal social relationships and provide a sense of community beyond the traditional office and work-from-home environments. A vast literature on new working spaces (hereinafter NeWSps) has emerged in recent years in different disciplines, reflecting different approaches to this phenomenon, summarized in this book’s first part.

This book fills the following research gaps in the academic literature. First, it provides a nuanced view of the different typologies and location patterns of NeWSps and is not purely narrowed to coworking spaces (CSs). Second, the book acknowledges that NeWSps are not homogeneous entities, but are rather hybrid in their

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functions (see in this book the chapters [The Evolution of Non-traditional Workplaces: From Third Places to Hybrid Places](#) by Tomaz and Tabrizi and [New Working Spaces Typologies Beyond Core Cities](#) by Gato and Haubrich). Third, the book looks at various spatialities of NeWSps stretching from country level to regional and urban dimensions. Moreover, the editors and authors acknowledge that NeWSps spill over beyond large cities and tend to thrive in more peripheral and rural locations, also to accommodate remote workers whose number increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Fourth, the book discusses the case of CSs that opened in west Ukraine during the Russian invasion to host people who had left the eastern areas hit by the war (see Chap. [The \(re\)location of Coworking Spaces in Ukraine During the Russian Invasion](#) by Zhurbas et al.). Fifth, the book calls for more qualitative studies of CSs' location factors (see, for instance, Chap. [Theoretical Framework of the Location of Coworking Spaces](#) by Mariotti and Micek) arguing that some location factors are qualitative in nature.

This chapter and [The Evolution of Non-traditional Workplaces: From Third Places to Hybrid Places](#) by Tomaz and Tabrizi provide a definition of NeWSps, as framed in the literature, by disentangling among “third places” [1, 2] and “fourth places” [3]. NeWSps include CSs, creative hubs, living labs, makerspaces, fab labs, open worklabs, hackerspaces, which combine work and social interactions to promote sharing, learning, and leisure opportunities. The analysis of NeWSps typologies and approaches has led to the development of a taxonomy for localized collaborative spaces, which are sometimes referred to as open creative labs or creative hubs in a broader context. Besides, any NeWSps typology joining together or merging with other categories of business (e.g., coffee shop, hotel, etc.), sometimes forming unusual compounds, can fit into “hybrid categories” since they combine different activities, functions and/or spatial configurations [4]. For instance, they can also offer a “living” or “recreational” dimension to work, as in the case of coliving spaces [5] or coworkation [6, 7].

This book is composed of two main sections. Section I focuses on the main typologies of NeWSps presented in the literature according to certain categories that help to describe the evolution of this phenomenon and that call attention to their increasing diversity. Section II focuses on NeWSps location (particularly CSs, given their prominence), examining their recent evolution and identifying factors and new geographies, discussing theoretical approaches and offering additional empirical analysis of different European realities. Most studies focus mainly on urban areas, but recently, more attention has been given to peripheral and rural areas.

The book encompasses a range of methodological approaches to studying NeWSps. The chapters employ a combination of theoretical frameworks, literature reviews, empirical analyses, and case studies to shed light on various aspects of NeWSps.

Beginning with an exploration of NeWSps' evolution and categorization, Tomaz and Tabrizi (Chap. [The Evolution of Non-traditional Workplaces: From Third Places to Hybrid Places](#)) provide a comprehensive overview, drawing on a theoretical framework and literature review. Micek et al. (Chap. [A Taxonomy of New Working Spaces](#)) further classify NeWSps based on users' needs and their approach to innovation

and creativity. They reveal links between NeWSps and some related concepts, e.g., creative hubs. Moving beyond urban areas, Gato and Haubrich (Chap. [New Working Spaces Typologies Beyond Core Cities](#)) delve into NeWSps in rural contexts through case studies, highlighting the importance of networks and connections for their integration within local communities. Migliore et al. (Chap. [University Hubs: Hybrid Spaces Between Campus, Work, and Social Spaces](#)) examine the role of University Hubs in the hybridization of study and workspaces, employing theoretical analysis and a case study of the Luiss University Hub.

The subsequent chapters focus on location patterns and factors. Mariotti and Micek (Chap. [Theoretical Framework of the Location of Coworking Spaces](#)) review location theories and literature and explore the location factors of CSs. Vogl, Sinitsyna, and Micek (Chap. [Systematic Literature Review of Location Factors of Coworking Spaces in Non-urban Areas](#)) conducted a systematic literature review, analyzing the location patterns of CSs in non-urban areas at various geographic levels. Examining specific regions, Coll-Martinez and Mendez-Ortega (Chap. [Location of Coworking Spaces: Evidence from Spain](#)) investigate the location patterns and characteristics of CSs in Spain, emphasizing their concentration in urban areas. Rafaj et al. (Chap. [The Localization of Different Types of New Working Spaces in Central Europe](#)) employ GIS analysis and descriptive statistics to explore the spatial distribution and evolution of CSs in Central Europe.

The book also explores unique perspectives. Merkel et al. (Chap. [Caring Practices in and Beyond Coworking Spaces](#)) study caring practices within CSs, utilizing in-depth interviews with female hosts. Bayada et al. (Chap. [The Importance of Location for Coworking Spaces and the Timed City Concept. Experiences, Perceptions, and Reality in Malta](#)) delve into the interdependence of location, CSs, and the timed city concept, employing semi-structured interviews in the context of Malta. Rafaj et al. (Chap. [The Localization of Different Types of New Working Spaces in Central Europe](#)) present and discuss about the NeWSps in Visegrad 4 countries (V4)—Poland, Czechia, Hungary, and Slovakia—and focus on examples of good practices for individual types of NeWSps. Lastly, Zhurbas et al. (Chap. [The \(re\)location of Coworking Spaces in Ukraine During the Russian Invasion](#)) investigate the location and relocation of CSs in Ukraine during the Russian invasion, using interviews with managers to analyze the role played by the coworking space community.

Through this array of methodological approaches and diverse perspectives, this book offers a comprehensive examination of NeWSps, contributing to our understanding of this dynamic and evolving work environment.

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