

## Research Group on Collaborative Spaces (RGCS)

*RGCS Symposium 2025*

January 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Politecnico di Milano, Milan (Italy)

### CALL FOR PAPERS

# “In-betweenness”: spatial and temporal perspectives on working and organizing

## 1. Topic of the RGCS Symposium #RGCS2025

In today’s rapidly evolving world of work, the traditional boundaries of time, space, and roles are blurring. The rise of remote work (Barrero et al., 2021; Petani & Mengis, 2023; Biagetti et al., 2024), the prevalence of platform technologies (Kellogg et al., 2020), and the increasing mobility of people (Costas, 2013) have compelled scholars to delve into new ways of working and organizing that surpass traditional “static” models, to observe more dynamic processes, contexts, and mechanisms.

As, more and more often, we observe that work “occurs” sometimes, somewhere, and within flexible networks, this symposium seeks to explore the concept of “**in-betweenness**”. The aim is to dive deep into the time, spaces, and practices that lie between established ways of working and organizing. What happens between a virtual and an in-person meeting? How is time occupied in the transition between individual and collaborative work? Where does work happen when not in the office or home but in transit from one to the other? What happens when everything around knowledge work is so variable, unsettled, changeable, and unpredictable? How do new ways of working affect organizing and, *vice versa*, how does organizing affect new ways of working?

The in-betweenness of space, time, and practices enables new forms of organizing that are untethered from traditional geographies, by reshaping the relationship between people, places, and organizations. While in-betweenness enacts new forms of interaction, proximity, collaboration, and value creation, it also highlights ongoing challenges of segregation, displacement, marginalization, unequal access, and the intersection of several types of exclusion. By focusing on interstitial spaces (Furnari, 2014), we foster approaches to the future of work with a critical stance (Dries et al., 2023) and discuss the increasing physical, digital, and social divides affecting today's world.

The concept of “in-betweenness” is transversal to multiple domains of working and organizing:

- As flexible schedules and distributed workforces redefine the boundaries of where and when work happens, organizations find themselves in an ongoing negotiation between traditional, fixed notions of time and space and more fluid, **dynamic spatial and temporal arrangements** (Mariotti et al., 2023; de Vaujany et al., 2021; Van Meel, 2011). This creates in-between moments that challenge workers, entrepreneurs, and leaders to rethink productivity, creativity, collaboration, and the management of both time and space. What about value creation?
- As humans increasingly collaborate with machines and AI systems, leadership and decision-making are shared between **human and non-human agents**. This in-between state of collaboration offers opportunities to enhance efficiency and innovation but also raises ethical questions about control, agency, and the role of human judgment and knowledge creation in an automated world (Petriglieri et al., 2018; Bailey et al., 2022).
- As organizations adopt more participatory and inclusive structures, they operate in the space between traditional **top-down hierarchies and fully decentralized systems**. This in-between state challenges existing governance, leadership, and culture models, pushing organizations to experiment with new forms of decision-making and collaboration that empower workers while maintaining cohesion and direction.
- Similarly, organizations balance economic imperatives with **social and environmental responsibilities**. The tension between profit-driven objectives and the growing demand for ethical, sustainable, and caring practices, more generally, creates an in-between space that companies must navigate and that should be taken into account pragmatically (Ferraro et al., 2015).

In the RGCS 2025 Symposium, we seek to explore these tensions and potentials inherent to the concept of “in-betweenness” by focusing on the (partially still) hidden work and organizing practices that emerge at the intersection of physical spaces, digital tools, and social dynamics.

We welcome both **theoretical** and **empirical** studies from **multiple fields** (organization and management studies, media studies, urban geography, sociology of work, anthropology of work and organizations, psychology, information systems, economic geography, architecture, urban

planning, and more). Both academics and practitioners (consultants, artists, activists, entrepreneurs, etc.) are invited to submit abstracts.

For inspiration, we provide examples of key topics below.

- Working in-between spaces: navigating physical VS digital environments
- Geographies, typologies, and taxonomies of in-between occurrences
- Dispersed work, digital nomadism, and the mobile workforce
- Workation and the combination of work and leisure
- Hybrid spaces and new working spaces
- The influence of new spatial and temporal organizing on entrepreneurship
- The impact of remote work and platform technologies on time, space, and roles in evolving work environments
- The influence of in-betweenness on organizational practices/spaces that bridge traditional geographies
- New forms of collaboration and value/knowledge creation in physical, digital, and social in-between spaces
- The effects of flexible schedules and distributed workforces on productivity, creativity, and time-space management
- Leadership and decision-making in the in-between state of human-machine collaboration
- Democratic organizing in the space between centralized hierarchies and decentralized systems
- The role of in-between spaces in exacerbating or mitigating issues of segregation, displacement, and unequal access
- Social Sustainability in work and organizing
- The influence of in-betweenness on spatial and temporal organization of work in urban VS rural environments
- Leveraging in-between spaces in hybrid work for organizational efficiency and employee well-being
- Power dynamics in new forms of organizing within in-between spaces
- Types of work that workers need to perform to inhabit these new spaces and times of in-betweenness
- The impact of remote work on organizational commitment/identification.

**Contributions on other topics are also welcome as long as they explicitly refer to research on old or new ways of working and organizing, collaborative spaces / communities / movements.**

Submissions will be considered for a special issue to be published in the Journal of Openness, Commons & Organizing (JOCO): <https://rgcs-owee.org/joco/>.

## 2. Submission process and organization

### SUBMISSION

You are invited to submit **extended abstracts** (1000 words, about 3 pages), **via [THIS FORM](#)** by **November 10th, 2024**. Notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent by **November 15th, 2024**.

### REGISTRATIONS (for both presenters and auditors)

Participation in the symposium for both presenters and auditors is **free of charge but requires registration**. Details on how to register will be shared starting from November 16<sup>th</sup> on [our website](#). Registration is mandatory **by December 9<sup>th</sup>**. When registering for the event, please indicate whether you plan to attend onsite [Milan] or online [platform to be announced].

We are an international association, and inclusivity is one of the pillars of the RGCS community. In this spirit, online attendance and presentation are possible but we still **encourage on-site participation**.

#### KEY DATES:

Submission deadline for extended abstract **via [THIS FORM](#): November 10<sup>th</sup>**

Notification of acceptance: November 15<sup>th</sup>

Registration for presenters and auditors: November 16<sup>th</sup> (until December 9<sup>th</sup>): Link will be shared on November 16 on [our website](#)

RGCS Symposium 2025: **January 23rd - 24<sup>th</sup>**.

We are looking forward to your submission for the Symposium!

If you have questions or comments, please contact us at: [rgcs.milan@gmail.com](mailto:rgcs.milan@gmail.com)

## 3. Venue

The RGCS 2025 symposium will be held in Milan, Italy.

Main venue: **Politecnico di Milano**, Campus Leonardo, Building 16c.

Address: [Via Edoardo Bonardi, 9, 20133 Milano MI](#).

## 4. RGCS in a nutshell

The Research Group on Collaborative Spaces (RGCS) is both an alternative learned society, a think tank and an immaterial maker space about and for new work practices. Collaborative communities and collaborative movements (coworkers, makers, hackers, DIY) are both a research object and a lever to transform work practices.

Since late 2016, the network co-produces a new research method OWEE ([Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations](#)) aiming at transforming jointly academic and entrepreneurial work

practices. This method aims at becoming a commons for academics and entrepreneurs involved in it (e.g. with a sharing of the symbolic capital of impact and citations).

For more details about RGCS: <http://rgcs-owee.org>

## **5. Local organizing committee at Politecnico di Milano**

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## 8. Acknowledgements

This symposium is organized by the **Department of Management, Economics and Industrial Engineering (DIG)** of Politecnico di Milano, in collaboration with the **Department of Architecture, Built Environment and Construction Engineering (DABC)** and the **Department of Architecture and Urban Studies (DASTu)** of Politecnico di Milano.



This symposium is organized in partnership with **MUSA – Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action** (<https://musascarl.it/en/home-2/>) an Innovation Ecosystem funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR, Mission 4, Component 2, Investment 1.5).

This symposium is organized in partnership with the project **REMAKING - “Remote-working multiple impacts in the age of disruptions: socio-economic transformations, territorial rethinking, and policy actions”**, funded by the European Union under G.A. N° 101132685.



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