

Coworking spaces as urban places for contemporary work

There has been a rapid increase in the use of coworking spaces – namely, shared working spaces in which freelancers, sole entrepreneurs, microentrepreneurs, self-employed individuals, and remote workers rent their own area to work. Such coworking spaces are especially common in big cities. Based on qualitative interviews with coworkers (N=15), observation data, and feedback data collected at the Work Up! event in the autumn of 2016, this article examines three coworking spaces in Helsinki. The article discusses body and space in coworking spaces, plus the interaction of the coworking spaces with the surrounding city. The findings show that contemporary knowledge work is bound up in body and space. Practices of body and space are constantly negotiated in the daily routines of coworking, and the working body is constructed as being distinct from regular office work. The boundaries of work and leisure, and private and public, are blurred in coworking spaces. The research reflects the everyday work of coworkers in relation to discussions about the creative economy and the creative class as drivers of urban development.