Re-thinking urban spaces through remote work

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The lockdown experience

▶ The pandemic has changed the times and spaces of our relationships, both personal and professional.

▶ The experience we lived because of the Coronavirus emergency in terms of restrictions to the freedom of movement and social distancing was turned into an opportunity to stop, observe and reconsider our lifestyle.

▶ Stopping that race which represents a distinctive feature of our time - a race to succeed in work, to reach the holiday places, to keep fit, to manage the daily complexity – let people re-evaluate slowness, nature, ancient daily knowledge, neighborhood relations.

▶ The pandemic has pushed many workers to the south to care for their families or because remote working allowed them to choose where to work.

Remote work during the Covid 19 Pandemic

The widest adoption of teleworking in the private and public sector during the

Covid-19 pandemic has shown the weaknesses of the existing legal framework, at

national and EU level.

Is working from home a threat or an opportunity?

Teleworking can give a new impetus to the human-centred agenda for the future

of work, provided that certain conditions are satisfied

Pros and Cons of remote work from a labour (law, management, policy) perspective

- Teleworking wage schemes, working time schedules and H&S protections need highly tailored legal and collective agreements regulations.

- Adequate training programs shall be identified.

- HR policies shall be improved in a gender-oriented perspective.

- A more sensitive work-life balance culture shall be supported by adequate fiscal incentives and occupational welfare schemes.

- Consistent labour market and social policies are also needed, in an ever more digitalised scenario.

What social and economic impact for remote work?

- Such an organizational and work-related innovation can also have a strong impact on the transformation of the socio-economic relationships in the territories.

  Where will knowledge workers live? Those who are going to be more and more the main actors of digital capitalism.

- The development of remote work can enhance peripheral communities and promote the territory as a whole.

- Moreover, telework could also represent a measure to combat the so-called "Brain drain".

- However, remote work can also "depopulate" big towns and cities, with relevant consequences on trade, real estate, etc.

What's going on in Italy?

- *On the one hand*, after centuries in which the demographic development of the places was grounded on their productive capacity, small towns and peripheral territories are again on stage. They have experienced a progressive decline due to mass emigration, determined by the lack of industrial development of many areas in our country. Right now, the attractiveness of places is no longer dictated by the availability of economic activities, but finds its pivot in the worker's personal choices.

- The so-called *southworking* is the opportunity to work in marginalized areas (or simply peripheral to large centers) for companies whose headquarters are in industrial centers or even abroad.

- Good intentions are not enough, however. Not even a good level of digitalization. The internal areas, those areas that are characterized by a distance from some essential services (health, school, mobility) that makes everyday life difficult, must equip themselves to live up to expectations and prevent the recent dynamism from turning out to be a passing fashion.

What's going on in Italy?

- *On the other hand*, an interesting solution to both promoting southworking and prevent big towns desertification can be represented by the creation of **co-working spaces**, conceived as incubator for young startuppers or developing center of circular economy projects at local level.

- Co-working spaces very often imply the activation of disused or under-used spaces and enhance network creation. They gather different competences making them available from remote and offer major opportunities to firms, workers and territories.

Strategic policy at local level

- In the present scenario of vibrant uncertainty, a top-down "one-size-fits-all" solution would be of little efficacy.

- *A broad mobilization, that involves all relevant actors* - companies, trade unions, local authorities -is essential to make a new virtuous relationship between work and territory effectively feasible, in the awareness that the fracture of the unity of place between business and work performance, generated by the pandemic, is now a point of no return.

- Local Governments should adopt strategic policies to promote social cohesion through a synergy among stakeholders, so as to enhance sustainable economic growth and overcome inequalities.

- In this perspective, the experience of the *tripartite territorial pacts* (social negotiations) could be intensified.