

# Multi-local living and sustainability: Social, spatial and cultural implications

Call for papers

6th meeting of the European Network for Multi-locality Studies (online), 3./4. November 2022

Multi-local living, the fact of living in more than one habitual dwelling at the same time, is a widespread practice that can be perceived as unsustainable. Multi-locality is affecting more and more people in all strata of society: work-family weekend commuters, Living Apart Together couples (LATs), children in joint custody, patchwork families, national or transnational long-distance workers, seasonal workers, (high-)mobile professions, expatriates, secondary residents, students, transmigrants... (Wood, Hilti et al. 2015; Duchene-Lacroix 2014, Hilti 2009). All of them have different living characteristics with an impact on sustainability or that apply different sustainability strategies.

Sustainability is a very broad term that corresponds to globalized crises such as climate disruption, health crises, agricultural losses, and also local risks for social cohesion or for the quality of life. Late modern lifestyles have a significant influence on the social life, on the health of biodiversity, on mineral and biological resources, etc. Residential multi-locality is an increasingly important issue in this.

Living in several places at the same time means using more than one accommodation, travelling between these residences with varying frequency and not being physically present everywhere. Economically, it could mean additional costs for mobility, for the maintenance of the accommodation or for life on the spot. Moreover, living multi-locally is not a free choice and in every case a further burden for individuals and groups with less resources and capacities. Socially, it could mean having to deal with the absence of people from one of the places (family cohesion and sustainability, local social participation). Finally, environmentally, multi-local living could consume a larger size of dwellings, more resources, more energy for travelling between dwellings or for heating the dwelling, etc. All of this raises the question of sustainability: At a time when we are talking about sustainability, is it really acceptable to live (and to work) in more than one context at a time? But reversely, we know only very little about whether multi-local living is less sustainable as comparable alternatives. Are there sustainable ways to practice multi-locality and which are they?

If some aspects of residential multi-locality do not correspond to sustainability objectives, what can be done to reduce the negative impact of these aspects? Thus, forms of spatial planning such as the 15-minute city (Paris), the Superblocks (Barcelona), or the pedestrian city (Vitoria-Gasteiz), a collective transport systems can facilitate multi-locality sustainability, not only in terms of lower costs and energy resources but also of local social cohesion.

Finally, if we want to reduce the amount (of certain forms) of residential multi-locality, what alternatives could we develop? Can new technologies provide solutions? (videoconferencing), Fusion Mobility (FM) or Building Blocks (BBs) approach? Thinking about the sustainability of residential multi-locality means integrating it into a systemic perspective, which should invite us to rethink even our advanced modernity (Neun, Cortesi & Kesselring 2020). In this regard, residential multi-locality can be considered as part of a major social transformation.

Residential multi-locality can have an impact on all aspects of sustainability at the societal and community level, as well as at the neighborhoods and for households or individuals. In the term of sustainability, we have outlined some of the risks of multi-residential practices that need to be analysed in depth. But it might also be possible that residential multi-locality is a sustainable solution compared to other alternatives (e.g. long-distance commuting). To what extent would this be the case?

Multi-local living, like sustainability, is a very vast and multiple reality which concerns a diversity of disciplines. We propose that contributors to the conference focus their papers in the following areas:

1. Residential multi-locality and sustainable families:
  - Is residential multi-locality a sustainable solution for contemporary families? What can we learn from their practices put in place during the pandemic, when travel was no longer possible?
2. Residential multi-locality and climate change:
  - Residential multi-locality as a practice contributing to climate change (housing issues, energy management, mobility management, resource management....)
  - Residential multi-locality as an option for climate adaptation or mitigation (housing issues, energy management, mobility management, resource management....)
3. Residential multi-locality and the (local) economy:
  - To what extent is residential multi-locality economically, socially, culturally and environmentally beneficial to a (local or regional) area?
4. Residential multi-locality and sustainable public and collective action:
  - How to develop a public policy, a sustainable public policy with intermittent inhabitants?
5. Residential multi-locality and methodologies:
  - What measures can be deployed to assess the sustainability of residential multi-locality? At what level should this be done (practices/household, living areas, territories, etc.)?

It is also possible to draw on the experience of COVID19 on residential multi-locality to develop one or other of these points in the contribution.

The conference will be held online on 3 and 4 November 2022. Abstract of max. 500 words (excl. ref) should be sent to [multilocality@gmail.com](mailto:multilocality@gmail.com) before 1 June 2022. A scientific committee will select the contributions and inform about the results by 15 June 2022. We would like the online conference to leave plenty of room for discussion. Therefore, we will ask the selected speakers to send an elaborated version of their contribution by 15 October 2022 so that the session leader, the committee and the other speakers of the session can prepare it in advance. PhD students and young scholars are welcome to submit first research findings. For any further questions please don't hesitate to contact the local organizer of the conference, Cedric Duchene-Lacroix (University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland): [multilocality@gmail.com](mailto:multilocality@gmail.com).