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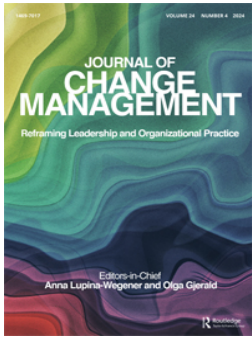
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Navigating Tensions in the Organizational Change Process towards Hybrid Workspace

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ABSTRACT



This article examines the change process of implementing hybrid workspace within organizations. Hybrid workspace involves employees working from multiple locations and has become an important topic during and after the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. This study aims to better understand the tensions emerging in the change process towards hybrid workspace and the responses by organizational members. Drawing on a case study of a major bank in Paris, this study finds four relevant tensions that emerge when implementing hybrid workspace: (1) connecting with vs. disconnecting from others, (2) agile vs. sedentary work, (3) paperless vs. paper-based working, and (4) telework vs. corporate space routines. These findings contribute to reshaping workspace literature by viewing organizational change through a tension lens while connecting different micro-processes of the planned change. Furthermore, this study contributes to the debates on hybrid workspace by viewing space as an ongoing process, through the dynamic interaction between individuals and technology in producing hybrid workspace.

MAD statement

This article aims to Make a Difference (MAD) by viewing hybrid workspaces and organizational change as mutually constituted in a process connecting technology and human agency. This study provides important contributions by identifying possible tensions that might emerge in the implementation of hybrid workspace. By revealing employees' responses to each tension, we provide practitioners with insights into discrepancies among planning, implementing, and the daily use of hybrid workspace, and into creative ways to transcend oppositions. To improve employees' well-being and reduce inequalities at work, we call for a managerial shift from disregarding or eliminating sources of tensions to managing them.

KEYWORDS

Hybrid workspace; change process; tension; technology; responses; telework

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Introduction

Both academics and practitioners have shown increasing interest in the implementation of hybrid workspaces. A hybrid workspace (Aroles et al., 2019; Halford, 2005; Petani & Mengis, 2021) involves the mobilization and use of a multitude of locations, including corporate, home, and other spaces, by means of information technology (IT). This enables organizations to disperse work into virtual spaces (Halford, 2005; Petani & Mengis, 2021); accordingly, employees can connect with the organization and other employees through home-based remote work, hereafter referred to as telework (Laß & Wooden, 2023; Sewell & Taskin, 2015). Organizations such as Apple, Google, and Salesforce have implemented hybrid workspaces to attract new talent and persuade employees to return to the corporate space that offers flexibility and other advantages (Mickle, 2021; Tilley, 2021). Organizations planning to change to hybrid workspace have expressed concerns regarding its design, implementation, and management (Cutter, 2021). Accordingly, research into this transition has examined planning (Fayard et al., 2021; Jemine et al., 2020), implementation (Lahti & Nenonen, 2021), and employees' responses to the change (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Halford, 2005; Hislop & Axtell, 2009). These studies reveal that organizational adoption of hybrid workspace is a dynamic process, shaped by diverse actors involved in ongoing interactions with and responses to these changes. How this dynamic process relates to the 'hybrid situation of a combination of telework and traditional working in the same job is less well understood' (Sewell & Taskin, 2015, p. 1521). Moreover, hybrid workspace continues to pose challenges for practitioners, with regard to how employees experience working in more than one space at the same time (Petani & Mengis, 2021).

This study aims to better understand the tensions emerging in the change process towards hybrid workspace and how organizational members respond. Here, 'tensions' refer to 'the clash of ideas, principles, and actions as well as any feelings of discomfort' (Fairhurst et al., 2002, p. 506). The study of hybrid workspace has accelerated since the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic (Kniffin et al., 2021; Parker, 2020) and is now central to managerial debates (Evans, 2022; Summerfield, 2022). Previous research has viewed hybrid workspace as a context for organizational change while neglecting employees' experiences and roles in the change process (e.g. Jemine et al., 2020), or focused only on how employees use and make sense of the hybrid workspace after the change event has occurred (e.g. Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Halford, 2005; Hislop & Axtell, 2009). Unlike some studies on telework (e.g. Boell et al., 2016; Leonardi et al., 2010), previous hybrid workspace research tends to overlook how organizational members manage and respond to contradictions and tensions arising from the use of technology. We understand the relationship between hybrid workspace and organizational change as mutually constituted in a process connecting technology and human agency across organizational and individual levels (Stephenson et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2023). Furthermore, we view organizational change through a tension lens, examining how organizational members enact change in the micro-level tensions amidst the planning, implementation, and experience of organizational change (Cameron & Quinn, 1988; Putnam et al., 2016; Seo et al., 2004).

This study's central research question is: 'What type of tensions emerge and develop during planned change towards hybrid workspace, and how do organizational

members navigate and manage these tensions?’ In order to answer this question, we developed a single case study (Yin, 2013) of Digibank (pseudonym), a Paris-based bank, which we studied from 2016 to 2019. Digibank changed from traditional offices to a combination of ‘agile offices’ (Barth & Blazejewski, 2023; Junker et al., 2022) and up to two days a week of telework. Through a systematic and simultaneous comparison of change planning, implementation, and change recipients’ daily experiences, we reveal the following four tensions: (1) connecting with vs. disconnecting from others, (2) agile vs. sedentary work, (3) paperless vs. paper-based working, and (4) telework vs. corporate space routines. First, these findings contribute to reshaping the workspace literature (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Brown & O’Hara, 2003; Halford, 2005; van Marrewijk & van den Ende, 2018) by viewing organizational change through a tension lens (Fairhurst, 2019; Seo et al., 2004). Second, this study contributes to the debate on hybrid workspace (Aroles et al., 2019; Petani & Mengis, 2021) by answering Stephenson et al.’s (2020) call for studies viewing space as an ongoing process, through the dynamic interaction between individuals and technology in producing hybrid workspace. Third, this study contributes to the debate on managing tensions in the organizational change process (Fairhurst, 2019; Mastio et al., 2024; Putnam et al., 2016; Putnam et al., 2014) by arguing to acknowledge and embrace tensions and address their management in organizational change towards hybrid workspace.

Theoretical Framework: Reshaping Workspace for Hybrid Work

The reshaping of the workspace has long been investigated by organizational change scholars (see Donald, 1994; Wright et al., 2023). Reshaping offices tends to reflect organizational change ambitions (Donald, 1994; Elsbach & Bechky, 2007; van Marrewijk & van den Ende, 2018). Previous studies have investigated managerial strategies aiming to foster interorganizational collaboration by housing three research institutes in one building (Irving et al., 2020), enhance creativity and innovation practices among employees with a new building, and thereby provide a context for reshaping organizational identity (Lancione & Clegg, 2013) and reshape the workspace to support fluid networking and informal employee interactions (Fayard & Weeks, 2007). Some studies have perceived the workspace as a context for organizational change while neglecting employees’ experiences and roles in the change process (e.g. Jemine et al., 2020); others have neglected the change process and only focused on how employees use and make sense of the reshaped workspace (e.g. Elsbach & Pratt, 2007; Halford, 2005; Hirst, 2011). These studies have shown how tensions and contradictions arise alongside the design and implementation of workspace reshaping. For instance, in a spatial intervention to create open-plan offices in a university, tensions emerged between academics and students. A mixed zone was designated where academics and students could freely interact. However, academics perceived their enclosed rooms to be a safe space where one could be ‘invisible’ to students, while the mixed zone was perceived as students’ territory – unsafe, busy, and noisy (van Marrewijk & van den Ende, 2018).

Tensions and contradictions are inevitable in the change process (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2017; Putnam et al., 2014). Here, contradictions are defined as ‘dynamic tensions between opposite elements that together form a unity and logically presuppose each other for their very existence and meanings’ (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2017, p. 320).

For example, a particular contradiction such as ‘pressure to both earn high profits and make investments in environmental protection pits internal constituencies against one another, creates tensions for the organization ...’ (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2017, p. 325). Tensions arise at the interface between different actors as they negotiate their roles, positions and spheres of influence (Thomas et al., 2011). For example, Irving et al. (2020) observed how a group of employees met for morning tea at their usual time and table; however, as employees from another department were seated at this table, the group dragged a table elsewhere, in order to sit separately. Tensions might also arise among different managerial levels, namely, senior, middle, and operational management, as they develop nuanced interpretations regarding the value of the change (Alshwayat, 2023). Furthermore, tensions might arise when change designers disregard the entanglements between organizational actors and technology (Leonardi, 2012; Pasmore et al., 2019; Seo et al., 2004) when introducing new technologies. Therefore, Imran et al. (2021) have argued for aligning social and technical systems while implementing new digital technologies. Moreover, tensions surface in the outcome of the change process as users experience unintended consequences (Elsbach & Pratt, 2007; Hirst, 2011). For instance, introducing a nature-like work environment can make employees aware of how stressful their work is (Elsbach & Pratt, 2007). In another example, employees disregarded the clean desk policy in the competition for preferred desks (Hirst, 2011).

To understand how tensions emerge and develop, it is necessary to pay attention to the planning and implementation of planned organizational change (Fairhurst, 2019; Fairhurst et al., 2002), experiences of the change recipients (Van Marrewijk, 2011), and temporal dynamics of change (Cameron & Quinn, 1988; Seo et al., 2004). Consistent with calls for recognizing the agency, sensemaking, and improvisations of change recipients (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Fairhurst, 2019), we must also compare change expectations with change recipients’ daily experiences (Manca, 2022; Sivunen & Putnam, 2020). This tension lens aligns with the perspective of the workspace and organizational change being constituted mutually (Wright et al., 2023). Such a perspective attends to multiple scales, actors, and temporalities, conceptualizing organizational change as an evolving process ‘connecting two or more levels of interpretation and action across individual, organizational, field and societal level’ (Wright et al., 2023, p. 15). This process is produced through employees’ enactment, sensemaking, and contestation of workspace, which are themselves influenced and shaped by the process. However, few studies on reshaping workspace have engaged with this perspective (Wright et al., 2023) in a process connecting the organizational and individual levels.

Change to Hybrid Workspace

At the individual level, research on organizational change to hybrid workspace has discussed the interrelationship between space and technology (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Brown & O’Hara, 2003; Halford, 2005). Space routines are fixed in the context in which they are enacted, that is domestic space is used for individual activities requiring concentration (Brown & O’Hara, 2003; Halford, 2005; Hislop & Axtell, 2009) and corporate space is associated with teamwork (Halford, 2005) as well as meaningful, serendipitous social interactions (Brown & O’Hara, 2003). A change to hybrid workspace is often accompanied by a redesigning of the organizational space into non-assigned desks

supported by a clean-desk policy (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Brown & O'Hara, 2003; Halford, 2005; van Marrewijk & van den Ende, 2018). This redesigning process has many names in the literature (e.g. hot-desking, agile offices); studies have identified employee concerns about crowding, navigating, and finding appropriate spaces. Hot-desking refers to office settings in which employees have no dedicated desk and can use any available workstation (Hirst, 2011). Similarly, in agile offices, employees have no dedicated desks and can choose to work from various adaptable and continually improved spaces that support their needs (Barth & Blazejewski, 2023). Agile offices are intended to promote agile work practices characterized by flexibility, proactivity, and movement (Barth & Blazejewski, 2023; Junker et al., 2022). However, clean-desk policies are time-consuming and challenging in situations requiring storage of papers and documentation (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Brown & O'Hara, 2003).

Considering technology, hybrid workspace research has been criticized for casting technology use as statically constraining or facilitating and failing to recognize the dynamic interconnections between technology and human actors in navigating such a workspace (Stephenson et al., 2020). Technology facilitates hybrid work through synchronous and asynchronous communication (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Brown & O'Hara, 2003), thereby 'relocating' work into the domestic space and 'dislocating' it into a virtual space (Halford, 2005, p. 19). Furthermore, mobile technology has enabled the emergence of new organizational forms of control by blurring domestic – corporate boundaries (Felstead et al., 2005; Halford, 2005). Mobile technology can constrain workers' sociability (Hislop & Axtell, 2009), foster feelings of attachment to the corporate space (Brown & O'Hara, 2003), hinder workers' effectiveness (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010), and create the expectation of perpetual connectivity with the corporate space (Hislop & Axtell, 2007).

Managing Tensions in Organizational Change

Previous studies on reshaping workspace have recognized the existence of tensions following the implementation of change (e.g. Elsbach & Pratt, 2007; Hirst, 2011). For example, Sivunen and Putnam (2020) have found tension between mobile and stationary work following the implementation of agile offices. Except for Sivunen and Putnam (2020), previous studies have failed to address how organizational members respond to tensions in their daily use of the workspace (Manca, 2022). Specifically, they have suggested that change managers should resolve the tension by engaging in trade-offs between the two opposite poles (Elsbach & Pratt, 2007). However, Fairhurst (2019) have recommended paying close attention to how organizational members navigate contradictions and tensions as parts of the change process and see value and opportunity in contradictions. Furthermore, Mastio et al. (2024) have argued for embracing opposites and addressing contradictions as issues that need to be handled by seriously considering the relationship between opposites.

Literature on contradictions suggests the following three approaches to respond to and manage tensions (Putnam et al., 2016; Seo et al., 2004): either-or, both-and, and more-than. In the either-or approach, actors either ignore the tension, select only one of the opposite poles, or separate them. In the both-and approach, actors vacillate between opposites at different times and contexts or find a middle ground. In the more-than approach, actors try to find new ways to reframe the situation and transcend

the opposition. For instance, employees reframed the tension between mobile and stationary work by casting the opposite poles as intertwined (Sivunen & Putnam, 2020). These approaches serve as an analytical lens to examine the effects of change: the either-or approach often leads to negative outcomes or vicious cycles of undesired outcomes; the more-than and both-and approaches often lead to positive outcomes via embracing opposites (Putnam et al., 2016; Seo et al., 2004).

Ways of managing tensions have implications for understanding organizational change and inertia (Fairhurst, 2019; Mastio et al., 2024). Specifically, approaches leading to positive outcomes can inform future decision-making, inspire learning, transform organizational situations through creative solutions, and enable reflexive thinking and collective participation (Fairhurst, 2019; Mastio et al., 2024; Putnam et al., 2016). Approaches leading to negative outcomes might fuel and reinforce vicious cycles, close off participation, and marginalize voices (Mastio et al., 2024; Putnam et al., 2016).

Method

The Case

For this study, an explorative design of a single case was chosen (Yin, 2013) in which the organization was extensively explored to obtain a clear understanding of the field of research. The case was selected based on three criteria (Yin, 2013). The first criterion was the need to be involved in a change process towards hybrid workspace; second, an organization that would allow an ethnographer to be present on the work floor for a longer period of time. The third criterion was that the ethnographer could participate and understand the language being spoken on the work floor. Based upon these criteria, Digibank, a major Paris-based banking organization employing over 50,000 people in France, was selected. In 2016, Digibank reshaped its offices to support a hybrid working programme, allowing employees to request one or two days of telework per week. Digibank's headquarters were also redesigned, creating spaces that communicated the desire to work in more digitalized and agile ways (Junker et al., 2022), that is, emphasizing collaborative and proactive work. This involved transforming closed, assigned, and hierarchically oriented offices into transparent open-plan areas with 80 unassigned desks for 100 employees. As a result of this first exploration, deeper insight into theoretical concepts and relations between concepts were obtained. The findings were compared with the outcomes of other cases (van Marrewijk & van den Ende, 2018) to select new cases. This theoretical sampling method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) help select the following three divisions, each division markedly highlighting different experiences of spatiality: the 'Wealth' division in the centre of Paris, 'Loan' in the west, and 'Capital' on the outskirts of Paris. While 'Loan' was easily accessible by public transportation and situated among business and shopping districts, 'Capital' was moved from the centre of Paris to the suburbs.

Data Collection

Digibank's case study is grounded in qualitative data collection methods. Specifically, thick descriptions (Ybema et al., 2009) based on participant observations,

interviews and desk research were used to explore the change process at Digibank, where the first author was employed as an internal consultant in one of its divisions (*Wealth*) from 2011 to 2014. As a courtesy granted by her former colleagues, she was given research access to the organization. During the fieldwork (2016–2019), her role as a researcher was that of participant-observer, that is, the researcher was immersed in the community and known to be conducting research after having sought explicit permission (Ybema et al., 2009). This role might introduce methodological problems of subjectivity (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006) and sympathetic interpretations (Vaara, 2003). Humphreys (2005) calls these insights self-reflexive personal vignettes, which add authenticity and exposure to interpretations, and, importantly, are useful for others. The data collection consisted of three phases. Phase 1 (June 2016) started just before the implementation of the change and lasted about four months. To obtain a clearer picture of the change design, we collected architectural plans, spatial guidelines, design notes, and change planning documents. We also conducted interviews with space planners and other actors involved (Table 1). Phase 2 (October 2016 to July 2017) represented the initial period following the transformation; the research perspective shifted towards emerging practices, social interactions, and hybrid work routines, as well as employees' initial responses. Accordingly, we observed daily spatial practices and change management workshops in Digibank headquarters and conducted 27 interviews with employees to understand their initial interpretations (Table 1). After the observed sessions, we engaged in informal conversations with the participants to come to grips with the explanations of their actions (Van Maanen, 2011). In Phase 3 (one-year post-implementation, from September 2017 to February 2019) observations were made at Digibank offices and 65 interviews were conducted with hybrid workers. Respondents were asked about their daily experiences, responses to the change, and how they used and interacted with the hybrid workspace. All interviews were recorded and manually transcribed. Quotations therein were translated from French to English by the first author and checked by the second author. An editing service performed a blind-checking of final quotations. Pseudonyms were used for all participants to protect their confidentiality.

Table 1. Interviewees.

Role	Codes for interviewees	
	Frequency of interview = 1	Frequency of interview = 2
Change actors		#C1[director of the steering committee], #C7[head of IT], #C6[head of HR], #C3[head of digital department], #C2[head of corporate real estate]
Space planners		#W1[interior architect]
Middle management	#P17, #P25	#M3
Team managers	#B8	#B19, #M1
Operational staff	#M8, #B30, #M11, #P2, #P1, #M4, #M9, #M22, #B29, #B26, #B18, #M15, #P9, #M21, #M19, #B2, #P13, #P10, #P26, #P8, #B5, #M5, #P28, #B27, #M31	#P34, #P5, #B23, #M10, #B21, #P27, #P4, #P6, #P22, #B28

Notes: C = Corporate headquarters; W = Independent building, P = Wealth, M = Capital, B = Loan.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected was analysed through a five-step interpretative method (LeCompte, 2000; Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). (1) First, we organized and read all field data to familiarize ourselves with how the change process unfolded. (2) In the second step, a longitudinal process view (Langley, 1999) was used to analyse the organized data and examine the manner in which the implementation of the hybrid workspace and introduction of digital technologies unfolded over time. We conducted first-level coding by depicting streams of actions and behaviours (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) related to digitalization, such as video-conferencing, printing, using the digital map, monitoring mobile sensors, instant chatting, and real-time sharing of documents. We worked through the dataset to examine these streams of actions and behaviours and relate them to the implementation of hybrid spaces. Our analysis can be understood as a 'parallel process theorizing' (Cloutier & Langley, 2020) whereby the linear process trajectory of introducing hybrid workspaces is inter-related with digitalization. 'Parallel process theorizing' studies aim 'to enrich current understanding of a higher-level process by showing and explaining how sub-processes mutually influence each other' (Cloutier & Langley, 2020, p. 10). (3) The third step consisted of using the tensions lens to examine the interplay between implementation of hybrid workplaces and introduction of digital technologies (design, implementation, and change recipients' experiences). (4) In the fourth step, the constant comparison method by Fairhurst and Putnam (2019) and Putnam et al. (2014) was been used. In this method, data are continuously compared with certain concepts; in our case, we compared tensions with evidence of struggles and expressions of discomfort, anxiety, or stress in observations and interviews. For example, the data revealed inconsistencies in the implementation of the digital motion sensors to foster agile work as employees' tricked the sensors by enacting sedentary work. We then listed sets of tensions, clustered them together, and combined similar ones to form the main tensions to report. These tensions were grouped as connecting with vs. disconnecting from others, agile vs. sedentary work, paperless vs. paper-based work, and telework vs. corporate space routines. (5) The fifth step comprised multiple readings of the data, in which we identified how different actors engaged with the emerged tensions through a management of contradictions and tensions lens (either-or, both-and, more-than). (6) In the final step, the text was written from the iterations between tentative assertions and field data (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006).

Findings

Designing the Change towards Hybrid Workspace

The purpose of Digibank's change initiative towards hybrid workspace was to express and enable organizational ambitions and ideas of digitalization and agility, including the redesigning of the corporate office's internal layout into an agile office. This change was carefully planned by management and driven by the logic of developing a new corporate image as a digitized organization. Accordingly, Digibank deployed a change programme called *Travailler autrement* [Working differently] (intranet release, January 2016), aiming to promote agile ways of working and implement a hybrid workspace. This programme was intended to be the 'flagship of the digital transformation' (Digibank CEO, internal

communication, January 2016). The CEO added, 'no digital transformation is possible without onboarding both employees and their work environment'. Accordingly, the board nominated employees from IT, digital, real estate, facility management (FM), human resources (HR), and communication departments to participate in a steering committee. Supported by external change consultants, this committee described the change programme as aiming to shape 'an agile mindset' (Pascale #C6, June 2016); it would accelerate 'a culture of *digit all*, where all employees can work with digital tools' (Arnaud #C3, July 2016). Digibank surveys had indicated employees' willingness to adopt working from home, which was expected to positively influence employees' digital fluency:

... surveys show that employees are open to homeworking as part of a good work-life balance and better work quality, but to be able to work from home they need to show autonomy with digital tools. So, they have to learn to master these tools and we will train them [to do so]. (Pascale #C6, June 2016)

Planning efforts were also devoted to redesigning hybrid workers' domestic spaces. These domestic spaces would ideally comprise private, closed spaces equipped with adequate power outlets and high-speed internet where confidential conversations would not be overheard and work equipment would be protected from cohabitants. Thus, the steering committee emphasized the resemblance of domestic and corporate space workdays: '[A] Day of telework should be similar to a workday on site' (John #C1, July 2016). This guideline was also emphasized in programme communication platforms. Moreover, teleworkers were expected to be connected and accessible to their managers and colleagues during standard working hours. Programme communications presented telework as voluntary, to be conducted only at home, requiring managerial and HR approval, and limited to one or two fixed days per week (subject to managerial discretion).

Corporate space was planned to allow continuous connectivity to the virtual space: 'Each corner of our headquarters should be connected to the network so that employees can work from the lobby, breakout areas, etc.' (John #C1, July 2016). Interior architects were convinced that managerial aspirations would be achieved through agile offices, including non-assigned desks and heterogeneous, collaborative spaces: 'We aim to work in agile mode, but we currently only have individual workstations, so with this change, we need to add meeting pods so that employees can collaborate efficiently' (Victoire #W1, September 2016). This redesign was framed in managerial discourse, based on the premise of 'inducing an agile mindset as employees will get rid of old sedentary habits of occupying a desk all day even if they are on the move or in meetings' (John #C1, July 2016).

To enable the change to hybrid workspace, the IT department carefully planned an efficient virtual space: 'We are planning an environment with no technical irritations to ensure the change is smooth, starting with a reliable and fast connection everywhere inside our buildings' (Christophe #C7, August 2016). Christophe also highlighted the following factors driving the planning and design of new applications and platforms: security (due to sensitive financial data), constant connectivity, and user-friendliness.

Overall, digitalization and agility dominated change design in two ways. First, both corporate and domestic spaces were planned to allow perpetual connectivity to the virtual space. Second, hybrid employees were expected to enact the same work routine at home and in corporate space.

Implementing the Change towards Hybrid Workspace

The steering committee plans were implemented in multiple ways in terms of material objects and artefacts, regulations, and change management process. First, digital technology became ubiquitous within the corporate space. Individual digital cards allowed access to buildings, elevators, floors, printing machines, and the corporate network. Employees' mobility was facilitated via laptops, smartphones, and backpacks. In addition to Outlook for email and scheduling and Skype for Business for video-meetings, document sharing, and instant messaging, the IT and digital departments supported constant communication by developing different applications, including a social media platform and map application. Other open-source communication channels such as Slack were modified to meet Digibank's security requirements. OneNote was stressed as necessary to support the paperless transition. Hardware included single or double screens to dock laptops, cables, and keyboards. Technology was also visible in conference rooms equipped with digital flipcharts allowing real-time sharing and editing of documents, large video-conferencing screens, and an e-booking system.

Furthermore, varied digital artefacts were visible at building entrances, starting with a 3D map highlighting available desks and rooms next to the main elevator. This 3D map was augmented with signals sent by AI-based sensors – incorporated in desks, collaborative spaces, and conference rooms – that tracked user movements. Managerial discourse framed these sensors as necessary to enhance user experience in the agile office:

First, they help users move efficiently. You just need to look at the digital maps and locate green-coloured desks and meeting rooms, green means free, and red means occupied. The second reason is that they allow us real estate and facility managers to monitor which collaborative spaces are less used so we can replace them with the ones users prefer and continuously adjust to users' needs and preferences. (Jack #C2, July 2016)

These sensors facilitated the regulation of space use and user movement. Accordingly, the steering committee developed guidelines for workstation usage; workers had to clear their desks if they expected to be absent for more than two hours. Specifically, sensors recorded space occupancy and sent these signals to the cloud, which updated the digital map. In this map, desks were marked green after two hours of non-occupation, while pre-booked conference rooms were marked green after no movement was detected for 15 minutes. Spatial regulations, applicable throughout the buildings and Intranet, explicitly prescribed spatial ordering through the following two rhetorical injunctions: 'Use space according to your task!' and 'Free your workstation if you expect to be absent more than two hours (including lunch)!' To prevent any interruption, each building's FM was responsible for maintaining order. These regulations were accompanied by paperless operations that involved technicians touring desks to help employees dematerialize, scan, archive, and backup their paper files that were formerly stocked in large personal cabinets. Individual cabinets were removed and replaced by shared cabinets (one shelf per employee).

To prevent connectivity interruption, the IT department provided teleworkers with a dedicated remote IT helpdesk during standard office hours; furthermore, all employees were trained to use new digital tools and solve basic technological issues. IT support was also deployed in the corporate space during the three first months post-implementation and took the form of computer specialist teams (known as 'digital angels')

circulating through the floors to help overcome connection and set-up problems. Subsequently, digital angels were gradually allocated a stationary area in each building to continue providing IT support. To enforce hybrid connectivity between teleworkers and corporate space workers, the following four rules were communicated and framed throughout the buildings and on the intranet: 'Stay connected and accessible!', 'Share your Outlook agenda!', 'Be sure your mobile is on when accessible!' and 'Share your status and location on Skype!'

Moreover, the steering committee plans were reflected in the change management process. Aided by the external change consultants, the committee implemented change management in three stages. The first stage started during the design of the change and lasted until the move to the hybrid workspace. During this stage, the committee launched communication campaigns to explain the programme's benefits to the organization and employees through different internal channels; they represented current spatial practices as obsolete in a changing financial sector threatened by, for example, disruptive Fintech actors. There was also ongoing communication through groups of referents comprising representatives of each department chosen by senior management who liaised between the committee and other employees. These referents were involved in the interior design, helping choose colours and furniture materials.

Additionally, all employees were invited to join workshops, including a mandatory three-hour interactive role-play workshop conducted by external consultants that aimed to simulate organizational members' working day and learn and test expected behaviours and rules of conduct. Team managers were trained regarding the best practices for remote management and maintaining expected behaviours among their team members. Furthermore, candidates for voluntary hybrid work participated in ergonomics training, that is, learning how to adjust furniture, materials, and bodily postures while working for home. This also involved a design workshop to map spatiotemporal ways to enact the steering committee's representations of teleworker practices and norms. Temporal enactments were reflected in the choice of teleworking days. For example, some avoided teleworking on Wednesdays (when schools are closed in France) 'to not be disturbed by my kid and only concentrate at work' (Christine #M10, June 2016). Spatially, some participants reallocated domestic spaces (e.g. guest rooms and attics) to accommodate a private, closed office. Other participants in smaller residences had to introduce partitions into private spaces, such as bedrooms and living rooms. These changes and adjustments were specified in the participants' application to join the hybrid work program. This created feelings of exclusion among those willing to join the program but without the ability to reallocate from their small studio apartments: 'I was excited to do homeworking to save time in public transportation but they excluded my application as I live in a small studio and don't have the possibility to set up an office as they request, not nice' (Yoann #M31, June 2016).

The second stage focused on change acceptance and comprised induction events organized by the committee with the referents' assistance. These convivial events aimed to minimize the apparent magnitude of change, welcome employees to the new environment, reiterate behavioural rules, and briefly repromoted the change. Moreover, digital angels and referents provided hybrid workers with technical support. In stage 3, all employees were invited by HR to answer a follow-up questionnaire and attend

meetings organized by referents to evaluate and discuss how the change impacted their daily working life.

In each workshop we observed, dissenting voices articulated concerns about the rules' efficiency and productivity, criticized consultants' role in the process, and pointed to their own passivity. For instance: 'I came here only because it's mandatory. It's a shame that external consultants have to show us how to live together and play with toys. That should be the role of HR and we should have been consulted' (informal interview, June 2016). Others perceived the change management process as divided between elites (managers) and the rest, leading to feelings of segregation expressed as follows:

I feel the way the change is handled has segregated the top management and their allies—referents that decide for us and team managers and facility managers that are asked to monitor our behaviours—from those of us without management positions who lack a say in decision-making. (Julien, #P4, June 2016)

There was also the perception that workshops aimed only to inform and educate employees about the process instead of involving them in decisions, as ironically expressed by the following participant: 'It's a pity we are here to watch a show and applaud the project's progress while learning how to execute the committee's plans' (Virginie, #P6, June 2016).

Regarding the one-year follow-up questionnaire, respondents found these evaluations meaningless because there was no follow-up to address their concerns; they were also disappointed that instead of providing detailed results, the questionnaire was summarized as reflecting 85% satisfaction with the change management process and 74% with the hybrid workspace.

Overall, digitalization was extensively visible in the implementation of hybrid workspace. Digital technology was deployed across the corporate space to regulate space use, connect different spaces, relocate work into the domestic space, and promote paperless work. Change management was a top-down, three-stage process (summarized in [Table 2](#)) involving external consultants and internal change actors (including heads of the IT, digital, HR, FM, real estate, communication departments, and groups of referents); space users were not actively involved, which created feelings of segregation among employees.

Table 2. Change management process.

Stages	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Timeline	During the change design until the implementation	Post-implementation and lasted three months	Six months after the implementation
Actors	Steering committee, external change consultants, referents	Steering committee and referents	Human resources and referents
Actions	Communication campaigns through different internal channels Ongoing communication via referents Participation of referents in the interior design and choice of furniture Simulation workshops and training for all employees Specific training for team managers Ergonomic and design workshops for candidates to telework	Induction events Support to all employees from digital angels Support from referents Dedicated remote IT help desk for teleworkers	A follow-up questionnaire Meetings to evaluate the change Dedicated area to digital angels to continue providing IT support

Responses to the Change Implementation

Data from Phase 2 (just after implementation) show a widely shared enthusiasm, as expressed in the following statement:

I find this environment very innovative. It is nice to have the freedom to change places and not be stuck with the same people every day. Digitalized conference rooms allow meetings to be more dynamic. How convenient to project from my seat! And the cherry on the cake is the day of homeworking. I am better organized having this day. It allows me to improve my digital skills. (Nathalie #P5, September 2016)

However, tensions and contradictions subsequently permeated daily working life as employees developed new meanings related to the change. We identified the following four main tensions: (1) connecting with vs. disconnecting from others, (2) agile vs. sedentary work, (3) paperless vs. paper-based working, and (4) telework vs. corporate space routines. Next, we present employees' engagements with each tension. [Table 3](#) summarizes the characteristics of the tensions that employees navigated within the hybrid workspace, linking them to employees' responses.

Connecting with vs. Disconnecting from Others

In the months following the implementation, software applications and digital tools were actively used by employees. Respondents explained that digital technology improved their communication and allowed them to overcome spatial distance: 'Having access to technology is great, it allows me to stay in touch with my colleagues while homeworking, and even work virtually together, checking on each other, "I did that on my side, what about you?", and stay motivated' (Maxime, #P22, December 2016).

However, Phase 3 data revealed gradual feelings of excessive connectivity related to the multitude of communication tools and software implemented to allow constant and continuous connectivity. To some employees, this connectivity was viewed as hindering their productivity, and they expressed their need to be disconnected from others:

Chat messaging, SMS, phone calls, and emails absorb a lot of my work time. There is a lot of communication. The worst is when a colleague sends a chat message and five minutes later sends an email: 'I sent you a chat, could you answer me!' People need an immediate answer, but I need to concentrate on work and disconnect for a while. (Caroline #P34, September 2018)

Thus, connecting with and disconnecting from others emerged in tension with each other's through intersecting the change design planned to allow continuous and constant connectivity, the implementation enforcing connectivity via rules, with employees' daily experiences of connectivity in contradictory ways. Specifically, hybrid workers perceived non-urgent communication during telework as undesirable and hindering their focus: 'I opted for hybrid work to be able to concentrate, so it really bothers me receiving non-urgent calls and chat requests when working from home' (Stephane #B29, January 2018). For some respondents, communication technologies also came to be perceived as evidence of managerial distrust, especially when teleworking: 'My manager never called me before, but now he calls me every time I'm homeworking and disturbs me with chat messages. I think he suspects I don't work when I'm at home' (Marie-Jose #P8, January 2018).

Table 3. Overview of the tensions navigated within hybrid workspace.

Tensions	Rising tensions	Response to tensions
<i>Connecting with others vs Disconnecting from others</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users experience the multiplication of communication tools and applications hindering to productivity • Hybrid workers perceive non-urgent communication at the domestic space a form of distrust and hindering to focus • Users experience the corporate space as impeding to concentration. • Users experience high connectivity feeling during non-work time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams adopted emergent work practices. • limited disconnection and creation of imaginary activities at the domestic space. • hiding at the corporate space. • strategies of partial and complete disconnection during nonstandard work time.
<i>Agile work vs Sedentary work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users experience agile work as hindering social relations with colleagues. • Change recipients perceive spatial regulations as imposed on them. • Prevalence of natural sedentary behaviours • Users experience agile work as a loss of time, energy, and hindering to impromptu collaboration. • Some users experience agile work as healthy • Inconsistence between planning and implementation in terms of the ratio of unassigned desks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enactment of strategies to alter the use of the motion sensors • Re-constitution of sedentary routines • A vicious cycle of transformation of the use of individual and collaborative workspaces. • Management introduced reinforcement measures.
<i>Paperless based-working vs Paper based-working</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users perceive paperless as eco-friendly and associate it with modernity and progress. • Users experience paperless as unproductive, unsuited for some work activities, and impeding their learning • Users have emotional attachment to paraphernalia • Users experience visual discomfort due to paperless based-working. • Users associate symbolic representations to paper based-working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reframing both poles as complementary by altering the context of paper use. • Finding a middle ground through using paper to some extent.
<i>Telework routine vs corporate space routine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The desire to free rest time • To respond to personal circumstances • Need to concentrate • Middle managers' need to be present physically at meetings • To attend social gathering • Inconsistence between planning and implementing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separating the two routines • Selecting time and space

The need to disconnect also emerged outside working hours, as employees kept sending and receiving work communication during the weekend and after 8 pm on work-days. This clearly contravened the French law of disconnection and occurred despite Digibank's virtual space being programmed to send reminders to employees to comply with the law if they connected to the network between 8 pm and 7 am during the week or at any time over the weekend. Such connectivity often stemmed from the desire to show commitment: 'I connect regularly to show I'm working hard' (Christelle #B30, March 2018).

Digibank employees responded to these tensions between connecting with and disconnecting from others by using a 'more-than' approach. Specifically, some teams transcended oppositions, by adopting emergent work practices:

Slack allows you to find information afterwards using hashtags. Our default tool for communication is the messaging chat in Skype for Business. We use it when we have a quick question that doesn't need to be saved. If we see the person is not connected, we use text messages. If

we need explanations or details, we call, and finally we email for formal communication or when we need a record. (Alexandre #B2, March 2018)

Other employees vacillated between the opposite poles by enacting limited disconnection strategies. For instance, to stay focused during teleworking and out of their colleagues' sight, some respondents stayed disconnected for limited periods: 'I put my phone on silent, don't answer any calls, and check the phone and chat messaging every hour to stay focused on a topic – generally all requests can wait one hour! After all, we are not doctors, we don't save lives' (Laure #B23, February 2018). Other participants marked fake activities in their Outlook agenda (e.g. 'on the move', 'external meeting', 'on conference call', or 'on video-conference') to work without interruptions. This strategy was also used in the corporate space; employees hid in meeting rooms to disconnect and finish work that required concentration.

To cope with connectivity temptation during non-work hours, employees enacted multiple strategies ranging from partial disconnection (e.g. reading but not answering emails, turning off work smartphones at home) to complete disconnection, which included carrying laptops and work smartphones to home only the night before teleworking, placing smartphones out of reach while teleworking, and temporarily deleting the mail icon from smartphones.

Agile vs. Sedentary Work

Initially and immediately after the implementation of the change, employees achieved managerial expectations in terms of agility by following the spatial regulations and guidelines and actively using the 3D digital map. For instance, the following account reveals that 'at the beginning, our team thought it would be good to be agile, we challenged each other to not sit at the same place two days consecutively, we tried to follow the rules. It worked' (Marion #M11, November 2018). However, in the three divisions, employees gradually redeveloped sedentary routines; for instance, Marion added: '... but didn't last – we went back to what seemed natural to us. As I arrive early, I can always get the same place' (Marion #M11, November 2018). Thus, tensions between agile and sedentary work surfaced from inconsistencies between the organization's expectations and employees perceiving agile work as hindering and disrupting natural sedentary routines: 'I prefer to look around the building and sit next to people I know' (Christine #M10, December 2018).

These inconsistencies were intensified by the meanings that employees associated with workstation rules regarding usage and regulations, including their relation to productivity: 'We lose time waiting for the laptop to turn on and reinstall software when we come back, especially for those working with SAS applications like myself, I am losing on productivity' (Pierick #B26, February 2018). Other employees expressed concerns about the time and energy wasted to comply with workstation regulations, causing the subversion of rules: 'I do not clear my workstation when I leave for more than two hours. I do not want to walk through the building looking for an available desk and carrying a heavy bag' (Sophie #B27, February 2018). To subvert the spatial guidelines and enact sedentary instead of agile work, employees tricked the sensors: 'The first to arrive in the morning settles in a zone, moves chairs to take up space in the surrounding desks so that the sensor thinks they are occupied, and then leaves personal items on

them' (Samuel #M21, September 2017). Similarly, other employees marked unoccupied workstations with personal objects, laptops, bags, and clothing to signal their presence and prevent others from using desks, regardless of the digital map: 'I put down my backpack, a bottle of water, a jacket, etc. Even though the sensor may indicate a free space, no one will sit at a desk covered with personal items' (Frederic #M4, May 2018). Employees who consistently practiced agile work felt the sedentary routines of their colleagues undermined their investment in self-regulation:

I like the agile work because I like moving around to stay in shape, but it's disappointing that others do not follow the rules. There are people who arrive, put belongings on a desk and then leave. So, when I arrive late at 9h30 there is no space left for me. When I questioned someone who always takes the same desk, he answered: 'I arrive early so I am entitled to sit here'. Clearly, we cannot rely on self-regulation. This is really annoying. (Henri #P13, February 2018)

The tension highlighted by Henri between agile and sedentary work worsened when buildings approached maximum occupancy: 'If only a few people don't play the game, the whole system fails. Thus, I go and work in a two-person space, further breaking the rules' (Karl #M19, October 2018). Accordingly, in response to heightened tensions, employees used collaborative spaces to perform individual work, subverting their intended use (our observations confirmed this practice). Employees also disrupted the intended use of individual spaces by transforming them into collaborative spaces. This deviation stemmed from the conflicting meanings employees associated with sedentary work, including its relation to impromptu collaboration: 'Instead of losing time reserving a meeting room, or finding an available space, we can easily move desk chairs for a quick talk to resolve a work issue or help each other' (Claire #M8, February 2018).

This vicious cycle of opposing organizational expectations and regulations, through sedentary work and transforming collaborative spaces into individual spaces and vice-versa, led the steering committee to introduce new reinforcement measures at the beginning of 2019, including an incentive system. This entailed that team managers responsible for maintaining the two-hour rule among their teams would receive annual bonuses in case of success. The steering committee deemed these attempts necessary as the number of employees had increased and they were convinced that compliance with the guidelines had the potential to free up space. Moreover, the committee abandoned the use of motion sensors in workstations and limited their use to collective areas.

Paperless vs. Paper-based Working

At the end of the implementation stage, the steering committee celebrated the success of paperless operations: 'We managed to reduce our paper consumption. We did well but we are not fully paperless yet – it's coming so we continue to communicate [about it]' (John #C1, December 2017). However, this feeling was not shared by all employees. Some had to sacrifice 'my 20 years of professional life in this company, throwing away my training files, my personal items, the goodies I collected from conventions. A career without physical traces! That wasn't easy!' (Marie-Laure #B21, December 2016). This emotional reaction was shared by other participants: 'They left us with no choice, either we scan papers and dispose of old stuff and personal items, or they throw away what is left in the cabinets' (Gaelle #M5, March 2017).

In the months following the implementation (Phase 2 data), employees' use of paper was minimal; they prioritized digital tools and desks appeared tidy. Months later (Phase 3 data), paperless working had become a divisive issue. Adherents portrayed paperless work as eco-friendly: 'I take notes on OneNote, I print nothing, I have my documents on the cloud; I like being paperless it corresponds to my personal ethics: being eco-friendly' (Bea #B5, December 2018), or as being associated with modernity and progress: 'I like the new appearance of desks, they are empty-everything is stocked on the laptop or the cloud. We look modern' (Henri #P13, February 2018). Supporting this, Julien criticized colleagues whose desks evidenced old practices: 'This is unpleasant, it gives an old-school vibe to the whole office' (Julien #P4, #November 2018).

For paper-based work advocates, going paperless was viewed as unproductive and unsuited for roles requiring creativity: 'When working in agile mode, we still need to write down ideas, visualize them on walls, as it fosters our creativity' (Christelle #B30, March 2018). Going paperless was also considered unsuitable for project work: 'It is important during project work to print our task sheets and display them on the walls so we can use pens to mark modifications and visualize progress' (Denis #P10, February 2018). To some employees, annotating papers improved learning: 'When preparing presentations, I need to annotate the printed slide. Annotation is appropriation. It's how I learn' (Damien #B18, March 2018). Furthermore, reading and annotating printed documents fostered concentration and focus, as shown in the following quote: 'I tried to go fully paperless but to concentrate I need to touch paper, to write things down – it helps my focus and memory' (Nathalie #P5, October 2018). Moreover, paper carried symbolic meanings for some employees. For example, holding printed slides while moderating meetings 'improves my self-confidence' (Pierick #B26, February 2018). Finally, paperless working produced visual discomfort:

In my work I do a lot of reporting, so I need a paper support to see clearly. I can't do it with a small screen, so I keep printing. Since we moved to paperless, I feel I print a lot as I can't keep documents, so I print, dispose, reprint, and so on. It's a pity I lose what I've highlighted with a fluorescent marker. (Celine #P2, November 2018)

Reading big documents from the screen causes me eye strain. So, I printed these documents at the end of day and took them home to read. (Celestine, #P28, December 2018)

Celine and Celestine's accounts also highlight how, in relation to paperless vs. paper-based working, they conducted two types of reframing that were widely adopted by other employees. Indeed, some employees printed and reprinted the same documents as many times as needed and simply disposed of them at the end of each day or when no longer needed. While for others, the domestic space served to store work papers. Some other employees sought a middle ground by relying on paper for some activities and using digital tools for others:

We talk a lot nowadays in this company about going paperless and writing digitally but handwriting is important. To me they complement each other. I take notes more easily and quickly with paper and pencil than with a computer. Writing also allows me to effectively memorize the information. (Aline #P1, February 2018)

This view on maintaining paper use, at least for notetaking, was widely shared among employees from the three divisions: 'I can print less by reading from two screens and

scanning documents, but for taking notes I need my small notebook with me' (Albert #M3, May 2017). Paper-based notetaking was also a valued practice among those acutely aware of the importance of eye contact in meetings:

It is important to see people in meetings, thus I don't take notes on the laptop, but use my notebook instead. It is irritating to see people in meetings staring at their screens instead of looking at each other. What's the point of having physical meetings?! (Gregory #B8, February 2018)

Telework vs. Corporate Space Routines

Contrary to planning expectations, our analysis revealed significant differences between telework and corporate space routines: 'I dedicate telework day to other work activities than those performed at the office, but also to personal activities' (Alain #M15, December 2018). The planned resemblance of routines across the corporate space and when working from home clashed with the meanings employees associated with each routine. Telework was associated with the need to suit personal circumstances: 'If there is a problem in my apartment, like when I need a plumber, I schedule it on my homeworking day' (Pascal #M9, November 2018). Telework was also associated with the desire for free time: 'Telework allows me to save some free time by doing laundry while I'm working, I easily save two hours for the weekend' (Yann #P27, November 2018). To recoup time lost to personal activities, hybrid workers extend their working days: 'In the afternoon of my teleworking day I work like a machine, non-stop until sometimes 22 h during busy periods' (Pascal #M9, November 2018).

Moreover, telework was associated with work activities requiring concentration because it provided a calm atmosphere distinct from the corporate space: 'I schedule my telework day by reserving tasks that require concentration and therefore all week I prepare a list of things to do quietly on Friday, my telework day' (Philippine #P26, December 2018). This included a range of individual activities, described as follows: 'I dedicate my teleworking day to reading complex documents that require concentration and writing reports. I also unstack less urgent but important emails' (Agnes #M1, November 2018).

Conversely, some activities, such as meetings, were identified as unsuitable for telework, especially among middle managers. These hybrid workers often interrupted their teleworking time to physically attend hybrid meetings. They explained that their physical presence in meetings increased efficiency. Furthermore, being remote led to marginalization and an inability to express opinions:

After a while I realized that I cannot handle homework if I spend my homeworking day making calls. It's unproductive, especially if it's big meetings because it goes all over the place and you don't interact in the same way on the phone or video as when you're physically present. Connection can suddenly freeze. We miss facial expressions that allow us to know other people's positions, as we never have a completely perfect image. (Mark #P17, May 2018)

The person who chairs the meeting always forgets to allow virtual attendees to speak, so I feel excluded while I am remotely present. (Claude #P25, September 2018)

Other hybrid workers – specifically those working in the *Wealth* division located at the Parisian centre – reframed the two routines by interrupting their teleworking time to attend social gatherings: 'It's nice to be present at these events – networking is important even though it disturbs my homeworking day. It would be convenient to be allowed to choose

our homeworking days depending on our calendar' (David #B28, March 2018). David's desire for flexibility in choosing teleworking days was shared; some even managed to enact this flexibility with their manager's support: 'When I see that there are meetings on my homework day, I move them to another day since my manager is flexible with that' (Gregory #M22, November 2018). Flexibility needs also permeated the domestic space, expressed as follows: 'At the beginning I was sitting all day at the home office desk but then I started to feel back pain by the end of the day. So now I start in bed, then move to the living room sofa with my laptop' (Claudine #P9, December 2018). Thus, hybrid workers partially abandoned the ideal domestic space and used less suitable spaces for telework, such as the living room or bedroom.

Discussion

This study focused on the process of implementation of hybrid workspace which interacted with the process of digitalization in a French banking organization. Our findings have implications for theoretical debates on (1) reshaping workspaces, (2) hybrid workspace, and (3) management of tensions in organizational change.

This study's first contribution involved bringing a tension lens in organizational change (Fairhurst, 2019; Seo et al., 2004) related to the reshaping of workspace (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Brown & O'Hara, 2003; Halford, 2005; van Marrewijk & van den Ende, 2018), while connecting different micro-processes of the planned change (Wright et al., 2023). Past studies on the reshaping of workspace have typically focused on one micro-process of change, that is, either the design or implementation process (e.g. Jemine et al., 2020; Lancione & Clegg, 2013) or employees post-change experiences (e.g. Elsbach & Pratt, 2007; Halford, 2005; Hirst, 2011). Contrastingly, our analysis revealed that the interaction among the three micro-processes emerge and develop tensions. For example, Digibank's change-designers and managers disregarded the entanglements between organizational actors and technology (Leonardi, 2012; Pasmore et al., 2019), as they did not take employees' knowledge and advice into consideration. Therefore, employees experienced excessive connectivity, stemming from the multitude of communication tools and software designed and implemented at the organizational level, as hindering their productivity. This reveals the importance of aligning social and technical systems while designing and implementing new technologies (Imran et al., 2021). Furthermore, following Alshwayat (2023), discrepancies were noted among different group of actors regarding the value of spatial regulations and guidelines. On the one hand was the change committee and consultants and on the other hand were referents and employees; this division created tensions during the implementation micro-process, leading to a vicious cycle after implementation.

Attending to the implementation micro-process allowed us to uncover three inadequacies in workspace change management. First, despite extensive change management meetings and communication, training, and simulation workshops aiming to alter the dynamics of change (Ford et al., 2008), the change-managers failed to recognize employees' improvisational strategies (Pina e Cunha et al., 2013). This led to tensions during the implementation phase, which manifested, for example, as feelings of segregation. The inclusion-exclusion tension identified in participation (Seo et al., 2004) emerged among non-managerial employees, their representatives, and management. This shows the

importance of valuing and including the voices of all change recipients in a change-planning process (Fairhurst et al., 2002). Second, top-down communication and simulation workshops created differences in the interpretation of rules and importance of the change between the change committee and recipients; recipients perceived the rules as being imposed on them and the change committee only communicated top-management' opinions, seeing value in the change as reflecting organizational ambitions (Lancione & Clegg, 2013) in terms of digitalization. Thus, critical and synchronous communication between change-managers and recipients is important to create conditions for successful change (Jian, 2007). Third, after implementation, change recipients' adaptations, meanings, and needs stemming from their daily experiences were not acknowledged by the organization; thus, human experience and continuous improvement should be recognized in the change processes (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Fairhurst, 2019).

Attending to the micro-process of change recipients' experiences revealed the tensions that emerged among different actors as they navigated hybrid workspace (Thomas et al., 2011). These tensions emanated from the different meanings imputed by actors to the change, as was evident, for instance, between those who perceived agile work as a healthy practice and those who perceived it as unnatural and impeding impromptu collaboration. Similarly, some employees perceived paperless work as a modern, less burdensome, eco-friendly practice while others linked paper-based working with effective knowledge assimilation. Unintended consequences of the change were also revealed, namely, space regulations were perceived to be time – and energy-consuming while impeding work productivity, echoing prior studies on agile offices (Bosch-Sijtsema et al., 2010; Brown & O'Hara, 2003). This was also evidenced by findings that paperless work may be unsuitable for some activities, cause visual discomfort, impede learning, and paradoxically cause more paper-printing. Introducing mobile technology also had unintended consequences, such as hindering employees' concentration, blurring the boundaries between corporate and domestic space, and entangling non-work and working hours despite the French law of disconnection. These findings are consistent with those of previous studies on telework (Leonardi et al., 2010). Mobile technology's apparent potential to facilitate managerial control in the domestic space also echoes the insights from previous hybrid workspace research (Halford, 2005).

This study's second contribution is to the debate on hybrid workspace. The findings confirm those of previous studies (Brown & O'Hara, 2003; Halford, 2005; Hislop & Axtell, 2009), suggesting that technology bridges space and time (Halford, 2005), enabling work to be relocated to the domestic space. Technology also enabled the organization to reduce paper consumption in the office (Sellen & Harper, 2002), while motion sensors aimed to help workers navigate the hybrid workspace and find appropriate individual and collaborative spaces. However, unlike previous studies that treated technology as static, our findings – similar to some studies on telework (Leonardi et al., 2010) – demonstrate that the employee – technology relationship is dynamic. For example, employees tricked motion sensors by creating a false bodily presence to transform agile into sedentary work, which led managerial action to abandon the use of the sensors. Employees also subverted communication tools to falsely appear occupied and disconnect from others.

Moreover, the findings foregrounded space as processual and intimately interconnected with human agency in producing hybrid workspace. Similar to prior studies (Halford, 2005; Hislop & Axtell, 2009), employees in our case associated some activities with the corporate space and others with the domestic space. For example, employees reserved activities that needed concentration and focus for teleworking. However, they also practiced focused activities in the corporate space by creatively transforming meeting rooms. Moreover, employees used space to disrupt managerial logics. For example, employees enacted collaborative work outside designated collaborative spaces. Additionally, employees used their domestic spaces to store paper and continue paper-based working. Finally, hybrid workers, in search of respite, worked from non-designated spaces in their domestic spaces and expressed their desire to work remotely from public spaces. Thus, these findings answer Stephenson et al.'s (2020) call for studies viewing space as an ongoing process, through the dynamic interplay between individuals and technology in producing contemporary workspaces (including hybrid workspace).

The third contribution is to the debate on managing tensions in the process of organizational change (Fairhurst, 2019; Mastio et al., 2024; Putnam et al., 2016; Putnam et al., 2014) by arguing to acknowledge and embrace tensions and address their management in the organizational change towards hybrid workspace. Past research on reshaping workspaces, except for Sivunen and Putnam (2020), has failed to address how organizational members respond to these tensions in their daily use of the workspace (Manca, 2022). Our finding shows that employees creatively embraced some tensions by, for example, adopting emergent work practices in connecting with and disconnecting from others; they also tried to find a middle ground in balancing out their daily paper usage.

Furthermore, with regard to the management of the tension in the context of telework vs. corporate space routines, our finding showcased employees' efforts to address time flexibility by selecting teleworking days with the support of their managers. Moreover, they spatially enacted creative solutions to navigate between domestic and corporate spaces during teleworking days. Employees also showed flexibility by adapting space for collaboration without losing on time and energy. Therefore, we suggest that change-planning and implementation should not treat time and space as means of regulating user behaviours, but as flexible and adaptable bases for users' own enactment (Putnam et al., 2014). Change agents and managers should learn from employees' improvisations and creativity in engaging with tensions, developing a paradoxical mindset (Fairhurst, 2019; Mastio et al., 2024).

Regarding the management of the tension in the context of sedentary vs. agile work, contrary to Sivunen and Putnam (2020)' finding that employees manage this tension by reframing opposites as complementary, our findings show that this tension led to a vicious cycle, at least on days when the building was at maximum capacity. However, some employees were also willing to reframe these opposites as complementary, as they saw the merits in agile work as a healthy practice. However, they were restrained by the inconsistencies between planning and implementation by the change-managers. These inconsistencies were also reinforced by excluding some employees from the hybrid program because they could not reallocate their households during the planning phase. By excluding these employees and not anticipating the increase of the number of employees in the corporate offices, Digibank's management and change agents' planning led to issues of space crowding. However, they

continued to marginalize employees resisting the clean desk policy and deny the tension by focusing on resolving it through trade-offs in favour of agile work (Elsbach & Pratt, 2007); as our findings reveal that at the end of the fieldwork, the change committee introduced new reinforcement measures.

Conclusion

This study brought a tension lens (Fairhurst, 2019; Seo et al., 2004) to the organizational change process towards hybrid workspace within a major bank in Paris. Through a longitudinal case study of three divisions at three separate locations, we found how inconsistencies between planning, implementation, and change recipients' experiences created four tensions within hybrid workspace: (1) connecting with vs. disconnecting from others, (2) agile vs. sedentary work, (3) paperless vs. paper-based working, and (4) telework vs. corporate space routines. We captured the ways these tensions were navigated and responded to by organization members in their daily working lives. By exposing these tensions, we suggest that change agents and management should consider different voices and opinions, engage in critical and synchronous communication with change recipients, and recognize continuous improvement (Jian, 2007; Pina e Cunha et al., 2013) while embracing the entanglements between organizational actors and technology (Imran et al., 2021; Pasmore et al., 2019).

By examining how organizational members manage change-related tensions, we suggest that change-managers should recognize, address and adopt creative ways to resolve the tensions instead of ignoring them or reinforcing guidelines to suppress one of the opposite poles (Fairhurst, 2019; Mastio et al., 2024); they should learn from change recipients' improvisations in this regard. This is in line with some previous research on managing tensions in organizational change (Putnam et al., 2014; Sivunen & Putnam, 2020). Furthermore, both space and time should be regarded as flexible in managing tensions arising from the implementation of hybrid workspace.

While this study offers useful insights that can be generalized to a larger field of organizations undertaking a change to hybrid workspaces, considering our theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), it also has some limitations. First, our research was conducted prior to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, which significantly transformed our understanding of the lived experiences of telework, hybrid workspace, and digital meetings (Crevani et al., 2021). Future research could investigate how the pandemic influenced planned change towards hybrid workspace. Second, we focused on the interaction between the process of digitalization and introduction of hybrid workspace. Future research could engage in strong process theorizing (Langley et al., 2013) by exploring how events in one process influenced the other.

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