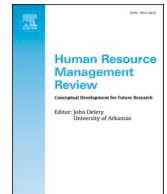




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## A framework for disability in the new ways of working

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## ABSTRACT

Organizations have been increasingly introducing new ways of working (NWW). Yet, it is still unclear how these new work practices (e.g. unassigned-desk policies; self-managing teams; telework) may affect the inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD). The framework developed in this paper theorizes the mechanisms through which NWW can enable or disable PWD's work outcomes (i.e. work-impairment coordination, perceptions of justice, isolation and privacy concerns). Additionally, we use the ideal worker concept to reason that, when combined, NWW practices create expectations for employees that can be incompatible with how PWD are often stereotypically perceived in the workplace. This article helps understand how NWW offer both opportunities and challenges for the socio-economic advancement of PWD and provides HR managers with specific recommendations to balance the enabling and disabling effects of the NWW.

## 1. Introduction

Approximately one billion people in the world have a disability. In the OECD countries, only about 42% of the people with disabilities (PWD) are employed, compared to 69% of the population without disabilities (OECD, 2022). In addition to this employment gap, evidence of PWDs' disadvantage in today's labor market abounds. Exclusion is noticeable through the disproportionate number of temporary and part-time contracts (Schur, 2003), pay gaps (Kruse, Schur, Rogers, & Ameri, 2018), lower job security (Schur et al., 2017), lower job and pay satisfaction (Hoque, Wass, Bacon, & Jones, 2018; Shantz, Wang, & Malik, 2018), among others. Despite the scholarly effort to come up with several explanations for this disability disadvantage, contributions of the novel workplace trends to the disablement of people with a broad range of (in)visible, physical, and cognitive impairments and chronic illnesses (Harpur & Blanck, 2020) are not obvious/remains unclear/are still to demonstrate. After COVID-19 pandemic, organizations rapidly adopted new work trends, such as virtual and collaborative work (Malhotra, 2021). It is thus imperative to understand the opportunities and challenges these trends bring to the equal treatment of PWD from a managerial perspective.

One of these growing trends has been referred to as the "new ways of working" (NWW), – a set of organizational practices and work conditions that follows ideals of flexibility, collaboration, empowerment, freedom, and democracy (Aroles, Vaujany, & Dale, 2021; Irving, Ayoko, & Ashkanasy, 2020; Peters, Poutsma, Van Der Heijden, Bakker, & Bruijn, 2014; Picard, Durocher, & Gendron, 2021; Taskin et al., 2017). In the NWW, the organization provides workers with flexibility by offering them different possibilities of *where*,

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when, and how to work through practices such as telework, flexible schedules, unassigned-desk policies, and activity-based offices (Kingma, 2019; Sewell & Taskin, 2015; Sivunen & Putnam, 2020). These work conditions are implemented along with organizational practices that provide employees with more work ownership and participation opportunities, while reducing bureaucratic constraints and slack (Kaufman, 2001; O'Leary, Mortensen, & Woolley, 2011). Such organizational practices include using multiple and temporary teams, self-managing teamwork, participative management, and management by objectives (Kingma, 2019; Taskin et al., 2017).

Although NWW are intended to bring benefits such as increased creativity, knowledge sharing and employee engagement (Wohlers & Hertel, 2017), several studies have identified downsides. For instance, scholars have associated NWW with blurring work-life boundaries (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2013), work intensification (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010), uncontrolled interaction (Wohlers & Hertel, 2017), and dehumanization (Taskin, Parmentier, & Stinghamer, 2019). Moreover, studies have indicated that NWW can be more disadvantageous for some. For instance, some authors identified that the new office spaces could lead to spatial "ethnic zoning" (Holck, 2016) as well as impact "the doing of gender" and exclusion of women in the workplace (Hirst & Schwanenland, 2018; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). Yet, a specific focus on how NWW may affect PWDs remains missing to date.

Some studies have, however, focused on one dimension of NWW – spatial-temporal flexibility (e.g., flexible schedules and telework) – and how it benefits PWDs (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Schur et al., 2014; Stone & Colella, 1996; Williams-Whitt & Taras, 2010). Yet, fewer studies investigate how other organizational practices related to the collaborative dimension of NWW (e.g., flat structures and output-based rewards) impact PWDs' work experience (yet see Baumgärtner, Dwertmann, Boehm, & Bruch, 2015; Hoque et al., 2018). To expand knowledge on how "the workplace of the future" (Malhotra, 2021) impacts some employees differently, we need a fuller understanding of the potential disadvantages of flexible work conditions and the effects of a broader range of organizational practices (e.g., management styles and type of teamwork) on PWDs. In addition, we need a better idea of how different practices together enable or disable the workplace experience of people with a broad range of impairments and chronic illnesses.

In response to these limitations, we present a framework of how NWW may affect the disadvantage that PWDs face in the workplace compared to people without disabilities (PWOD). We formulate propositions based on the literature on the outcomes of NWW, on disability in the workplace, and the few studies addressing both. In our framework, we identify the mechanisms through which the different NWW practices may affect PWDs' work outcomes. Through a social relational view of disability (Harlan & Robert, 1998; Thomas, 2004), we evaluate how each of the NWW practices can either create, aggravate or dismantle the barriers that disable people with impairments face/meet/encounter in the context of paid employment. By investigating the mechanisms through which NWW can enable and disable PWDs, we aim to better understand the complexity by which "the workplace of the future" might bring about different work outcomes for people with and without disabilities. Our framework aims to provide scholars with insights and directions for future research.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we outline the practices that are characteristic of the NWW. Second, we conceptualize the dependent variable of our framework, i.e. the disability disadvantage, and discuss the social-relational model of disability. Then, we present our framework. Informed by the social-relational model, we discuss the mechanisms that mediate the relationship between NWW practices and the disability disadvantage, outlining how each practice affects these mechanisms. We use the "ideal worker" concept (i.e. the characteristics and behaviors of employees that organizations value) to evaluate the conjoined impact of NWW practices on PWDs. Then, we discuss the possible moderators that might strengthen or weaken the effect of the NWW on PWDs' work outcomes. We end our paper by discussing its theoretical contributions, providing directions for future research, and conferring implications for managers and HR practitioners.

## 2. The new ways of working (NWW)

Recent improvements in information and communication technologies (ICT) have led organizations to face significant changes in their spatial configurations, corporate culture, and management (Kingma, 2019; Sewell & Taskin, 2015; Taskin et al., 2017). These changes have been argued to represent a shift from old to *new* ways of working (NWW) which are commonly defined as a set of practices that combine flexible work, specific organizational configurations, and participative and collaborative forms of management (Ajzen, Donis, & Taskin, 2015; Taskin et al., 2017). Although some of these practices are not necessarily "new" (e.g. participative management as described in Sashkin, 1976), the novel character of the NWW resides in the *combination* of these practices and their implementation following a "philosophy of management" that is aligned with ideals of individualization, flexibility, collaboration, empowerment, freedom, and democracy (Aroles et al., 2021; Taskin et al., 2017) and has the purpose of enabling an organization that is agile in attending to market demands (Peters et al., 2014; Peters & Blomme, 2019; Picard et al., 2021). This paper considers the practices most often associated with the NWW, which broadly encompasses practices that foster flexibility and collaboration.

Flexibility refers to employees' freedom to choose *where*, *when* and *how* they wish to work (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010; Sewell & Taskin, 2015), while collaboration is associated with sharing resources through interpersonal relationships to achieve common goals (Irving et al., 2020). *Telework* allows employees to connect to work and coworkers anywhere and anytime via ICT (Sewell & Taskin, 2015). Through telework, employees can work at home, at clients' premises, or while commuting from one place to another. Meanwhile, *flexible schedules* allow employees to adjust their work journey according to their personal preferences or work demands (Leslie, Manchester, Park, & Mehng, 2012). *Activity-based offices* enable workers to change their workspace flexibly according to their needs (e.g. lounge areas for informal meetings and quiet bubbles for concentration tasks) and provide spaces that allow employees to collaborate and share knowledge more easily (Irving et al., 2020; Kingma, 2019; Wohlers & Hertel, 2018). Finally, *hot-desking* and other *unassigned-desk policies* allow a given employee to work in proximity with different coworkers each day, as they have to occupy different workstations on different days (Morrison & Macky, 2017). By offering spatial-temporal flexibility, organizations aim to

increase employee's productivity and job satisfaction (Gonsalves, 2020; Leslie et al., 2012) while also reducing costs with real estate (Rolfö, Eklund, & Jahncke, 2018).

These flexible spatial and temporal work conditions are often implemented along with managerial tools and work configurations that grant workers more opportunities to participate in decision-making and greater autonomy and ownership over work processes. *Teamwork* is a common feature of NWW where employees partake in *multiple, temporary*, self-managing teams (O'Leary et al., 2011; Taskin et al., 2017). Through *participative management*, workers participate more in organizational decision-making, as hierarchy flattens and employees can offer their input (Hodson, 1996; Kaufman, 2001). Finally, *management by objectives* (MBO) sets goals for teams and individuals, rewarding workers according to their (group) outcomes (Kingma, 2019). MBO is thought to empower people and management while also making them more interconnected, fostering collaboration. These practices enhance organizational and employee performance by promoting collaboration at work (Peters et al., 2014; Picard et al., 2021; Taskin et al., 2017) while reducing bureaucratic constraints and slack (O'Leary et al., 2011).

### 3. The disability disadvantage at work

Prior research has shown that PWDs face a significant disadvantage in the labor market, observable across numerous measurements. PWDs are more likely to undergo persistent unemployment (Lengnick-Hall, Gaunt, & Kulkarni, 2008), have temporary and part-time contracts (Schur, 2003), and be displaced (Mitra & Kruse, 2016). At work, they present lower pay satisfaction (Shantz et al., 2018), face pay gaps (Kruse et al., 2018), have lower job satisfaction (Baumgärtner et al., 2015; Snyder, Carmichael, Blackwell, Cleveland, & Thornton, 2010), have poorer relationships with supervisors (Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016), face work-life balance issues (Jammaers & Williams, 2021), and are more likely to suffer ill-treatment (Fevre, Robinson, Lewis, & Jones, 2013).

The social-relational model of disability argues that these disadvantages that PWD face compared to PWOD are due to the interaction between impairments and the way society and its institutions are structured (Thomas, 2004). Specifically, the social-relational model stresses that people with impairments can become hindered through impairment effects and disabled by social structures and attitudes (Sang, Calvard, & Remnant, 2021; Thomas, 2004). The model recognizes that impairments can have real and meaningful effects on people's day-to-day experience at work by, for instance, causing pain and fatigue. However, *impairments* need not lead to a career disadvantage in and of themselves. Instead, impairments become disabling when interacting with the social barriers imposed by social structures and attitudes (Sang, Richards, & Marks, 2016; 2021). *Social structures* comprise both immaterial and material social arrangements, such as the way jobs are designed (Foster & Wass, 2013), and the way spaces are built (Foster & Wass, 2013; Van Laer, Jammaers, & Hoeven, 2020), while *social attitudes* relate to the negative stereotypes and stigmas that are associated with having an impairment (Beatty, Baldrige, Boehm, Kulkarni, & Colella, 2019; Stone & Colella, 1996). Social structures and attitudes can thus lead to the discrimination and ill-treatment of people with impairments, limiting their participation in social life while privileging people without impairments.

As such, organizational practices play an essential role in creating disability in the workplace (Harlan & Robert, 1998; Stone & Colella, 1996). For instance, office design can cause barriers to wheelchair users or people with autism by enforcing one standard of moving or interacting in the space. Following the social-relational model approach, we argue that the NWW are organizational practices that can create, aggravate or reduce the social barriers and impairment effects that disable people with impairments in the workplace. Based on this perspective, we investigate the opportunities and challenges that the NWW bring for PWD compared to PWOD.

This paper defines disability disadvantage as the gap in work-related outcomes between employees with and without disabilities.<sup>1</sup> A disability disadvantage is observed when PWOD present consistently higher work-related outcomes than PWD. We address the following work-related outcomes: job satisfaction, belongingness, physical health, psychological well-being, and performance. In the following sections, we analytically tear apart typical NWW practices and indicate how each practice can incorporate opportunities and challenges to PWD. On this basis, we refer to the *enabling potential* as the potential of an NWW component to decrease the disability disadvantage at work. Conversely, the *disabling potential* is the NWW's potential to increase the disability disadvantage. In the sections below, we discuss our framework (see Fig. 1).

### 4. A dis/ablement framework of the NWW

In this section, we build on existing literature to propose how NWW practices can affect the disability disadvantage in work outcomes. Guided by the social-relational model, which highlights the role of social structures, attitudes, and impairment effects in the creation of disability, we present four mechanisms through which disadvantage occurs: (1) *work-impairment coordination*, (2) *perception of justice*, (3) *workplace isolation* and (4) *privacy concerns*. Second, we propose how combining NWW practices can create a set of disabling "ideal worker" norms (i.e. workplace norms that are challenging for PWD to fulfill). Third, we discuss the contingent factors that moderate the effects of NWW practices on the disability disadvantage. We make the assumption that building an *inclusive climate* and providing *accessibility* can help reduce the disabling effects of the NWW. Finally, we outline that the NWW will have a different impact on people with varying *types of impairment* (e.g. the experience of people with a visual impairment will differ from that of people

<sup>1</sup> Despite the important conceptual differentiation between "impairment" and "disability" in the social-relational model of disability, we henceforth use disability as an umbrella term, unless we want to point specifically to impairment effects (e.g. pain and fatigue) or a specific type of impairment (e.g. visual impairment).

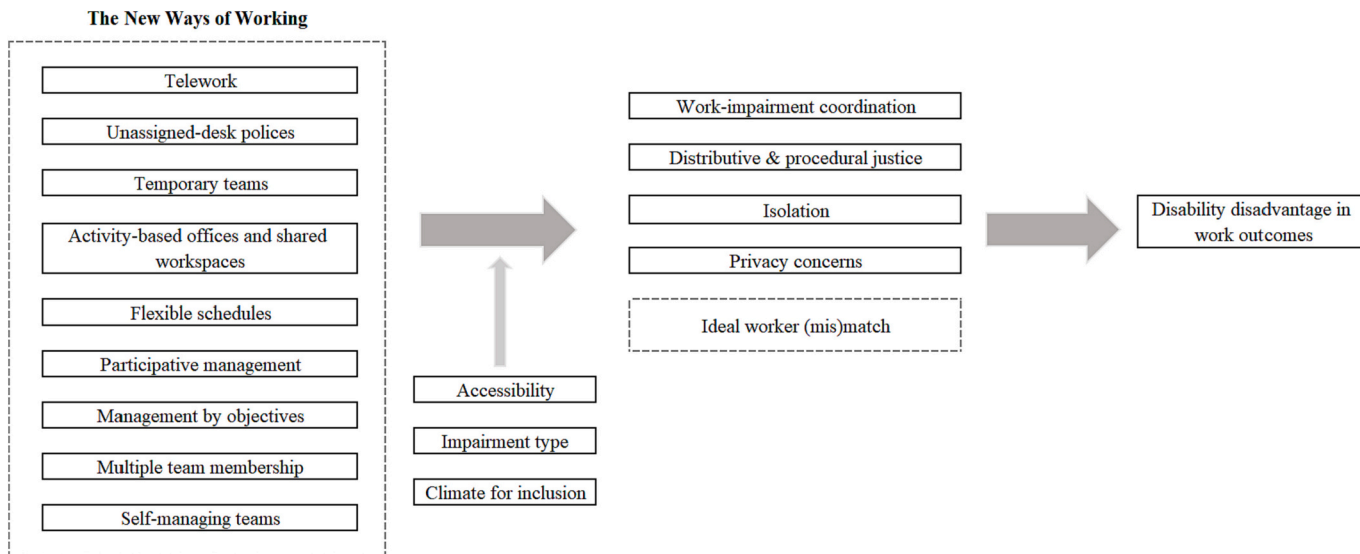


Fig. 1. A dis/ablement model of the NWW.

with autism in the same NWW).

#### 4.1. Work-impairment coordination

The social-relational model of disability argues/states/claims that impairments, through effects like pain and fatigue, can hinder people's daily work experience and require heightened care and attention (Thomas, 2004). Hence, a common challenge PWD face in the workplace is coordinating their impairment and health-related needs with their work activities (Jammaers & Williams, 2021). For instance, some impairments might require extended periods of rest, while others require frequent visits to medical professionals. Consequently, PWD need to coordinate these needs in a way that fits their work activities, which often leads PWD to make changes in their work life to take care of their health issues without harming their work outcomes. As such, the NWW can reduce the disability disadvantage by facilitating the coordination between work- and impairment-related needs.

One promising way the NWW might reduce the disadvantages of PWD at work is by providing *flexible schedules*. Flexible schedules can help PWD to allocate their time better to manage their impairment-related needs (Harpur & Blanck, 2020; Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Stone & Colella, 1996). For instance, it allows workers with fluctuating energy levels to arrange their workday accordingly, organizing their time in a way that better suits both personal needs and work demands. Prior studies have demonstrated this potential enabling role of time flexibility for PWD. For instance, Schur et al. (2014) found that changes in work schedule are the most common accommodation request among PWD, while Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2011) demonstrated that PWD perceive time flexibility as empowering in the organization. In addition, Brzykcy, Boehm, and Baldrige (2019) showed that employees presented higher perceived work ability when they were in flexible, individualized work arrangements and that this effect was more substantial among PWD. Finally, Bainbridge and Townsend (2020) found that people with caregiving responsibilities perceived organizations that allowed flexible schedules and working from home to be more supportive of combining work and care activities. Hence, flexible schedules would enable PWDs' work outcomes by allowing better work-impairment coordination.

Authors have also discussed the potential benefits of *telework* to PWD (Schur et al., 2014; Schur, Ameri, & Kruse, 2020). Schur et al. (2014) demonstrated that working from home is significantly more requested by employees with than without disabilities. However, the former are less likely to be in teleworking positions due to their segregation into lower-paid and non-managerial jobs (Hoque & Bacon, 2022). Wittmer and Lin (2017) showed that flexible arrangements that included telecommuting were positively related to PWDs' commitment to the organization. One of the advantages of telework is enabling people to save time and effort on commuting (Allen et al., 2013; Schur et al., 2020), which contributes to PWD physical safety and well-being as office spaces and public infrastructures often pose physical challenges to them (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Van Laer et al., 2020). Working from home can also facilitate the accommodation of impairment-related needs as PWD become less dependent on employers to obtain reasonable accommodation (Harpur & Blanck, 2020). Moreover, working from home can improve work-life balance (Hill, Miller, Weiner, & Colihan, 1998). This can be particularly beneficial for PWDs' well-being, as they are more likely than others to experience work-life balance issues due to their higher self-care needs (Jammaers & Williams, 2021). It is important to note that, although working from home improves PWDs' job-related outcomes, Hoque and Bacon (2022) found that it did not decrease the disability disadvantage, given that PWD also experience improved outcomes when working from home.

Some studies also suggest that *self-managing teams* benefit the coordination of personal and work lives. For instance, Cohen and Ledford (1994) showed that members of self-managing teams presented higher work-life quality than those of traditional teams, while Jönsson and Jeppesen (2013) findings showed that team autonomy was positively related to individual autonomy. Both individual autonomy and improvements in work-life balance can be beneficial for PWD, as they can enable PWD to better coordinate work and impairment-related needs. In support of this argument, a study by Brown and Moloney (2019) demonstrated that PWD, and especially women with disabilities, experience lower job autonomy than PWD which contributes to their lower well-being. Hence, self-managing teams might also have an enabling effect on the well-being of PWD.

Finally, in the NWW, workers often participate in multiple teams. *Multiple team membership* requires individuals to skillfully switch their attention from the tasks of one team to another and coordinate their time and skills to handle the different teams' work demands (O'Leary et al., 2011; van de Brake, Walter, Rink, Essens, & van der Vegt, 2020). Although a study by van de Brake et al. (2020) found multiple team membership did not increase employee work challenges, PWD might find it more challenging to participate in multiple teams than PWD. Specifically, coordinating task demands from multiple teams might be particularly challenging for PWD because they already have the additional challenge of coordinating their impairment effects with work (Randle & Hardy, 2017; Williams-Whitt & Taras, 2010). Thus, multiple team membership might challenge PWDs' work-impairment coordination.

**Proposition 1a.** Flexible work schedules, telework, and self-managing teams will decrease the disability disadvantage by facilitating PWDs' work-impairment coordination.

**Proposition 1b.** Multiple team membership will increase the disability disadvantage by hindering work-impairment coordination.

#### 4.2. Perceptions of justice

The social-relational model of disability stresses the role of social attitudes toward disability in creating disadvantage in the workplace. Research indeed found that PWD are often stereotyped at work as less productive (Jammaers, Zanoni, & Hardonk, 2016) and more privileged than others (Colella & Varma, 1999; Kensbock, Boehm, & Bourovoi, 2017), or to be pitied (Colella & Varma, 1999; Jammaers, 2022; Nelissen, Hülsheger, van Ruitenbeek, & Zijlstra, 2017). Such negative attitudes evoke negative outcomes, such as discrimination in hiring and poor performance appraisals (Beatty et al., 2019). Hence, another important factor through which the



NWW might influence the disability disadvantage by affecting social attitudes toward disability through the perceptions of justice in the organization (Colella, 2001; Jammaers, 2022). Specifically, *procedural justice* refers to the extent to which processes and procedures are fair (Cook & Hegtvædt, 1983; Konovsky, 2000) and is affected by the degree to which procedures represent accurate information, are unbiased and can be corrected according to feedback (Colquitt, 2001). Meanwhile, *distributive justice* captures the extent to which tasks, rights, benefits, and resources are allocated fairly among organizational members (Cook & Hegtvædt, 1983). Enhanced perceptions of justice have been demonstrated to increase employees' outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance (Konovsky, 2000).

In this sense, *participative management* can reduce the disability disadvantage by increasing PWDs' perceptions of procedural fairness, as several studies have demonstrated participation to be positively linked to procedural justice (e.g., Hunton, Hall, & Price, 1998). Participation in decision-making can lead employees to significantly influence both processes and outcomes, thus experiencing more control (Colquitt, 2001). Specifically, for PWD, participative management can make managers more willing to listen to PWDs' voices and use their inputs, which might facilitate the implementation of changes that benefit PWD in the organization (Baumgärtner et al., 2015; Kensbock et al., 2017). In line with this argument, a study by Baumgärtner et al. (2015) showed that low perceived participation in decision-making was negatively related to job satisfaction, and this relationship was stronger for PWD.

Similarly, a study by Kalev (2009) showed that organizational structures based on *self-managing teams* were positively related to demographic diversity in management positions. The author argues that in self-managing teams, team members have more participation in work processes and decision-making and more chances to show their capabilities. This gives team members with minority identities more opportunities to disprove stereotypical assumptions about them. As such, self-managing teams can also potentially increase PWDs' perceptions of procedural justice as this kind of organization might help reduce negative biases in people's attitudes toward them.

Additionally, employees' perceptions of procedural justice can also be affected by *management by objectives*. MBO leads employees to be evaluated and rewarded based on their performance outputs rather than their working hours (Kingma, 2019). As such, managers are expected to care less about whether employees are working during standard working hours and to be more focused on whether they have delivered desirable performance outcomes (Kelly, Ammons, Chermack, & Moen, 2010). Arguably, this should lead workers to be appraised and rewarded based on objective and straightforward performance evaluations (Hoque et al., 2018; Shantz et al., 2018), thus increasing perceptions of procedural justice (Cheng, 2014). For PWD, this objectivity should reduce the effect of negative biases that often occur in subjective forms of performance appraisals (Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016; Hoque et al., 2018), although in practice this seems easier said than done (Schloemer-Jarvis, Bader, & Böhm, 2021; Shantz et al., 2018). In support of this argument, Hoque et al. (2018) showed PWD with similar productivity characteristics as PWOD to present lower job-related anxiety when paid according to individual performance. Hence, for PWD whose impairments do not affect performance (e.g. knowledge worker in a wheelchair), output-based appraisals might be perceived as a fairer procedure to evaluate and reward performance, consequently reducing PWDs' stress and increasing their job-related outcomes such as well-being and job satisfaction.

**Proposition 2a.** Participative management, self-managing teams, and management by objectives will decrease the disability disadvantage by increasing PWDs' perceptions of justice.

Finally, the use of *flexible schedules* and *telework* can be particularly enabling because they apply to all organizational members in the NWW instead of exclusively to PWD, which might increase perceptions of distributive justice in the organization. Allowing flexible schedules and telework for all employees may counteract the adverse reactions that PWD encounter when they ask for "exceptions" (e.g. adjusted schedules or working from home) based on impairment-related needs. As prior studies indicate, coworkers may perceive impairment-related adaptations as unfair when not available to all (Colella, 2001), while supervisors regard impairment-related schedule disruptions as a performance threat (Williams-Whitt & Taras, 2010). Should the organization allow flexible schedules and telework to all its employees, schedule and location adaptations are no longer viewed as work disturbances but are accepted and expected (Bourdeau, Ollier-Malaterre, & Houffort, 2019; Gonsalves, 2020). As such, the availability of flexible schedules and telework to all employees will enhance employees' perceptions of distributive justice and reduce the disability disadvantage.

Yet, some NWW practices might reduce distributive justice. For instance, *shared workspaces* may become disabling for some PWD because the installation of reasonable accommodations requires a fixed space in the office environment. Prior studies show that coworkers often interpret visible reasonable accommodations as "unfair treatment" (Schur et al., 2014; Williams-Whitt & Taras, 2010). These may become more salient in shared workspaces, given that they become more visible. Prior research has shown that status differences become more salient when only certain people work in a shared space, while higher-ranked staff work in separate offices (Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Wasserman & Frenkel, 2011). Hence, giving PWD private offices or fixed seating in a shared workspace to accommodate their impairment-related needs might be interpreted by colleagues as an "undeserved privilege" and reduce perceptions of distributive justice.

**Proposition 2b.** Flexible schedules and telework will decrease the disability disadvantage by increasing PWOD's perceptions of justice.

**Proposition 2c.** Shared workspaces will increase the disability disadvantage by decreasing PWOD's perceptions of justice.

#### 4.3. Workplace isolation

As identified in the social-relational model of disability, barriers created by disabling social structures affect PWDs' relationships with others in the workplace. Social structures such as spatial arrangements (e.g. office type, virtual work) may become disabling when

they limit the movement, activities, and social interactions of PWD (Foster & Wass, 2013; Van Laer et al., 2020), consequently subjecting them to social isolation (Macdonald et al., 2018). At work, isolation refers to reduced participation in the social interactions that take place in the workplace (Daniel, Di Domenico, & Nunan, 2018). It reduces opportunities to create interpersonal networks, receive mentoring, and gather informal learning and, therefore, hinders the professional development of isolated workers (Cooper & Kurland, 2002). Prior research has shown that workplace isolation is a recurring problem among PWD, as they are more likely to experience social isolation and emotional loneliness (Macdonald et al., 2018) and often face obstacles to their full integration into the workplace (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011), such as being left out from informal social gatherings (Randle & Hardy, 2017; Robert & Harlan, 2006).

In this sense, while *telework* can enable PWD by allowing better coordination of impairment-related needs, it may also disadvantage PWD by leading to isolation (Sewell & Taskin, 2015) and diminished knowledge transfer among colleagues (Taskin & Bridoux, 2010). Furthermore PWD may also be relegated to telework positions as employers might find it an easier form of reasonable accommodation compared to adjusting the workplace (Schur et al., 2020). These factors may be particularly damaging for PWD, whose quality of interactional exchange with supervisors is already lower (Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016) and whose risk of workplace isolation is higher (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Robert & Harlan, 2006). A longitudinal study by Goldfarb, Gal, and Golan (2022) showed that people with autism who were allocated to telework during the COVID-19 pandemic suffered degradation in their job-related competence and autonomy and experienced a sense of social isolation and communication problems, while those who continued to physically attend work did not experience such alterations. Hence, the reduction of face-to-face interactions due to telework might contribute to the isolation of PWD.

The new office spaces might also have a disabling potential for PWD, as they are designed to encourage the “movement” of bodies instead of their “fixity” (Hirst & Schwabenland, 2018; Sivunen & Putnam, 2020). In *activity-based offices*, employees are expected to move from one space to another depending on the activity they need to perform (Kingma, 2019; Rolfö et al., 2018; Sivunen & Putnam, 2020). Consequently, new bodily and spatial norms are formed (Hirst & Schwabenland, 2018). For example, employees are expected to perform tasks that demand concentration in quiet rooms and then move to lounge areas or meeting rooms to perform activities that require interaction with coworkers. These mobility norms have implications for the social dynamics within the organization, as employees need to constantly relocate from one place to another to find and meet coworkers and participate in the workplace’s social life (Sivunen & Putnam, 2020). This movement, however, might not be easy for PWD. For instance, a study by Randle and Hardy (2017) demonstrated that people with cognitive impairments perceive working at different locations as challenging. Also, a study by Picard et al. (2021) reports office spaces in which landings between storeys are designed for the intended use as a gathering point where spontaneous meetings can occur. As one might promptly conclude, landings impose significant obstacles for those with mobility impairments. Hence, although the new office spaces are created to promote social interaction, they might exclude PWD from daily office interactions and banter (Randle & Hardy, 2017; Van Laer et al., 2020).

Another factor to consider is that although the constant social changes in the NWW are aimed at increasing workplace interactions, they have also been associated with a decrease in the quality of workplace relationships. For instance, activity-based offices have been associated with decreased cooperation among team members (Wohlers & Hertel, 2018) and hot-desking has been associated with increased uncooperative behaviors, distrust in colleagues, and negative interpersonal relationships in the office (Morrison & Macky, 2017). This may be deleterious to the already problematic socialization of PWD (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011), some of whom are primarily dependent upon coworkers’ willingness to “help out” (Mik-Meyer, 2016). As such, while these constant social changes can be detrimental to the socialization of everyone in the organization, they are expected to be more deleterious to PWD due to their higher risk of social isolation (Anderson, Bricout, & West, 2001), different patterns of social interaction (Szulc, McGregor, & Cakir, 2021), and occasional dependency on coworkers’ prosocial behaviors (Mik-Meyer, 2016).

The NWW is also characterized by the extensive use of *temporary teams* (Ajzen et al., 2015; Picard et al., 2021). This type of teamwork threatens the development of affective relationships within the team (Gonzalez-Mulé, Cockburn, McCormick, & Zhao, 2020) and might accentuate the socialization problems that PWD already face (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). For instance, Sang et al. (2016) revealed how changing teams can be challenging for people with impairments such as autism. Also, Randle and Hardy (2017) demonstrated that frequent reconstitutions in teams required PWD to renegotiate accessibility with colleagues whenever the team changed. Hence, temporary teams might challenge the development of quality interactions with team members, leading to further isolation of PWD.

On a more positive note, through *unassigned-desk policies*, employees are encouraged to occupy different workstations daily and consequently interact with other people in the office space (Gonsalves, 2020; Irving et al., 2020; Wohlers & Hertel, 2017). This potential increase in interactions may be beneficial for PWD as it can increase the possibilities to receive informal mentoring (Stone & Colella, 1996) as well as reduce their (already higher) risk of social isolation (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Robert & Harlan, 2006). As Snyder et al. (2010) showed, PWD are more likely than PWOD to be excluded from informal gatherings and be ignored in meetings. As such, by encouraging everyday social interactions through hotdesking, there should be more opportunities for PWD to be included in informal interactions with coworkers. In addition, colleagues with prejudices and stereotypes about PWD might learn through their encounters and interactions that these assumptions are false when being seated next to a colleague with a disability whom they would otherwise avoid (Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Robert & Harlan, 2006). Hence, unassigned-desk policies might reduce the isolation of PWD at work.

**Proposition 3a.** Telework, activity-based offices and temporary teams will increase the disability disadvantage by increasing PWDs’ workplace isolation.

**Proposition 3b.** Unassigned-desk policies will decrease the disability disadvantage by decreasing PWDs’ workplace isolation.

#### 4.4. Privacy concerns

Privacy refers to the extent to which employees can “control or regulate the boundary between self and others” (Khazanchi, Sprinkle, Masterson, & Tong, 2018, p. 594), including the degree to which they are visible and audible to others and succeed in hiding an impairment (Kim & de Dear, 2013). A lack of privacy may be caused by enhanced visibility or decreased sensory privacy (e.g. sounds from extraneous conversations, visions from people constantly moving). In environments high in visibility, accommodations, impairments and their effects (e.g. pain and fatigue) are more exposed to others (Gignac et al., 2021). Meanwhile, sensory interferences can make it harder for some PWD to concentrate on work activities or even contribute to a deterioration of their health (Nielsen, Emberland, & Knardahl, 2021; Van Laer et al., 2020). In light of the social-relational model of disability, controlling visibility can be understood as a way to avoid disabling social attitudes, while preventing sensory interferences can be understood as a way to manage the impairment effects that cause hindrance to daily activities.

In this respect, while the *shared workspaces* in activity-based offices are designed to increase the visibility and proximity of employees to foster interaction, they do so to the detriment of workers’ privacy (Khazanchi et al., 2018; Kim & de Dear, 2013). Indeed, several studies name the lack of privacy as a primary concern among employees in the NWW (Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Morrison & Stahlmann-Brown, 2020). These privacy issues can be particularly relevant to people with invisible impairments (Hastuti & Timming, 2021; Stone & Colella, 1996), who prefer to conceal their condition to avoid adverse reactions from managers and coworkers (Follmer, Sabat, & Siuta, 2020). Consequently, some employees might need to invest more effort in concealing their impairment in shared workspaces, negatively affecting work outcomes and health. For example, a person who chooses not to disclose their Chron’s disease might be perceived as more disengaged in a shared workspace by others, as they become seen as taking more (toilet) breaks, which can lead to poorer performance evaluations. Spiegel, De Bel, and Steverink (2016) show that workers’ prolonged efforts to conceal their visual impairment in the workplace reduced their well-being.

There is also evidence that open, shared workspaces and activity-based offices present increased noise and interruptions (Baldry & Barnes, 2012; Morrison & Macky, 2017), even if some studies claim improved auditory privacy (Rolfö et al., 2018). This can be especially problematic for people with hearing and learning impairments and neurodivergence,<sup>2</sup> as the distractions created by these disturbances may be disabling for their performance and health. For instance, Nash (2022) has shown that neurodivergent people experience distress from having to work in shared spaces due to their sensory sensitivities. Thus, the lack of visual and auditory privacy in shared workspaces might have a disabling effect on PWDs’ well-being and (perceived) performance.

Finally, *telework* can increase privacy as employees become less visible to coworkers and supervisors (Daniel et al., 2018). As the body becomes less visible, impairments might become less salient to others, and PWD will be less exposed to differential treatments, such as stares and unsolicited help from others. In addition, those with invisible conditions might need to invest less energy in concealing their impairment when working at home. PWD might also enjoy decreased sensory disturbances by working from home compared to working at the office, which facilitates concentration for those whose impairments make concentrating more difficult. Nevertheless, recent research on home working in the pandemic has made it clear how, even for people within the same impairment type group (e.g. neurodivergence), preferences related to privacy concerns may differ a great deal, with dyslexic people fearing increased visibility of spelling mistakes in online meetings where reliance on written communication increases (Das, Tang, Ringland, & Piper, 2021) and people with autism enjoying enhanced control over a social setting through the turning off of cameras (Tang, 2021).

While lack of privacy may be a common problem for everyone in the organization, PWD are more susceptible to experiencing its negative consequences given their complex disclosure dilemmas (Follmer et al., 2020). Moreover, the more visible their impairments become, the more prone they are to negative social attitudes like damaging stereotyping and stigmatization (Jammaers & Ybema, 2022). Also, sensory overwhelm is more likely and more problematic for PWD (e.g. neurodivergent workers, see (Nash, 2022; Szulc et al., 2021); workers with adult-onset hearing loss (see Baldridge & Kulkarni, 2017).

**Proposition 4a.** Activity-based offices and shared workspaces will increase the disability disadvantage by increasing PWDs’ privacy concerns.

**Proposition 4b.** Telework will decrease the disability disadvantage by decreasing PWDs’ privacy concerns.

#### 4.5. The “ideal worker” in the NWW

When applied simultaneously, the practices associated with NWW contribute to an ideal of agility where work is performed anywhere and anytime through devoted collaboration. This creates standards of desirable behaviors for employees, which produces the image of an “ideal worker”, i.e. a worker for whom jobs are designed (Acker, 1990). Contrary to traditional work environments, the ideal worker of the NWW not only prioritizes work over private life (Acker, 1990) but also dismisses any meaningful separation between the two domains. As such, the “new” ideal worker is a person who is capable of attending to work requests flexibly, simultaneously and “on demand” (Picard et al., 2021). This requires remaining connected to work at all times so that problems are resolved whenever they arise, as one is constantly “on the move” and work-ready (Hirst & Schwabenland, 2018).

While some NWW practices can create ideal-worker norms of availability or mobility when used in isolation from the other practices, the bundle of NWW practices strengthens and combines these norms. For instance, telework may create norms of availability

<sup>2</sup> Nash (2022) defines neurodiversity as “an umbrella term meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information in a different way to the neuro-typical person, who processes information and functions in the way society expects.” (p. 1).



even when applied in more traditional work environments, as workers might believe they have to demonstrate that they are available when working at home (Sewell & Taskin, 2015). Yet, these norms of availability are expected to be enhanced when telework is combined with practices that encourage collaboration, mobility, and work commitment. Specifically, the combination of NWW practices can create expectations where employees must use telework and flexible schedules as a means to work during unrestricted hours in order to achieve the objectives established by management or to attend to the (multiple) team demands. Alternatively, activity-based offices might lead employees to believe they need to be mobile in office spaces in order to work more effectively in self-managing teams or to be able to actively engage in participative management. Hence, when combined, NWW practices can reinforce norms and expectations of availability, connectivity, and mobility.

However, research has highlighted the difficulties for PWD to embody ideal worker norms (Foster & Wass, 2013; Jammaers & Zanoni, 2021). For instance, Jammaers and Zanoni (2021) showed that in organizations where flexibility is valued, PWD become labeled as inflexible and unproductive and seen as the antithesis of the ideal worker. Such difficulties are likely to be aggravated in an environment that expects a hypermobile body (Van Laer et al., 2020) and an agile mind that can attend to simultaneous demands, switch rapidly from one task to another, and find concentration in a bustling environment (Baldrige & Kulkarni, 2017; Nash, 2022). PWD might also find it more challenging to meet the high (non)verbal communication standards now required in both virtual and face-to-face meetings (Das et al., 2021). Lastly, attaining to ideal worker norms means oftentimes neglecting the needs of the body in favor of work demands, something PWD already struggle with (Jammaers & Williams, 2021).

As such, PWDs' difficulty to enact the role of the "new" ideal worker can contribute to a further increase in the disability disadvantage (Randle & Hardy, 2017), given that prior research has demonstrated that a mismatch between the perceptions of what constitutes an ideal worker and the *actual* worker leads to lower performance evaluations from managers (Reid, 2015) as well as career penalties (Leslie et al., 2012).

**Proposition 5.** When combined, NWW practices increase the (perceived) mismatch between the ideal worker and the worker with a disability, which in turn amplifies the disability disadvantage.

#### 4.6. Contingent factors

As shown in previous sections, the practices associated with NWW can present both benefits and disadvantages for PWD. For example, our framework recognizes that activity-based offices and shared workspaces have an overall disabling effect on PWD by increasing unfairness perceptions, isolation, and privacy concerns. On the other hand, self-managing teams are likely to enable PWDs' work outcomes by increasing work-impairment coordination and fairness perceptions. Meanwhile, some practices can have contrasting effects on the disability disadvantage. For instance, telework can enable PWD by allowing better work-impairment coordination but at the same time can disable them by increasing their isolation. Here we discuss the conditions that might influence the extent to which NWW practices enable (vs. disable) PWDs' work outcomes.

##### 4.6.1. Inclusive organizational climate

Several authors have drawn attention to the role of organizational climate and culture in the inclusion of various minorities, related to gender, sexual orientation, age, and ethnicity (Nishii, 2019; Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2018). Following Nishii (2019) definition, an inclusive climate refers to employees' shared perception that the organization is committed to reducing bias in employment practices, integrating differences among employees, and actively seeking different employees' perspectives in decision-making. As such, in an organization with an inclusive climate, diverse employees are valued and treated more equally.

This is also true for PWD who benefit from a supportive work environment with unhindered access to opportunities and resources (Colella, DeNisi, & Varma, 1997; Follmer & Jones, 2018; Jones, 2018). Recent empirical studies demonstrate, for instance, that inclusive climate attenuates the negative effect of supervisor-subordinate disability incongruence on their relationship quality (Dwertmann & Boehm, 2016). Zhu, Law, Sun, and Yang (2019) found that when employees perceived their workplace as inclusive, the job self-efficacy gap between PWD and PWOD was reduced. Nelissen et al. (2017) showed that inclusive climate was positively related to inclusive behaviors toward PWD, such as helping out with tasks and work-related problems.

Hence, we expect that an inclusive organizational climate will enable organizations to reduce the disabling effects of NWW practices. For instance, an inclusive climate can reduce the decreased justice perceptions when PWD are offered a fixed workstation to better accommodate their impairment-related needs, as coworkers value having diversity and understand this requires different treatment (Jammaers, 2022). We also expect an inclusive climate to attenuate the potential disabling effect of the combined NWW practices on the disability disadvantage by reducing the mismatch between PWD and the ideal worker image.

In addition, we expect a high climate for inclusion to strengthen some of the outlined positive effects of singular NWW practices. For instance, while research suggests that management by objectives can improve perceptions of justice by evaluating and rewarding PWD through objective performance appraisals (Hoque et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2010), other studies suggest that these appraisals are still subjected to the biased judgments of managers and are therefore influenced by negative stereotypes against PWD (Schloemer-Jarvis et al., 2021; Shantz et al., 2018). Indeed, a review by Schloemer-Jarvis et al. (2021) highlighted that although objectivity in appraisals enables a more accurate evaluation of PWDs' current performances, bias and stigma may still interfere with how evaluators process information on the performance of PWD, thus leading to erroneous evaluations. Yet, an inclusive climate can reduce these negative biases and stereotypes against PWD and thus strengthen the enabling potential of management by objectives for PWD.

**Proposition 6.** The effect of the NWW on increasing/decreasing the disability disadvantage is dampened/strengthened in organizations with a high (vs. low) inclusive climate.

#### 4.6.2. Lack of accessibility

While accommodations are individualized solutions that help accommodate people's impairments in the workplace, often in a reactive manner, workplace accessibility allows PWD to use spaces and technology and access information and resources on equal footing with PWOD, in a proactive manner (Fujimoto, Rentschler, Le, Edwards, & Härtel, 2014). Inaccessibility is a complex phenomenon for PWD that extends well beyond the organizations' physical front door and limits in productivity (e.g. inaccessible business trips or software) to encompass virtual spaces and limits in social participation (e.g. inaccessible team building events) (Das et al., 2021; Østerud, 2022; Van Laer et al., 2020). Although also vital in traditional workplaces, accessibility becomes ever more an important contingency factor in the NWW as it can reduce the disabling and enhance the enabling potential of NWW practices.

For instance, a lack of accessibility in activity-based offices can segregate people in specific areas by preventing them from accessing all spaces equally (Van Laer et al., 2020) and thus further contribute to increasing their isolation. Inaccessibility can also prevent PWD from occupying spaces where they would benefit from greater privacy (e.g. silent bubbles, resting spaces). Conversely, improved accessibility can reduce the need for requesting reasonable accommodations under hotdesking. For example, if all desks have an electronically adjustable height people with back injuries, reduced muscular strength, or in a wheelchair might not need to have an assigned desk just for them. This can prevent negative consequences for PWD such as resentment from colleagues and perceptions of unfairness in the distribution of resources (Florey & Harrison, 2000).

The lack of accessibility can also be problematic when it comes to technology, as PWD might encounter difficulties when using inaccessible software (Hoque & Bacon, 2022; Das et al., 2022). For instance, when teleworking, people with visual impairments might miss out on important information during online meetings if the company's communication software (e.g. TEAMS) is incompatible with screen reading software. By hindering communication and information exchange, lack of accessibility can also hinder PWDs' engagement in participative management and their effective participation in teamwork, as it limits their means to give ideas, feedback, and suggestions to managers and teammates (Fujimoto et al., 2014). In this way, inaccessibility might make it more difficult to perform tasks under telework as well as work with multiple teams, which can diminish the enabling effect of these practices on work-impairment coordination.

Finally, although accessibility might not help reduce the disability disadvantage for all NWW practices (e.g. the outcomes of flexible schedules and temporary teams are likely to be unaffected by accessibility improvements), accessibility can make it overall easier for PWD to perform closer to the ideal-worker standards by reducing their limitations in the workplace, thus reducing the ideal worker mismatch.

**Table 1**

List of illustrative examples of how impairment type affects the relationship between the NWW practices and the proposed mechanisms.

Impairment type	Examples to be analyzed in future research
<b>Sensory impairment</b> (e.g. visual, hearing)	People with sensory impairments may be more disadvantaged by practices that increase isolation, given that their social integration is more challenging compared to people with other impairment types. People with sensory impairments may be more at risk of experiencing decreased perceived justice in the NWW, given their need for specialized equipment (e.g. fixed workstation with a magnifying computer screen).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges in communication.</li> <li>Benefit from assistive devices and job adaptations.</li> </ul>	People with sensory impairments may be more disadvantaged by practices that increase privacy concerns, given that sensorial disturbances (e.g., noises or lights) affect their health and ability to perform tasks.
<b>Mobility and motor</b> (e.g. muscular dystrophy, amputation, cerebral palsy)	People with mobility and motor impairments may benefit more from practices that improve work-impairment coordination, given their higher challenges with commuting. People with mobility and motor impairments may be more at risk of isolation in the NWW, given their higher difficulty with constantly moving around at, for instance, activity-based offices and hotdesking.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges in moving around and commuting.</li> <li>Benefit from assistive devices and adaptations in the built environment.</li> </ul>	People with mobility and motor impairments may benefit more from practices that increase procedural justice, given the lower impact of their impairment on their job performance.
<b>Neurodivergence and cognitive</b> (e.g. ADHD, autism)	People with neurodivergence or cognitive impairments may suffer more from increased isolation, as sociability is more challenging for them. People with neurodivergence or cognitive impairments may benefit more from practices that increase sensory privacy, given that they are more susceptible to loss of concentration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges in concentrating and/or sociability.</li> <li>Benefit from structure and mental breaks.</li> </ul>	
<b>Chronic and mental illnesses</b> (e.g. chronic fatigue syndrome, Parkinson's disease, chronic depression)	People with chronic and mental illnesses may benefit more from practices that improve work-impairment coordination, given their higher self-care needs (e.g. symptoms management).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges in managing symptoms.</li> <li>Benefit from breaks to receive medical care and deal with symptoms.</li> </ul>	

**Proposition 7.** The effect of the NWW on work-impairment coordination, isolation, privacy, justice, and the ideal worker (mis)match is moderated by the accessibility of the NWW practices.

#### 4.6.3. Type of impairment

Although PWD are subject to common problems such as being treated according to stigmatized beliefs and facing a higher risk of social exclusion, workplace experiences are known to vary according to impairment type and characteristics. Impairments can differ in terms of their nature (e.g. sensory, mobility, cognitive/neurodivergence, chronic and mental illness) but also in terms of their visibility (i.e. visible vs. invisible) and these differences are likely to also play a contingent role in how the NWW have an enabling or disabling potential on the disability disadvantage.

Hence, people with certain impairment types and characteristics may become more disabled than others in the NWW. For example, people with cognitive impairments who find it difficult to concentrate amid interruptions might be more disadvantaged by practices that reduce sensory privacy, such as the shared workspaces in activity-based offices (Nash, 2022). Privacy concerns might also become more relevant for those with invisible impairments who have chosen to conceal their disabilities (Hastuti & Timming, 2021). Meanwhile, people with chronic illnesses that require longer periods of rest might enjoy a greater advantage from the practices that increase work-impairment coordination, such as flexible schedules (Jammaers & Williams, 2021). In Table 1 we provide examples of how different types of impairment can affect the disability disadvantage via their respective relevant mechanisms. Four impairment types were clustered (i.e. sensory, mobility and motor, cognitive and neurodivergence, chronic and mental illness), depending on their similarity in workplace needs and challenges.

**Proposition 8.** The effect of the NWW on isolation, privacy, justice and work-impairment coordination is contingent upon impairment type.

## 5. Discussion

This article aimed to review and integrate the literature on the outcomes of the NWW for PWD, on disability in the (primarily traditional) workplace, and the few studies addressing both disability and NWW practices. This was done to construct a framework connecting the NWW to the disability disadvantage, identifying possible relations for future research and supporting practical recommendations.

### 5.1. Theoretical contributions

This paper contributes to the HRM literature by reflecting on the inclusionary potential of NWW for PWD and setting up a research agenda. Despite their growing popularity, the various impacts of NWW on some employees remain unclear. Indeed, there is a danger that the workplace of the future might not bring the promised equality in chances and opportunities (e.g., Hirst & Schwabenland, 2018; Kelly et al., 2010), hence this urgent call for a more thorough investigation. A handful of studies have addressed the benefits that flexible work conditions may bring (e.g., Foster & Wass, 2013; Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Schur et al., 2020) but more research is needed to address how these benefits come together with the effects of collaborative practices and spatial arrangements (e.g., Randle & Hardy, 2017; Sang et al., 2016) to impact the outcomes of PWD in the new workplace.

Through an inter-disciplinary approach, integrating insights from different research fields (e.g., ergonomics [e.g., Wohlers & Hertel, 2017], social psychology [e.g., Hewstone & Swart, 2011], sociology [e.g., Acker, 1990]), this paper attempts to establish an overall framework of possible relationships between the disability disadvantage at work and flexibility (e.g. flexible schedules), spatial elements (e.g. activity-based offices), managerial tools (e.g. participative management), and team characteristics (e.g. temporary teams) in the NWW. By discussing these different elements, we contribute to the understanding of how new business trends can affect the work experiences of PWD in the organization. Specifically, we identified that activity-based offices, shared workspaces, multiple team membership, and temporary teams can be expected to overall aggravate the disability disadvantage, while flexible schedules, self-managing teams, un-assigned desk policies, participative management, and management by objectives are likely to narrow “disability gaps”. The effect of other practices is likely to be more complex (e.g. telework).

Finally, beyond discussing each of the separate practice associated with the NWW, we have also discussed how the combination of these practices can affect PWD by creating narrow expectations of ideal work behaviors which may further lead to a perceived ideal worker mismatch (Acker, 1990). Understanding the NWW as a combination of multiple practices is particularly important given that the practices associated with the NWW are often implemented altogether in organizations that aim to reap the benefits (e.g. cost efficiency, agility) of the new workplace (e.g., Kelly et al., 2010; Kingma, 2019; Taskin, Ajzen, & Donis, 2017). Hence, by providing a unified framework of the NWW, we offer a more complete comprehension of the ways by which they pose both challenges and opportunities to workplace inclusion.

### 5.2. Directions for future research

Our framework offers several avenues for future research. A first avenue for research is to compare the disparities in the disability disadvantage between organizations that rely on more traditional work practices with those that have implemented the NWW. This can be done by comparing different case-studies as well as by using a longitudinal set-up in organizations that have undergone the change into the NWW. However, it should be noted that access for longer periods of time to organizations that employ a good number of PWD

is extremely challenging. Ideally, research endeavors would be approached through mixed-method designs. Despite combining the “best of both worlds”, such designs remain vastly underused in the study of disability in management and organization studies (only 3% of studies in Beatty et al.’s (2019) review of the literature). On the one hand, innovative quantitative methods such as network analysis and quasi-experiments (e.g., Bernstein & Turban, 2018) could help test some of the proposed relationships related to changing patterns of social interactions in our framework. Meanwhile, survey research could be used to test our propositions by using already existing measures (e.g., job satisfaction, e.g. Hoque et al., 2018; inclusive climate, e.g. Nishii, 2019) and/or adapting previously developed scales (e.g., measures on ideal-worker norms, e.g. Glaveli, Karassavidou, & Zafiroopoulos, 2013). On the other hand, extensive qualitative methods such as ethnography and shadowing could be useful to better understand the processual nature of NWW (Aroles et al., 2021) in investigating the “making of” disability disadvantage. Research in that vein would focus on, for instance, NWW as a materialization of power relations and resistance, or as lived experience that make the disability disadvantage emerge.

Second, future research should consider how the NWW might affect PWD differently not only depending on impairment type, but also depending on other intersecting identities. Previous research has shown how the experiences of female, older or ethnically-diverse PWD differ substantively from those of white, young, male PWD (Jammaers & Williams, 2021). Therefore, there is a need for more intersectional approaches that are sensitive to the way other identities such as gender, sexual orientation, race and age complicate the workplace experience of PWD. Further research is thus needed to better understand how the components of the NWW can differently affect people with (in)visible or (non)-physical impairments with different socio-demographic backgrounds.

### 5.3. Managerial implications

Our framework indicates the greatest disabling risks for PWD in the NWW to be related to isolation and privacy concerns. Conversely, it suggests that inclusive climate and accessibility can be used to mitigate the disabling risks while enhancing the positive effects that can be expected to arise following the move from old to new ways of working.

First, when designing (or re-designing) the physical office space, designers and architects need to make sure to include enough closed-off rooms where people can enjoy more privacy to administer self-care (e.g. lay down for a rest, change a stoma, regulate blood glucose levels). These private spaces can have multifunctional purposes related to diverse personnel (e.g. be used for praying, breastfeeding, meditation). At the same time, it is important to provide spaces that allow a better concentration for those with sensory (e.g. blindness) and cognitive impairments (e.g. ADHD) by reducing auditory and visual interferences.

Second, to reduce the isolation of PWD in the office, facilities, IT and HR professionals should ensure that office designs and desk policies are fully accessible and do not impede the installation of reasonable accommodations, nor fix PWD in a segregated and isolated determined space (e.g. grouping together wheelchair users on ground floor). Ideally, the organization’s accessibility should allow PWD and PWD to interact in the same spaces, use the same entrances, participate in the same collaborative practices and be equally able to move and occupy all physical (e.g. the “wellness” rooms) and immaterial spaces (e.g. the organization’s social life) in the organization. This also requires the designers of digital spaces to ensure that the information and communication technologies are fully accessible. Hence, it is important to ask for the advice of accessibility experts and disability-led organizations during the design process of both spaces and technologies.

Third, managers and HR professionals need to provide enough options and creative solutions that allow social interaction, even when working from home. The COVID-19 pandemic has offered multiple insights of virtual social activities that successfully maintain employees’ interactions while working from home, such as digital coffee corners or online group activities (e.g. yoga). PWD may also benefit from online buddy systems that facilitate and institutionalize asking for help from peers through videocalls as well as from diversity networks that enable best-practice sharing.

Finally, practitioners should create an organizational climate where values of equality and inclusion take center stage, next to the other core values of the NWW (e.g., agility, collaboration). Such an inclusive climate can be achieved by establishing policies that support diversity and disability in hiring and recruiting (Shore et al., 2018), providing training on diversity to coworkers (Shore et al., 2018), implementing buddy systems (Kulkarni & Lengnick-Hall, 2011), and optimizing the process of reasonable accommodation ensuring that PWD participate in the decisions concerning their own accommodations (Kensbock et al., 2017). Importantly, in a truly inclusive climate, the voices of PWD are included – if not prioritized – throughout the entire design, implementation and evaluation process (Jammaers & Ybema, 2022).

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### CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Ive D. Klinksiek:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization. **Eline Jammaers:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision. **Laurent Taskin:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Project administration, Funding acquisition.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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