

Stream proposal

Disability and the modern workplace: New ways of inclusion or exclusion?

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Theme

Digital transformation, the COVID-19 pandemic, and shifting attitudes towards work and life have led to a rapid change in organizations during the past decade (Malhotra, 2021; Maurer, Bach, & Oertel, 2022). Together they have enabled 'new' ways of working (Aroles, Vaujany, & Dale, 2021). Modern workplaces have begun to transform the challenges and opportunities for all of us (Hoque & Bacon, 2022). Work-from-home, multi-team membership, or assistive technologies present us with new ways of interacting with each other and the structures in which we work. There is a lot of potential for building more equitable and inclusive workplaces for all (Villamor, Hill, Kossek, & Foley, in press). Yet, in a similar manner existing inequalities and marginalization may be exacerbated (Harpur & Blanck, 2020).

One group that deserves particular attention are persons with disabilities (Hoque & Bacon, 2022). It is hitherto poorly understood how they fare in the modern workplaces shaped by new ways of working. In their new paper Klinsiek, Jammaers and Taskin (in press) outline possible ways, in which persons with disabilities may benefit from or be obstructed by new ways of working. For instance, flexibility and unassigned desk practices may decrease disability disadvantage whereas multiple team memberships and activity-based offices may do the contrary. Key context factors interfering with these mechanisms are accessibility, disability type, and climate for inclusion.

We call upon disability, inclusion, and new work scholars to share their insights (conceptual, qualitative, or quantitative) on the interplay of disability and modern workplaces with a specific focus on the following questions:

- What role does disability type play by leveraging opportunities or exacerbating challenges for persons with disabilities in modern workplaces?
- How and to what extent can inclusive practices help making new ways of working an asset for persons with disabilities rather than a hindrance?

- What is the potential of digital transformation in erecting or obliterating disability barriers in modern workplaces?
- How do new technologies help or hinder persons with disabilities in organisations?
- How are identity management and sense-making of persons with disabilities affected, changed, and transformed by new ways of working?
- How does disability intersect with other marginalized groups in modern workplaces?
- How are common tropes like the ‘ideal worker’ or ‘the disabled’ being challenged and what new tropes, which shape workplace practices, processes, and structures, emerge in modern workplaces?

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