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# (In)visibility during organizational entry: Newcomer perceptions of visibility in remote work

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## ABSTRACT

While the research on communication visibility has typically focused on how visibility is enacted among employees who are familiar with the networks, practices and technologies of the organization, this study focuses on the experiences of newcomers. Additionally, while technology use around newcomers has typically been approached in parallel with face-to-face communication, our study concentrates on fully remote organizational entry. Qualitative interview and survey data among 24 newcomers revealed that the dimensions of visibility – the sociomaterial context, actors' actions and observers' actions – play a role in uncertainty and impression management during the entry process, while simultaneously reflecting to visibility management. The findings contribute to a model theorizing the relationship between visibility, uncertainty, impression management and sociomateriality during remote organizational entry.

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Communication visibility; impression management; newcomers; organizational entry; remote work; technology-mediated communication; uncertainty

Entering a new organization is an important process for both individuals and organizations. In particular, newcomers, but also their colleagues, experience uncertainty when entering the workforce and seek information to manage uncertainty and learn from each other. Successful entry has been found to increase organizational identification and commitment to the organization, from which organizations can reap several benefits (Ashforth et al., 2007; Kramer & Sias, 2014). Thus, it is important for organizations to ensure that the entry processes allow parties to manage their uncertainty.

When organizational entry takes place in remote working conditions, multiple questions arise regarding the possibilities of managing uncertainty via communication technology. Can newcomers find information about their new organization, tasks, and coworkers? Furthermore, are newcomers able to introduce themselves or be introduced to others? Studies on communication visibility have indicated that if information, knowledge and networks are visible, organizational members, including newcomers, can use communication technology for learning about their organization and colleagues (e.g., Treem & Leonardi, 2013). Studies show that the use of communication technology

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enables increased visibility because it allows information to be found with less effort (Evans et al., 2017), but communication may also be left invisible, either strategically or unintentionally (Gibbs et al., 2013).

In the current study, we seek to find how the visibility afforded by organizational communication technologies is enacted at work according to organizational newcomers. Although existing research provides knowledge about newcomers in workplaces, their processes of becoming a part of the work community (for an overview, see, Kramer & Miller, 2014), and the links between communication technology use and organizational entry (Kramer et al., 2019; Leidner et al., 2018; Woo et al., 2023), the popularity of remote work has posed new challenges and perspectives when looking at these processes. We investigate what kinds of information, communication, and behavior relevant to newcomers are visible and what is obscured in remote working conditions. Our research contributes to the nascent theory of communication visibility (Treem et al., 2020) by showing how the different dimensions of visibility are perceived and how they relate to uncertainty and impression management when entering an organization remotely. Moreover, this study contributes to the literature on sociomateriality and organizational space (Taylor & Spicer, 2007; Wilhoit, 2016) by showing how the sociomaterial, perceived organizational space is intertwined with newcomers' experiences of organizational entry in fully remote conditions.

## Theoretical background

### *Visibility in organizations*

Remote work offers a fruitful setting for studying visibility in organizations because it offers contradictory viewpoints on visibility in general. On the one hand, remote workers have been found to experience challenges in being noticed in organizations (Cristea & Leonardi, 2019), but on the other hand, working remotely requires using communication technology, which can provide increased and more far-reaching visibility across an organization. Therefore, we focus our attention on the affordance of visibility, which we define as the ways in which technology (or other materiality, such as office space) makes users' actions, skills, and networks more or less visible to others, either intentionally or inadvertently (Sivunen & Myers, 2022; Treem et al., 2020; Treem & Leonardi, 2013).

Our approach to visibility stems from research on affordances. Affordances refer to the action possibilities to which individuals perceive that they could apply communication technology within its capabilities and constraints and relative to individuals' needs (Evans et al., 2017; Rice et al., 2017). Prior research has identified several affordances, from the persistence of information in digital platforms to the editability of once-published content (Treem & Leonardi, 2013). Visibility has been identified as the affordance that supersedes the various affordances provided by communication technologies, making it possible for other affordances to exist (Flyverbom et al., 2016). It can therefore be assumed that visibility is an important affordance in shaping the experience of joining a remote working organization via digital systems.

As a theoretical lens to studying visibility experiences of newcomers in remote work, we draw from the emerging theory of communication visibility (Treem et al., 2020). Thus, we look at communication visibility through three dimensions operationalized in this theory: (1) through actors' activities, (2) through observers' activities, and (3)

through the sociomaterial context of communication. By looking at actors' activities, we are interested in the ways in which individuals can make themselves more or less visible. For example, employees can promote positive impressions of their knowledge or interests by making certain information or behavior visible to others on digital platforms or hide content they believe could foster negative impressions (for overview, see Sun et al., 2021).

By looking at observers' activities, we recognize that if communication is visible, it can be observed in situations where it is not directly targeted to the actor in question. Through what is observed (or observable), individuals draw inferences about the motives and patterns underlying certain behaviors (Leonardi & Treem, 2020), which can be further reflected in attitudes, interpersonal relationships, organizational dynamics, and the future behavior of the concerned parties (Kim, 2018; Leonardi, 2015; Leonardi & Treem, 2020). The possibilities and consequences of observation are especially interesting from the perspective of organizational newcomers in remote work, who usually do not have existing networks within the organization and, thus, can benefit from observing what becomes visible through technology. Additionally, the choices made within organizations about managing visibility – for example on what is observable on organizational platforms – is a form of power (Flyverbom et al., 2016) that plays a role in how easily a newcomer can learn about the organization through observation.

Finally, by looking at the third dimension of communication visibility, the sociomaterial context of communication, we are interested in those social and material circumstances that are related to individuals' ability to manage visibility. The material circumstances refer to the features of the communication technology, such as whether the technology enables tagging and sending notifications about posted content. At the same time, the social circumstances refer to the ways in which individuals can use the material features of technology differently in different situations. Overall, variation in these circumstances enable various levels of visibility (Leonardi, 2013). In the context of remote work, sociomaterial context can refer to all the ways in which organizational members can use different features of communication technology to conduct their work and communicate with their colleagues. However, in remote work, the role of sociomateriality extends beyond technology to questions of space. It has been suggested that the affordance approach can be applied not only to technology but also to spatiotemporal environments, such as organizational spaces (Sivunen et al., 2023; Wilhoit Larson, 2020). Remote organizational entry provides a context in which such extension to the affordance perspective beyond technology is relevant because it allows us to take into account the absence of shared physical space and the fact that in remote work, it is not possible to observe all visual aspects of the organization, such as office artifacts or corporate symbolism, which have been found to foster organizational identification (Sivunen & Myers, 2022). However, prior research shows that different kinds of physical and virtual spaces can become associated with the organization through their features being used by individuals to conduct work (Wilhoit Larson, 2020). The three-dimensional framework of communication visibility theory allows us to consider the visibility experiences of newcomers during their entry, including formal and informal communication, not only as an affordance of technology but also in relation to virtual and physical spaces. We thus approach visibility as a sociomaterial affordance (see also Sivunen et al., 2023).

The sociomateriality of visibility also shapes impression management. Communication visibility theory challenges the ways in which scholars of impression management have approached the meaning of co-presence of communication partners (Goffman, 1959), as well as the concept of publicity of a certain behavior mediating the motivation for impression management (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) by showing how in technology-mediated communication, “the play has no ending, the theater has no walls, the stage has no boundaries, and the audience is an ever-changing sea of millions of known and unknown accounts, avatars, and automated agents” (Treem et al., 2020, p. 50). Studies have found that perceiving visibility as something that can be managed leads to its strategic use in impression management (Berke-laar, 2017), but at the same time, especially new employees may feel concerned about how visibility affects the impressions of them in their new organization (Lee et al., 2019). Therefore, by looking at the sociomaterial context of visibility we seek to understand the role of remote work conditions in newcomers’ impression management.

### ***Entering a (remote) organization***

We use the concept of organizational entry (Jablin, 2001) to describe the interactive process through which both the newcomer and work community perceive the new employee as part of the organization. During organizational entry – whether it takes place remotely or face-to-face at the office – one of the most crucial phenomena is uncertainty. Several studies have stressed the amount of uncertainty during organizational entry processes (e.g., Jablin, 2001; Kramer & Miller, 2014; Kramer & Sias, 2014). For a newcomer, uncertainty can be related to a number of things: completing tasks, building relationships, and adjusting to an organization’s norms or hierarchy and working styles (for an overview, see Kramer, 2004, pp. 103–105). Successfully entering into an organization is crucial to newcomers’ adjustment to the organization and sense of belonging to the work community (Ashforth et al., 2007; Kramer & Sias, 2014). Thus, the possibility of managing uncertainty to make organizational entry successful is important.

To manage uncertainty, newcomers often turn to their coworkers for information. Newcomers use diverse sources and strategies for finding relevant information (Ashforth et al., 2007; Kramer & Miller, 2014) through which they make themselves more comfortable and evaluate their role in the organization. The strategies newcomers use can be direct and active, such as discussing with coworkers and supervisors, but also indirect and more passive, such as observing others’ behavior and mirroring it (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Newcomers can also provide information about themselves, which helps other employees manage their uncertainty toward newcomers’ abilities, role, and fit for the group (Gallagher & Sias, 2009). While referring to *information*, it should be noted that organizations can hold many different kinds of information or knowledge. Rennstam and Ashcraft (2014) suggest that along with technical knowledge, organizational communication rests on communicative knowledge, i.e., knowledge about organization’s way of interaction, constructed in interaction. In newcomer experiences, this is important because newcomers need both task-related and technical know-how and knowledge about social dynamics and communication styles for their successful entry.

The possibilities for uncertainty management can be different when entering happens remotely. Computer-mediated communication and the visibility afforded by the technologies play a significant role in finding and sharing information while working remotely.

For example, visibility can facilitate newcomers to find information that helps them manage uncertainty before and while entering a new organization (Kramer et al., 2019), learn about their organization's culture and norms (Thom-Santelli et al., 2011), and build networks with coworkers through internal and external social media (Lee et al., 2019). Research has often approached employees' use of communication technology from the perspective that computer-mediated communication is a part of a process that also involves face-to-face communication (e.g., Lee et al., 2019; Leidner et al., 2018; Waldeck et al., 2004). However, in fully remote work, this is not the case, which makes it important to study contexts where organizational entry takes place only through communication technology.

Recently, Woo et al. (2023) studied uncertainty management of newcomers entering the organization during the COVID-19 pandemic, finding that newcomers experience uncertainty related to workplace relationships, task and role performance, and organizational norms. They also discovered that newcomers used different information-seeking strategies for managing uncertainty, such as organizing virtual small talks and utilizing digital repositories. As remote and hybrid work are becoming more prevalent ways of working, it is important to understand fully remote entry processes and the special features they bring to topics such as uncertainty management and information seeking. We will extend this discussion on remote organizational entry by turning our attention to communication technologies and spaces and the visibility they afford in entry processes. Extending the focus on newcomers' behavior to the conditions of remote organizational entry allows us to identify the sociomaterial factors that enable or constrain the visibility of newcomers during their entry process.

To broaden our understanding of technology-mediated entry processes, we study the visibility experiences of employees who entered their organizations during a period of extensive remote work (because of the COVID-19 pandemic). Supported by the literature on organizational entry (e.g., Jablin, 2001; Kramer, 2004), we base our research question on the visibility dimensions introduced in communication visibility theory (Treem et al., 2020). Because remote organizational entry is a special context – during the times of a pandemic, even an extreme one – we put the sociomaterial context at the forefront of our analysis, broadening the focus of sociomateriality from investigating only the technology to other sociomaterial aspects present during the entry process. Hence, we seek to understand not only the role of the technologies and the features of different tools but also the role of the (absence of) physical office space and its visibility affordance related to newcomer experiences. Our research questions are as follows:

In remote organizational entry, (a) how does the sociomaterial context relate to newcomers' perceptions of visibility; (b) how do newcomers and their work become visible by the actions of themselves or their colleagues; and (c) how are newcomers able to observe their coworkers and actions?

## Methods

### Participants

The data were collected through a survey and qualitative, semi-structured interviews with 24 individuals working in public and private sector organizations. The informants took



part in a large research project, in which a survey about remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic was conducted. The survey was anonymous, but the respondents could voluntarily give their consent to be contacted for further research reasons. The survey was targeted broadly to Finnish employees who worked remotely during the pandemic. Because we were interested in the experiences of organizational entry, we contacted all the survey participants who gave their consent and responded to having entered their organization within one year or less at the time of the survey. Of 35 respondents we contacted, 24 agreed to participate in the interview. There was no incentive for informants to engage in the interviews.

Of the 24 participants, 14 identified as female and nine as male. One informant wished not to disclose a gender. Respondent ages ranged from 27 to 58 years, median age being 42 years ( $SD = 7.1$ ). At the time of the survey, the informants reported having worked one year or less in their current organization, and at the time of interviews, their tenure averaged one year ( $M = 14$  months,  $SD = 5.7$ ). Of the informants, 13 worked in the public sector and 11 in the private sector. Altogether, the informants worked in 23 different organizations, with two coincidentally working in the same organization. The industries of their organizations varied from public administration to manufacturing, including information and communication, professional, scientific and technical activities, as well as wholesale and retail trade. The sizes of the organizations varied from small- to medium-sized organizations ( $n = 14$ ) and to large enterprises ( $n = 9$ ). One respondent reported not knowing the size of their organization. All the participants worked in knowledge-intensive professions, but their job levels varied between managers, specialists and operatives. Table 1 provides background information of the informants and the organizations they entered.

At the time of the interview, all the informants worked mainly remotely through company-provided laptops and mobile phones. The COVID-19 pandemic was the reason for their extensive remote work and technology-mediated entry. The majority of the informants had started their employment during the COVID-19 restrictions, and the few who had started shortly before the restrictions described their onboarding was still in progress when the restrictions directed organizations to remote work. The impact of the pandemic was reflected in newcomers' descriptions of having visited at the office either during the first weeks of their entry or more recently, but in most cases, other employees were not present at the same time. The newcomers also assumed that their working conditions would change after the end of the restrictions. Only one respondent said they would have worked remotely full time, even without COVID-19 restrictions.

The communication technologies used in the informants' organizations varied, but there were also similarities. If categorized based on the idea of connective and communal communication technologies (Fulk et al., 1996), all the informants had the possibility to communicate through both connective, direct communication systems (such as email) and communal systems that allowed information to be shared synchronically to many (such as online meeting tools). In many cases, these systems were used as hybrids (Fulk et al.), when communication could sometimes be open to all and sometimes targeted directly from one to one. An example of such is software that allows individuals to both send messages to certain people and to broadcast information to all (such as Microsoft Teams). All participants mentioned using both email and online meeting



**Table 1.** Pseudonyms and background information of the informants.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age (years)	Organization type	Industry of the organization <sup>a</sup>	Job level
Anna	Female	37	Public sector	Public administration	Manager
Anssi	Male	30	Public sector	Public administration	Manager
Eeva	Female	38	Private sector	Information and communication	Manager
Hanna	Female	35	Public sector	Public administration	Operative
Inka	Female	44	Public sector	Public administration	Specialist
Johan	Male	56	Public sector	Public administration	Specialist
Joonas	Male	45	Private sector	Information and communication	Specialist
Julia	Female	46	Private sector	Professional, scientific and technical activities	Operative
Jussi	Male	38	Public sector	Public administration	Manager
Kate	Female	58	Private sector	Manufacturing	Specialist
Kuura	Does not want to disclose	42	Private sector	Information and communication	Specialist
Lena	Female	44	Public sector	Public administration	Specialist
Lisa	Female	27	Public sector	Professional, scientific and technical activities	Specialist
Marko	Male	39	Public sector	Professional, scientific and technical activities	Specialist
Matti	Male	37	Private sector	Information and communication	Manager
Mia	Female	36	Public sector	Professional, scientific and technical activities	Specialist
Miriam	Female	37	Public sector	Public administration	Operative
Nina	Female	42	Private sector	Manufacturing	Manager
Pia	Female	45	Private sector	Information and communication	Specialist
Sarah	Female	43	Public sector	Public administration	Manager
Sari	Female	31	Public sector	Public administration	Operative
Tom	Male	45	Private sector	Information and communication	Specialist
Tony	Male	41	Private sector	Information and communication	Specialist
Vesa	Male	44	Private sector	Wholesale and retail trade	Manager

<sup>a</sup>Based on the Finnish Standard Industrial Classification TOL 2008.

tools, such as Google Meet, and more than half of the informants mentioned having an intranet in the organization. Many mentioned using instant messaging software, such as WhatsApp, as well as file storing and sharing tools, such as OneDrive.

## Procedure

Consisting mainly of quantitative measures, the survey included two qualitative, open-ended questions: (1) What has been the most challenging in your work during the Covid-19 (Corona) crisis? and (2) What has been the most rewarding in your work during the Covid-19 (Corona) crisis? The respondents were encouraged to think broadly about their work and working conditions.

When the informants agreed to participate in the interview study, they received formal privacy statements, consent forms, and information on the use of the research data in written form. The first author conducted all the interviews in technology-mediated ways using synchronous online conferencing software in the summer of 2021, when the remote work mandates had been continuing (on and off) for over a year in Finland. Interviews were conducted in Finnish and ranged from 30 to 80 minutes, averaging 51 minutes ( $M = 50$  min,  $SD = 13.01$ ). The semi-structured interviews consisted of themes such as formal and informal information sharing at work, practices of introducing newcomers to their coworkers, and social support received during entry. All

themes included questions about how communication technology was present in the process and how its role was interpreted. For example, the informants were asked, “Where and when did you learn about your organization’s social practices?” Another example question was as follows: “What kind of information found from digital platforms has been meaningful for you during your entry?” The interview guide focused mainly on the time of entering the organization, but also included comparisons to current experiences and predictions for the future.

### **Data analysis**

All data were pseudonymized in the first stage of analysis. First, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, resulting in 552 pages of written text (Times New Roman, double-spaced, 12 pt.). Second, we included the open-ended survey responses of the interviewees in our analysis. The open-ended survey responses resulted in 8 pages of written text (Times New Roman, double-spaced, 12 pt.). Although the questions in the survey did not directly focus on the experiences of newcomers, more than a third of the interviewed participants (9 out of 24) mentioned entering the organization as the biggest challenge of remote work during the pandemic. Additionally, the majority of the informants reflected the use of communication technology and the role of organizational space in their responses while evaluating the challenges and rewards of working remotely.

The data were analyzed iteratively with a qualitative analytic approach (Tracy, 2013), here explained in a simplified, chronological manner to ensure readability (for challenges in reporting qualitative research methodology, see Tracy, 2012). The first author started the analysis inductively by reading all the interview transcriptions and survey responses, paying attention to how the informants described their experiences of entry and perceptions of visibility. This first, more inductive reading was done by asking questions from our data to further understanding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) of informants’ self-reported remarks of *what was visible or invisible* to them in the organizations, *what strategies* they mentioned using regarding visibility, and *what were the reasons* they described for their specific strategies.

The second stage of the analysis was guided by communication visibility theory and the three dimensions of communication visibility (Treem et al., 2020). The first author created primary codes by identifying instances where the informants described the socio-material dimension of visibility (e.g., the ways they used technologies related to visibility), instances where they talked about their own visibility in the organization and about observing coworkers and their actions. After the first round of theory-driven analysis, the authors discussed the initial findings to specify and combine some of the codes, similar to a method known as “critical friends” (Smith & Sparkes, 2006), where critical discussions and feedback between the researchers allow them to reflect their interpretations and negotiate about alternative explanations (Patton, 2002). Next, the codes were categorized into primary themes and sub-themes by the first author by going back and forth between the data and the guiding theory of communication visibility. Again, the themes were discussed and partly recategorized among the authors.

Finally, the authors cooperatively integrated and recategorized some of the earlier categories and constantly compared the internal coherence of the categories to arrive at our final aggregate dimensions (Gioia et al., 2013). As the second stage of our analysis had

revealed that all three dimensions of communication visibility were present in all informants' descriptions, we connected the reasons and strategies for certain actions associated with the informants' experiences as newcomers to the dimensions of visibility.

## Findings

### *Sociomaterial context of remote organizational entry*

Newcomers' accounts of remote organizational entry were filled with descriptions of the sociomaterial context. Both the sociomaterial aspects of the organizational space and communication technologies were described as important in relation to remote organizational entry experiences.

#### *Visibility afforded by organizational space*

When newcomers accounted for their experiences of entering organizations remotely because of COVID-19 restrictions, the sociomaterial context surfaced in the ways they made sense of space and its role through impressions of both digital platforms and the (lack of) physical office. This "perceived organizational space" was present in informants' descriptions of how well they thought the visible elements on digital platforms reflected the organization, as well as in descriptions about their expectations toward the organization's physical office. The informants weighed the possible differences between entering an organization remotely or with daily visits to an office and the visibility opportunities provided by communication technology versus physical space. Physical office artifacts, such as coffee machines, were often mentioned by newcomers who perceived that the existence of such artifacts would have helped them to meet and get to know their coworkers. Inka described her thoughts on what significance physical office artifacts might have had in getting to know coworkers:

I know my team very well. But the others, I never see them or hear from them. That is because there is no coffee machine, lunch table or bathroom line in remote work as there is in the office. I think that is absolutely the reason I don't know them [colleagues outside of own team] at all. [interview]

Newcomers also described how their colleagues sometimes seemed reluctant to bring any technology-mediated practices into use. These experiences were closely related to perceptions of remote work being somehow a secondary or temporary way of working compared to working in a physical office. Anssi described in the survey how his onboarding had been postponed later to be done in the (physical) office: "Onboarding and training practices have been very hard to follow, because there seems to be a 'someone will help you with this once we get back to office' mentality in many things." This way, the perceived organizational space did not offer newcomers the same opportunities for onboarding as they expected the physical office space could have offered.

The concept of perceived organizational space was also connected to working from home. Mia found it difficult to realize the change of jobs because she had been working remotely in her previous job and had started remotely in the next one. At the time of the interview, she had not yet met any of her coworkers face-to-face. For her,

visibility was constrained due to the lack of cues related to the job-changing process alongside the lack of physical office space:

I have my computer and other equipment at my kitchen table, as I had while working in the previous organization. So there was no mental transition. In a way, that workload from my previous job didn't go away, and at the same time, I didn't feel like a part of that new work community either. So even though you know you have changed jobs, that kind of mental stress doesn't go away because you don't realize the transition [interview].

Overall, newcomers perceived that the sociomaterial context of remote entry did not afford as much visibility as they assumed the physical premises would have afforded.

### *Visibility afforded by communication technology*

Another important sociomaterial aspect related to remote organizational entry was the visibility provided by communication technologies. All informants used the type of communication technologies that allowed people and their actions to become visible through video, audio, and online statuses. The features of the meeting software were mentioned most often in connection to organizational entry. Using video instead of audio only or written text was found to be meaningful by a clear majority (16 out of 24) of newcomers when they were entering a new organization. Seeing others was found so important that Marko mentioned in the interview being “happy about paying more for my internet provider to have the bandwidth to use video features and see faces.” Vesa, in turn, described the importance of seeing colleagues in video meetings as “the only way to get to know people” as a newcomer:

I have found it nice and useful to see faces and facial expressions during conversations, not only black screens or profile pictures. It has really been the only way to get to know people and see what the people you are dealing with almost every day look like. [interview]

As the example above shows, the newcomers felt they could get to know their coworkers better by using video at meetings. Another sociomaterial aspect that afforded more visibility for newcomers was online statuses in different organizational platforms, which newcomers used to predict when they would not disturb their colleagues with their questions. This way, utilizing the visibility of online statuses also served as impression management: the newcomers wanted to find the “right” time to reach their colleague to ask for help to make a good impression, as Sari shared:

For me, it's very important to know who is available. If they are “green,” I dare to approach. It's nice to know that I don't disturb. If I would call them on the phone, I would not know if they had something going on or not. But with this [availability status], you can see if someone is busy or on “do not disturb” or have been away for 20 min, so probably out for lunch. It has been relieving; it has made it easier to choose who am I going to approach with my question [interview].

For many, the organization provided the technology that enabled visibility and the newcomers seemed to be aware of many of the material features of technology used in organizations. They mentioned using certain features to manage the impressions of their coworkers about them or to manage their own uncertainty related to their new organization through visibility. However, newcomers were still often unhappy having to rely only on technology for learning about their work and their coworkers. One of the

reasons for dissatisfaction was the lack of shared practices or guidelines in the use of technology, which made it difficult for the newcomers to gain communicative knowledge about the organization. Even if the organization had the technology available, the lack of guidelines led to increased uncertainty among newcomers and constrained their visibility. Miriam described in the interview as follows: “We do have a mandatory ‘Basics of [Microsoft] Teams’ [course], but it doesn’t include any practices. Or how I see it – that we should have ground rules for what to use for what. But we don’t have that.” The informants talked about being hesitant about how to use the offered technologies of their new organizations, not only from a technical perspective but also to align with organizational culture. Uncertainty about practices in remote work was perceived to cause uncertainty among the informants.

### ***Visibility of newcomers***

The sociomaterial context enabled newcomers to become visible – or invisible – in two ways: by their own actions and by the actions of their colleagues. This emerged in four themes regarding the visibility of newcomers: visibility as a strategic action of newcomers, invisibility as a strategic action of newcomers, visibility as a result of others’ actions, and invisibility as a result of others’ actions.

#### ***Visibility as a strategic action of newcomers***

When newcomers used communication technology through their own initiative to make themselves visible in the organization, it was often motivated by impression management. The informants described using both internal and external organizational media to promote themselves and their work, as well as using online meetings to introduce themselves to their colleagues. Informants also reported they hoped that their actions would encourage others to introduce themselves. Thus, newcomers’ actions served as an attempt to participate in building more visible organizational culture. The following example from Anna’s interview illustrates how newcomers increased their visibility to make a good impression, while asking others to increase their visibility:

When you are in a [remote] meeting for the first time, I think it would be good to bring up, you know, like, “Hi my name is Anna. I’m the new one here.” And you could open your camera for a moment and ask others to do so as well, so it might feel a bit more personal.

Alongside actions related to being noticed as a newcomer, the informants described making themselves visible because of the job they were hired to do. Especially if the newcomer was hired to a managerial or representative position, they increased their visibility to manage the impressions they perceived were associated with their role. Lisa described in the interview that, “because I serve as an occupational health and safety representative of the employees and give training to all new employees in that role, people’s faces become familiar, at least virtually. Because of that, I assume that many people, if not all, at least know my role.” Johan, in turn, said in the survey that he found “remote management of my subordinates” challenging in remote work. In the interview, he described using visibility provided by communication technology to support his leadership and to give the impression that he was trustworthy as follows:

Personally, I like to be open and tell a little about myself, maybe even more than necessary, but it's mainly because I think it helps others trust me as a leader. [-] Apparently, in the past, it was customary here for the manager not to show his calendar, so nobody really knew where he was, which to me sounds interesting. I have kept [my calendar] open to everyone.

The newcomers aimed to make themselves visible because they wanted to be noted as new members of the organization but also to manage impressions of themselves. Often the newcomers wished that their actions toward increasing their visibility would lead to others following suit, which would help the newcomer get to know their colleagues better. Newcomers' actions toward increasing their visibility can also be seen as a way to adopt organizational culture, or even as an attempt to create new organizational practices. This way, the informants aimed to manage both their own uncertainty and the predicted uncertainty of others about themselves by increasing their personal visibility on different digital platforms.

### *Invisibility as a strategic action of newcomers*

Newcomers also described situations where they tried to make themselves less visible or strategically waited to learn about their organization before increasing their visibility. The informants reduced their visibility to better focus on their work or to manage their privacy by marking the contents in their calendar as private, as Inka explained in the interview: "I may mark 'personal appointment' if I'm off so that people know I'm out of reach. But it's none of their business where I am." Even though most remarks about strategic, intentional invisibility were related to demonstrating one's unavailability, invisibility was also explained by security and privacy reasons, such as Mia, who was working as a researcher, described:

Maybe it's because of my job, but I think a lot about what traces I leave. I don't share just any information on those virtual [platforms] for security reasons. I also often observe what kinds of traces I leave online and to communication platforms [interview].

One of the reasons for keeping oneself invisible was related to uncertainty toward organizational culture. In these situations, the decision to stay invisible was related to the socio-material context of remote organizational entry, although the decision to restrict visibility was strategic. As such, the available technology or the ways it was used in the organization did not offer newcomers the opportunity to mitigate their uncertainty about the culture and practices of the organization, and thus, they found it to be more comfortable to stay less visible and learn how others communicate within the organization. Julia described in the interview how she pondered which factors played a role in the communication culture of the organization, and how the lack of visibility of these factors caused her uncertainty and further led to her first wanting to observe the organization culture before participating in it:

Pretty soon after I entered it hit me: what am I supposed to do here, how do I start working? The reason for that [feeling] was that I transferred from a very female-dominated field to a company in which I was the only female at the time. That made me wonder what [within the communication practices] came from the company culture, what came from the male-dominated industry, and what was about the individuals. I kept wondering how much I dare to chat in WhatsApp, is it strictly business there or can I just talk whatever. It took me a long time to get to know my coworkers and get on board with the company culture.

As the examples illustrate, attempts to decrease visibility were often related to tasks, efficient working, and security and were explained to be a strategic choice. Strategic invisibility was used to manage uncertainty toward organizational culture or communication practices until the newcomers were more familiar with them.

### *Visibility as a result of others' actions*

Interestingly, the visibility of newcomers was more often a result of their colleagues' actions than their own. Often the newcomers were not personally making themselves visible to the organization, but their colleagues were. Kate told in the interview that in her organization, there was an established procedure to make the newcomers visible to the organization:

As I recall, I, as well as other newcomers, were introduced on this enterprise social media or whatever it is. Almost every day, there is a message saying welcome this and this person, because there are many new employees coming in. There is an introduction of the newcomer's role with a picture there.

When colleagues or managers instructed newcomers to make themselves visible in the organization, visibility was a result of others' actions. Visibility guided by others was often present during meetings when coworkers asked the newcomers to introduce themselves. Sometimes, the advice was limited to contacting certain people, as Anssi described in the interview: "I was encouraged to book appointments from my colleagues' calendars for onboardings on various matters. And through that, I got to know people. It was pretty much just making cold emails and cold calls." This way, visibility sometimes required actions from newcomers, but the activity was strongly guided by someone else. The actions of others making the newcomer visible and known within the organization were found important by the newcomers in order to relieve the uncertainty they felt about entering a new organization remotely. Johan described in the interview as follows:

If you enter a large organization during a pandemic, it's easy to get lost if you are not a very extroverted person who has the courage to contact people. If you think of an organization in this kind of situation, it's extremely important that coworkers, managers and all understand to contact the newcomer and keep them kind of by your side for a while, so that the newcomer is able to build a network within the organization. Even if it's a virtual network.

As the descriptions of newcomers show, when managers or colleagues guided newcomers' visibility, it was typically perceived positively, because the newcomers did not have to promote themselves, but others' actions made them visible in the organization. Noticing others' efforts to making a newcomer visible was also connected to newcomers feeling less uncertain about getting into new work community.

### *Invisibility as a result of others' actions*

Invisibility around newcomers was also constructed through their colleagues' and managers' actions. In these cases, newcomers described feeling forgotten or ignored, which meant that invisibility was often found undesirable. They felt that their colleagues had not recognized them entering the organization or were not interested in getting to know the newcomer via communication technology, or that the organization or responsible managers did not take the initiative to include newcomers in discussions. These



situations often raised concerns about being able to fit to the work community. Nina explained this as follows:

It clearly seems that when a newcomer starts remotely, the organization doesn't register her in the same way as it would if she was physically in the office. This results in situations where your colleagues don't inform you about things because they don't notice a new name added to the mailing list. I was pretty sad about that in the beginning; I felt like it was often forgotten that there even was a newcomer in the organization [interview].

Similar to Nina's experience, Joonas described a situation where he experienced invisibility because of the actions of others:

It must have been in some department-level [virtual] meeting, to which I had not been invited at all. My colleague sent me a chat saying that I was being introduced at the meeting, and I should have been there to introduce myself. I told them that I didn't even get the invite to that meeting, but I could join. They let me in, and I got to say a few words about myself.

Starting in a new job during the COVID-19 crisis was also perceived as a reason for the lack of visibility by the newcomers. Some of the informants inferred that the crisis situation caused urgency within the organization, which led to their colleagues not recognizing them as newcomers. Julia mentioned in the survey as follows: "During the first three weeks of entering this organization, I met my boss or colleagues only three times altogether. Thus, adjusting to my new organization has been challenging." In the interview, she elaborated as follows: "It took me at least a month, even longer if I remember correctly, to see any of my coworkers." This example suggests that newcomers' invisibility was partly a result of the exceptional situation caused by the pandemic.

### **Observing others**

Observing colleagues and their actions was the most often mentioned of all three dimensions of visibility. Observing others was described as useful, but the informants also reported challenges in observation. Four sub-themes related to observing others emerged: observing networks, observing task-related information, observing organizational culture and challenges in observation.

#### **Observing networks**

According to newcomers, observing was a way to find information about organization and colleagues. Communication technology helped newcomers observe the structure of their new organization and learn about the expertise of their colleagues. Often information about networks was observed from asynchronous platforms, such as organization's external websites and internal communication platforms. Lisa stated in the interview: "There are different groups on this platform, and you can see who is a member in which. In the beginning, I also used the directory on our organization's external websites to find out peoples' names, teams, and tasks." Also the technology used in synchronous ways helped find out "who is whom" in the organization. Tom explained in the interview how the fact that employees' names were visible at meetings helped him: "At [virtual] meetings, you can see the name of the person who has their mic on and who is speaking. Through that, I found out who could be the contact person for

each task.” In this case, technology provided new ways of observing information which helped with getting to know others and managing uncertainty.

### *Observing task-related information*

Alongside observing information about coworkers and networks, newcomers used observation to find information about their tasks. In such instances, newcomers often turned to so-called “encoded knowledge” (Rennstam & Ashcraft, 2014), i.e., information stored in shared files and folders, databases and manuals. Several newcomers mentioned that their organization’s intranet held at least some kind of guide to employee responsibilities. Mia’s description in the interview summarizes the typical task-related information that was observable for newcomers: “I’ve been going through our intranet to find how to report working hours, how to write a work plan and so forth. I’ve been depending on intranet a lot.” Shared files were also found useful because they were typically rich in information and included search tools that made it faster to find relevant information. Kate said in the interview:

I dig up information from our information management system every day. It can be meeting notes, presentations, or whatever really, all kinds of material. You can search for them or just browse through them; information can be found and has been found. I also used it to find out who had stored the material and could know more of what I was looking for.

As the quote above shows, objects of observation were sometimes related to each other: when searching for certain information, others’ knowledge and networks might also become visible.

### *Observing organizational culture*

Finally, newcomers talked about how they used communication technology to observe the organizational culture and to gain communicative knowledge about how and when to communicate with their colleagues. For example, newcomers learned how to align with organizational culture by observing how others used certain features of the technology. Miriam shared in the interview her remarks on the use of online statuses she had learned through observation: “As long as these ‘traffic lights’ are followed, amity and peace will remain.” Most typically the observations were linked to practices of communicating in the organization, such as where the conversation happened and how the discussions were organized on a certain platform. Sometimes, the newcomers observed the communication of others as a way to find what *not* to do in the organization, which was described as recognizing the style of the discussion, who speaks to whom, or even who gossips about whom, as well as which topics to discuss or avoid. Lisa explained in the interview: “If you look back the conversation history in Teams, you can see if someone has written sharply or maybe if a certain topic is delicate for someone.” The reasons for observing others varied, but they were often related to newcomers’ need to manage uncertainty, but also to ensure making good impression of by avoiding conflicts or by learning the conventional way of communicating within the organization.

### *Challenges in observation*

While newcomers widely used observation during their entry, they also experienced multiple challenges regarding observation. Many newcomers described that the sociomaterial

context of remote entry constrained the visibility of people, organizational culture and task-related information and made it difficult to observe them. Anssi explained in the interview the challenges that occurred when the visibility of networks was constrained:

Because the instructions are hidden and there's no information about who is responsible for what in written, it's hard to get into things. In remote work, written instructions are price-less. I have wasted hours and hours looking for information from the wrong places.

Anssi continued by describing how organizational culture was also difficult to observe, although some information was to be found regarding the official code of conduct:

There is a code of conduct that has become very clear to me by observing others' behavior. But then, for example, conversation topics — who likes to talk about movies and who likes to talk about sports and so on — are very unclear to me. And all these internal cliques and networks, which are not officially stated anywhere, are still very unclear [interview].

Similar to Anssi's experience, Sari described the challenges in observation she faced regarding the information about her tasks and the content of her work. Already in her survey response, she described that in her organization, "entry process has been very difficult because there is no plan for onboarding, instead, the attitude [of others] has been 'just get to work.'" In the interview, she pondered if her difficulties were related to being so much younger than her colleagues (31 years old), or with her shorter tenure, which she described as follows:

My colleagues might just tell me to go see the instructions from our client information system. Okay, I can check the instructions, but they are from 2016, and some of them are outdated. How could I know which of them are still in use? [-] Of course sometimes, when you work with customers, you can adapt [the instructions] as you wish, but the instructions are sometimes very vague. As a newcomer who has not worked here for twenty, thirty years like everyone else, I would like to have more clarity.

Observing others was a popular strategy for managing uncertainty while entering a new organization remotely. As the organizations worked and communicated through technology, a large part of the information, as well as some aspects of work culture, were visible for the newcomers to observe. However, newcomers expressed concerns about the reliability of information they found and perceived that the social side of the organization was difficult to learn by observing. These experiences, in turn, were related to feelings of uncertainty although observation in general helped in managing uncertainty.

## Discussion

We examined the visibility experiences of new employees entering a remotely working organization by using the three dimensions of visibility (Treem et al., 2020) as a theoretical lens. We found several ways through which the sociomaterial context of remote organizational entry shaped newcomers' experiences, as well as how newcomers perceived their own and their colleagues' actions as enabling or constraining their visibility. Finally, we found that different types of objects of observation were often visible for newcomers on organizational platforms, but newcomers also encountered several challenges related to this observation. We discuss the theoretical contributions of our study as well as the limitations and future research directions regarding visibility, uncertainty and impression management during remote organizational entry.

### ***Extending the theory of communication visibility: actor's actions revisited***

Overall, our findings support the idea of approaching visibility as a three-dimensional concept as the communication visibility theory (Treem et al., 2020) suggests. We found that for newcomers, their own actions toward increasing or decreasing visibility, the possibilities for observation, as well as sociomaterial context of remote work, all played a role in how the organizational entry was perceived. Our first contribution, however, is to extend the existing theory regarding actors' actions in making people, their behavior and information more or less visible.

First, our findings expand the empirical research of the nascent theory of communication visibility by analyzing and unpacking the first dimension of the theory related to actor's actions. Prior empirical studies on visibility (Leonardi, 2015; Rice et al., 2017; van Zoonen et al., 2023) have mainly analyzed the second dimension of the theory, the observers' actions, focusing on *seeing* what others have made visible through communication technologies. Other studies have lumped these two dimensions, the actor's and observers' actions, together (Gibbs et al., 2013; Kim, 2018). By following the conceptualization of communication visibility theory that visibility consists of interrelated dimensions of *seeing* and *being seen* (Brighenti, 2007; Treem et al., 2020), we provide one of the first empirical investigations that analyzes this separate, yet interconnected visibility dimension, the visibility of *being seen*, or the actor's actions, distinctly from the other visibility dimensions.

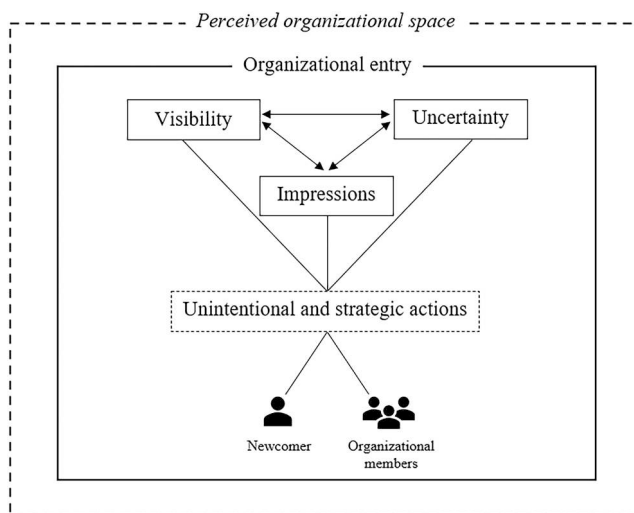
Second, our findings extend the existing visibility dimension related to actor's actions (the visibility of being seen) by suggesting that specifically in the context of the organizational entry, newcomers' visibility in an organization is not only about their own actions of making themselves, their actions, or their knowledge visible, but being seen is also largely related to others' actions. Thus, we extend the dimension of visibility regarding actor's actions by including the actions taken by others to purposefully make someone else visible through different communication technologies. Being seen is not only in one's own control, but actors can be made visible by others through the use of communication technologies. Whenever someone tags a newcomer to a post on enterprise social media or talks about newcomers' actions on a blog post in the intranet, the newcomer becomes visible in their organization regardless of their own efforts in increasing or decreasing their visibility. We argue that remote work as a sociomaterial context enables such actions that can increase somebody else's visibility, especially if the organizational culture encourages employees to publicly support (or criticize) their colleagues on digital platforms. Thus, actions regarding the visibility dimension of *being seen* should be investigated more broadly, including not only actor's actions, but also others' actions through which the actor's visibility can be managed.

### ***Conceptual model of visibility in remote organizational entry***

Alongside contributing to the theory of communication visibility (Treem et al., 2020), our study contributes more broadly to the literature on visibility, as well as on uncertainty and impression management during organizational entry. To guide our discussion, we built a conceptual model to visualize our contributions (Figure 1). This model presents how our contributions to theories regarding communication visibility and organizational entry are intertwined in the context of remote work and demonstrates the prominent role

of the perceived organizational space in these processes. As a key contribution, we argue that in remote organizational entry, remote work setting is a sociomaterial context in which visibility, uncertainty and impressions are connected to each other through the strategic and unintentional actions of newcomers and their colleagues, intertwined with material aspects of the context. For instance, if a newcomer feels uncertain about their role in the organization, they can try to manage this uncertainty by increasing their visibility on digital platforms so that others recognize them as newcomers. Simultaneously, what is made visible on digital platforms plays a role in the impressions made of the newcomer. This is illustrated in our model (Figure 1) by lines connecting the actions of newcomers and organizational members to visibility, uncertainty and impressions, as well as by arrows connecting visibility, uncertainty and impressions to each other. Furthermore, the concept of a perceived organizational space shapes newcomers' interpretations regarding visibility during their entry processes. Next, we discuss these contributions, starting with the concept of perceived organizational space and moving toward how strategic and unintentional actions and impressions reflect the relationship between visibility and uncertainty.

The newcomers explained their experiences often by comparing their perceived organizational space to their expectations toward entry into a physical office and suspected their challenges related to visibility emerged because of the intensity of technology use rather than reasons related to the organization or employees. Thus, we argue that the perceived organizational space plays a crucial role in the relationship between visibility and uncertainty during organizational entry in a situation where an organization and its processes are constituted fully in technology-mediated ways. In such a context, the perceived organizational space includes the material features of technology being used and their connective or communal nature (Fulk et al., 1996), but also the more immaterial, personal, and social aspects, such as individual perceptions regarding physical work spaces or social expectations regarding organizational culture. We argue that in this



**Figure 1.** A conceptual model of uncertainty, visibility and impression management in remote organizational entry.

context, the role of sociomateriality goes beyond being a dimension of visibility because the sociomaterial context of perceived organizational space enables and constrains the possibilities to manage visibility. Therefore, while Treem et al. (2020) suggest that the dimensions of visibility can be analyzed both collectively and singularly, we argue that the sociomaterial context is inevitably part of the two other dimensions. This is shown in our model (Figure 1) by perceived organizational space surrounding the organizational entry process. Further, our findings echo the view that affordances are not only technological but also spatiotemporal (Sivunen et al., 2023), thereby highlighting the importance of further exploring sociomaterial affordances beyond technology use.

Perceptions of space and place have been of interest to scholars especially in psychology and critical geography, and often relied on the work of Lefebvre (1991), but there is a lack of scholarship in studying perceived spaces in an organizational context (Wilhoit, 2016). Our study contributes to the literature of organizational spaces (Taylor & Spicer, 2007; Wilhoit, 2016), by applying the concept of perceived space to the context of virtual work. We argue that the concept of perceived organizational space is especially useful in virtual settings, as it is crucially related to visibility. Perceived organizational space demonstrates how the organization can become visible in different ways to different employees, through practices and preferences of technology use or through expectations regarding physical office spaces. As our findings show, many newcomers found it valuable to be able to see, for instance, online statuses indicating availability of others, but at the same time, some informants found online statuses invasive and decided to restrict their visibility. Thus, it is likely that some practices of visibility management are contested, especially if joint practices are not formally specified. The newcomers in remote work made sense of their organization not only through what was visible for them on digital platforms but also through expectations and impressions about physical office space. Prior research has shown that spatial visibility, including company artifacts such as logos, as well as visual access to other organizational members in an open office, is related to organizational identification (Sivunen & Myers, 2022). Most of our informants did not have the chance to work in a physical office surrounded by company artifacts or under the gaze of others, which may have shaped their experiences of the entry process. Rather paradoxically, according to the newcomers, the remote technology-mediated work setting that could potentially enable much more visibility than a physical office setting, often did not actualize in better visibility. Instead, newcomers felt that they were invisible to their colleagues because they did not share a physical space or found it difficult to gain communicative knowledge (Rennstam & Ashcraft, 2014) of how to interact with others, as the cues they observed on digital platforms seemed inconsistent. This way, the perceived organizational space in remote work was constructed through several components: through (1) the visibility afforded by technology to make oneself visible, (2) the extent to which newcomers perceive they can acquire communicative knowledge through observing others via communication technology, and (3) the comparison of virtual space to physical space in newcomers' perceptions and the lack of visibility afforded by the virtual space.

Our findings suggest that in the context of remote organizational entry, newcomers become more or less visible through their own actions and through the actions of others in the organization. The newcomers themselves promoted their visibility to make their supervisors and colleagues know about them and their expertise. This kind

of action served several purposes: newcomers aimed to manage the impressions (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) about them and their job roles, reduce the uncertainty of others about them (Gallagher & Sias, 2009), and manage their own uncertainty by ensuring that others know about them through increasing visibility. Furthermore, newcomers aimed to encourage others to increase their visibility, which can be seen as an attempt to contribute to the building of organizational culture. We argue that because newcomers in remote setting become visible only through communication technology, managing visibility is the prominent single mechanism that allows newcomers to manage their entry process. In other words, the strategic actions to manage visibility arise from newcomer's uncertainty of their role within the organization but simultaneously reduce the newcomer's uncertainty when their personal visibility leads to increased communication with their colleagues or allows an experience of participation.

### ***Visibility management in remote organizational entry***

The findings of the study extend the discussion regarding visibility management in organizations, and specifically in the context of remote organizational entry. In prior research, controlling visibility has been found to be reasoned by retaining personal expertise, as well as ensuring the confidentiality of information (Gibbs et al., 2013). Specifically, organizational newcomers have been found to have a tendency to limit their information giving on digital platforms (Kramer et al., 2019). In our findings, the newcomers described keeping themselves less visible during their entry process in order to first observe how others communicate via digital platforms. They talked about going through prior discussions on organizational platforms to learn about the communication styles and appropriate discussion topics and taking advantage of the visibility of others before utilizing visibility themselves. We suggest that keeping oneself strategically invisible during organizational entry can be visibility management that results from uncertainty related to organizational culture. If a newcomer feels uncertain about their role within the organization or if the perceived organizational space does not allow them to gain enough understanding of the organizational culture in order to participate in it, they are likely to end up restricting their visibility. Our results suggest that the accumulation of communicative knowledge is more challenging in remote work, as such knowledge is typically tacit and embodied (Rennstam & Ashcraft, 2014), and therefore more difficult to make visible on digital platforms than task-related or technical know-how. Alternatively, strategic invisibility can act as an impression management strategy if a newcomer finds that being less visible in perceived organizational space helps them concentrate on learning their new job. Future research should look into the relationship between strategic invisibility, uncertainty and impression management during organizational entry.

When the actions of others made the newcomers invisible (e.g., when a newcomer is left out of a meeting or a group email), our informants often anticipated that they were left out by an accident. Thus, the actions that can shape visibility and uncertainty during organizational entry may be both strategic and unintentional, as shown in our model (Figure 1). However, actions that make newcomers invisible can also be actions of power, again contributing to visibility management by facilitating the ability to see and know (Flyverbom et al., 2016). Our study extends this idea by showing how



organizational members' ability to make a newcomer visible is a form of power, allowed by the sociomaterial context, as newcomers can become visible, whether or not they actively seek to manage their visibility (Treem et al., 2020). This way, it is possible that employees with longer tenure within the organization use power over newer employees – especially in virtual setting – by managing not only their own, but also their new colleagues' visibility. The actions of others that increase or decrease the visibility of newcomers are also linked to the impressions made of the newcomers, which confirms that managing visibility can give power to those who have the opportunity and the know-how to do so. Looking at these power structures around visibility in future studies may reveal interesting dynamics that do not depend on tasks or titles but rather on the tenure and knowledge of the perceived organizational space and its possibilities regarding visibility.

The findings of the current paper on observing others are in line with prior research on uncertainty management during organizational entry. The research on organizational entry has shown that organizational culture, norms, and working styles are often things that newcomers are uncertain about (Kramer, 2004), especially in remote conditions (Woo et al., 2023), and this uncertainty is managed by seeking information (Ashforth et al., 2007; Kramer & Miller, 2014) and learning from mistakes and feedback (Woo et al., 2023). Our informants observed networks, task-related information and organizational culture on organizational platforms. Our study extends previous research in two ways. First, while prior studies have focused primarily on the behavior of newcomers on digital platforms, our study addresses more broadly the role of technology and space and the visibility they afford in the processes of entering an organization and managing uncertainty and impressions. Turning the attention explicitly to visibility allows us to extend the discussion to organizational technologies and spaces in use and the power structures associated with them, revealing also how the affordances do not always allow newcomers to find the information they are seeking or reduce the uncertainty they experience. Second, our findings show that newcomers do not only strategically observe what to do, but also what not to do, which can be seen as an attempt to adapt to the organizational culture and create a positive impression. This phenomenon is crucial in remote work because prior discussions on digital platforms can be visible and persistent and can be used to make interpretations about the organizational culture and communication within the company.

### ***Limitations and future directions***

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on organizations should be considered while assessing our findings. All but one of our informants said that the organization they entered had worked face-to-face before the pandemic and the COVID-19 restrictions forced them into full-time remote working. It is possible that there was a lack of instructions for communication technology use and a lack of practices of welcoming new members to the organization because the organizations were not used to relying only on technology for communication. Furthermore, working remotely may not have been a long-term goal of the organizations, which means the processes of utilizing visibility might have been shaped by this assumed, temporary need. Future research should study the dimensions of visibility during organizational entry in organizations where

technology-mediated work is a strategic and long-term choice and where remote entry processes are commonplace, not exceptional.

Another limitation of our study concerns the role of different identity markers in newcomers' perceptions of visibility. Age and gender as factors came up in the informants' reflections on what identity-related factors they felt might have played a role in their experiences of entering their organization. However, it has been suggested that belonging to a marginalized group or a minority could lead to organizational members becoming either hyper-visible or invisible in organizations (e.g., Buchanan & Settles, 2019), and thus, impact the strategies of managing visibility, as well as the power structures that emerge within visibility management. We suggest that future research in examining the visibility of newcomers in remote organizations takes identity markers into account more broadly by, for example, targeting data collection to newcomers that identify themselves as part of a minority or a marginalized group. This way, future research could also provide more insight on how sensemaking, organizational norms, and office politics become visible to newcomers and how they are perceived by newcomers from different backgrounds.

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