Corporate Nomads: Working at the Boundary Between Corporate Work and Digital Nomadism

Julian Marx
The University of Melbourne, j.marx@unimelb.edu.au

Milad Mirbabaie
University of Bamberg, milad.mirbabaie@uni-bamberg.de

Stefan Stieglitz
University of Potsdam, stefan.stieglitz@uni-potsdam.de

Follow this and additional works at: https://aisel.aisnet.org/jais

Corporate Nomads: Working at the Boundary Between Corporate Work and Digital Nomadism

Julian Marx,[1] Milad Mirbabaie,[2] Stefan Stieglitz[3]
[1]The University of Melbourne, Australia, j.marx@unimelb.edu.au
[2]University of Bamberg, Germany, milad.mirbabaie@uni-bamberg.de
[3]University of Potsdam, Germany, stefan.stieglitz@uni-potsdam.de

Abstract

Digital nomads are knowledge workers who leverage information technology (IT) to perpetually travel while working independently of any organizational membership. Corporate nomads are individuals who adopt a nomadic lifestyle but remain permanent employees, which places them in a field of tension between corporate work and digital nomadism—two conceptions of work previously deemed incompatible. To resolve this professional paradox, we conducted qualitative interviews with corporate nomads to better understand how they succeeded (or failed) in holding together two disparate fields with competing values and worldviews. Drawing on ideas from the boundary work literature, we developed a process model of boundary coworking in the context of corporate nomadism. The model incorporates the finding that corporate nomadism unfolds along three phases: (1) splintering, (2) calibrating, and (3) harmonizing. This requires mutual engagement in IT-driven boundary work from both the corporate nomad and their organizational environment. Consequently, corporate nomadism can be understood as an extreme form of "working from anywhere" in which individuals work as spatiotemporal outliers within otherwise settled organizational structures. Practitioners may find value in this study because it discusses managerial implications for recruiting, leading, and retaining corporate nomads.

Keywords: Corporate Nomads, Digital Nomads, Boundary Work, Digital Work, Information Systems

1 Introduction

Highly skilled knowledge workers are increasingly pursuing the idea of "digital nomadism"—that is, combining digital work and lifestyle choices that involve perpetual travel (Schlagwein, 2018). Through the intensive use of information technology (IT), digital nomads monetize their skill sets independently and often practice geoarbitrage—that is, receiving remuneration based on Western standards while maintaining living expenses in emerging countries (Jiwasiddi et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2018). Due to the widespread adoption of remote work and the need for

organizations to keep up with the individual preferences of highly skilled knowledge workers (Asatiani & Norström, 2023), the integration of nomadic work into organizational structures has expanded in recent years (Aroles et al., 2020; Choudhury et al., 2021; Marx et al., 2023). Examples of the emergence of "corporate nomads"—that is, permanent organizational employees emulating digital nomadism—include the thousands of knowledge workers from central Europe flooding the Canary Islands in Spain (Vega, 2020) and the IT company Cisco sending employees to the Greek island of Rhodes (Delaney, 2023).

The coalescence of corporate work and digital nomadism is paradoxical. Not long ago, these two conceptions of knowledge work were deemed largely incompatible because of mismatching values and worldviews (Kong et al., 2019). At the outset, digital nomadism evolved around the experiences of freelancers, gig workers, and digital entrepreneurs, by which it provided a modern-day antithesis to "9-to-5" corporate work (Wang et al., 2020). In addition, digital nomadism has been "romanticized" (Bonneau et al., 2023) as a subversive way of living to escape the corporate "rat race" (Schlagwein, 2018) and was previously rejected by many corporate managers (Frick & Marx, 2021).

Consequently, prevailing conceptualizations of the digital nomad knowledge worker archetype strongly emphasize professional independence and dissociation from operating within organizational boundaries (Prester et al., 2023; Reichenberger, 2018; Schlagwein & Jarrahi, 2020). If one defines organizational boundaries as the "demarcation between the organization and its environment" (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005, p. 491), corporate nomads emerge as individuals who perform boundary work from within their organizations (Langley et al., 2019; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010), which means that they purposefully influence social, spatial, or temporal boundaries. However, they seem less concerned with common types of boundary work, such as spanning (Kaplan et al., 2017) or breaching (Garud et al., 2014). Instead, they operate at the edge of two disparate fields—corporate work and digital nomadism—blurring their boundaries at the microlevel (i.e., relating to their day-to-day routines) while keeping them distinct at the macrolevel (i.e., relating to the organizational make-up).

Existing studies have offered theoretical explanations for similar types of "collaborative" boundary work (Langley et al., 2019), mostly concerning interactions between occupational groups (e.g., Barrett et al., 2012) or with regard to individual boundary spanners (e.g., Levina & Vaast, 2005) who link organizational groups or units with the external environment. Their unconventional mobility does not make corporate nomads boundary spanners per se unless they bring knowledge and resources from their nomadic work life to their corporate teams. They seldom act as representatives of an occupational group but often act in isolation (Marx et al., 2023). In other words, corporate nomads challenge the norms of what is standard, acceptable, or expected in the context of corporate knowledge work without changing the boundaries of their organizational environment beyond their individual microlevel work arrangements. This is puzzling because existing theory predicts that the effort to engage in boundary work will always be driven by the collectivistic intention to change current boundaries for a whole occupational group (Langley et al., 2019) or sets of individuals (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

The purpose of this study is to resolve the professional paradox created by corporate nomads and better understand why they risk subjecting themselves to the tensions between rigid definitions and proponents that keep two fields separate (Frickel, 2004)—in this case, corporate work and digital nomadism. Moreover, we aim to unpack how corporate nomads perform boundary work that changes individual microlevel arrangements but not macrolevel structures. In accordance with these objectives, we pose the following research question (RQ):

RQ: *How do corporate nomads perform boundary work in organizations?*

To address this research question, we conducted qualitative interviews (n = 37) with corporate nomads. The data collection and analysis were guided by the principles of the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2014) and culminated in an inductive process model of *boundary coworking* in the context of corporate nomadism. We find that the boundary work of corporate nomads is largely dependent on the extent to which their superiors, coworkers, and clients jointly engage in reconstructing organizational boundaries for corporate nomads but not necessarily for themselves. In our model, we theorize the three phases of (1) splintering, (2) calibrating, and (3) harmonizing, which elucidate the process of first fathoming and then operating at the edge of two disparate fields (corporate work and digital nomadism). We further theorize that IT unlocks the possibility of allowing corporate nomads to change microlevel boundaries (e.g., in relation to time and space) while the organizational environment keeps the same boundaries unchanged on a macrolevel. Here, we posit that corporate nomads are dependent upon the extent to which IT balances *conformity and divergence* in the splintering phase, *control and self-management* in the calibrating phase, and *integration and segregation* in the harmonizing phase. Understanding this process constitutes a first step toward developing a more nuanced technological dimension in the boundary work literature.

This research is important for advancing the debate on the future of knowledge work because it identifies factors of rapprochement between corporate work and digital nomadism. For organizations, the integration of corporate nomads promises a competitive advantage through talent acquisition benefits and digital innovation (Aroles et al., 2020; Marx et al., 2023). On an individual level, many digital nomads find fault with the lack of social security, which can be alleviated through stable and recurring income and employment rights typical of corporate work (Wang et al., 2020). Our study is among the first to bridge the two conceptions of digital nomadism and corporate work, strengthening the notion of corporate nomads as an emerging knowledge worker archetype. As opposed to organization-wide "work-from-anywhere" policies that are often restrictive (Smite et al., 2023), we find that corporate nomads typically operate as outliers who use IT and *boundary coworking* to achieve spatiotemporal independence within otherwise settled organizational structures.

Practitioners may find value in this paper, as it identifies common trade-offs encapsulating the risks and incentives associated with recruiting, leading, and retaining corporate nomads. Being aware of these trade-offs supports managing organizational knowledge work in a way that accounts for both individual-independent and corporate-institutional preferences and creates synergies for maneuvering unbounded mobilities in the future of work.

2 Background

2.1 The Conflation of Digital Nomadism and Corporate Work

The phenomenon of digital nomadism describes knowledge workers who leverage IT to perform digital work while perpetually traveling (Schlagwein & Jarrahi, 2020). Digital nomads monetize their skill sets independently and practice a highly individualized lifestyle (Wang et al., 2018). Whereas this lifestyle is largely a result of building an alternative work identity (Prester et al., 2023) and the desire to travel the world in a long-term fashion (Richter & Richter, 2020), this roving practice may also be economically motivated (Schlagwein, 2018). With a rising number of coworking spaces, topic-related virtual communities, and conferences, digital nomadism has evolved from a subculture to a mainstream phenomenon (Aroles et al., 2020). Digital nomadism is often understood as antithetical to corporate work because of its focus on worker independence and autonomy (Wang et al., 2020). The primary reason for the prevailing segmentation of digital nomadism and corporate work in theory and practice is conflicting work-life philosophies (Kong et al., 2019). A lack of understanding of each other's preferences, poor implementation or adherence to their respective institutional logics, and misalignment between their worldviews have so far impeded the successful association of both fields (Marx et al., 2023). However, this separation has been challenged by increasing numbers of organizational employees who have begun to emulate the idea of digital nomadism (Fernández-Aráoz, 2022). This development is driven by organizations being pressured to adapt their working models to the demands of highly skilled knowledge workers (Shirish et al., 2023) and advancements in workplace IT, making physical meetings, office space, and company cars superfluous to the performance of knowledge work (Jarrahi et al., 2019; Jarrahi et al., 2022).

However, the approximation of corporate work and digital nomadism happened only recently. During the last decade, the exhaustive acceptance of nomadic working models in the corporate sector has never really gone beyond several IT companies granting software developers remote work arrangements (Schlagwein, 2018). Although anticipated decades ago (e.g., Kurkland & Bailey, 1999), increasing numbers of organizations now offer *work-from-anywhere* programs and policies, which institutionalize location-independent corporate work. Work-from-anywhere constitutes a "nonpecuniary benefit likely to be preferred by workers who would derive greater utility by moving from their current geographic location to their preferred location" (Choudhury et al., 2021, p. 655). Most work-from-anywhere policies do not allow for cross-border movement patterns because of tax implications and noncompliance with insurance companies (Smite et al., 2023). Therefore, these policies represent settled, rather than nomadic, location independence. Moreover, working from "anywhere" is often limited to the country in which the organization is headquartered or even "a reasonable commute distance" (Smite et al., 2023, p. 9). An adjacent concept is the idea of *workations*, which avoids the bureaucratic hurdles of work-from-anywhere policies by strictly limiting the geographic absence of a corporate worker to a short timeframe with a fixed start and end date (Voll et al., 2023). This means that corporate nomads who move without temporal and spatial restrictions come from countries in which these limitations do not apply, operate in legal gray areas, or find creative solutions, such as contracts with foreign subsidies of their employing organization or an intermediary.[1]

The existing literature provides only limited empirical and conceptual research to help us understand corporate nomadism. Whereas previous studies have largely focused on the individual experience of working as a digital nomad (Hensellek et al., 2024; Nash et al., 2018; Shawkat et al., 2021), their integration into organizational structures has been largely overlooked (Richter & Richter, 2020). As we know from previous studies, digital nomads seek flexibility and personal independence, but at the same time, they constantly try to achieve a sense of stability through established routines and structures (Kong et al., 2019). The autonomous work identity of a *digital* nomad can only flourish if that identity is not dependent on a centered view of materials, technologies, space, or time (Prester et al., 2023). Interestingly, the dimensions of time and technology have been found to be those that are most centrally managed by organizations that employ *corporate* nomads (Marx et al., 2023). This suggests that

---

[1] An example of such an intermediary is remote.com, a platform that grew by 900% in 2022 and is currently valued at more than 3 billion US dollars (Lunden, 2022).

digital nomad and corporate nomad work identities are constructed differently, supporting the idea that we should keep both concepts separate. Consequently, the remainder of this article focuses on corporate nomads and their unique engagement in boundary work that allows them to move nomadically without restriction while remaining permanent members of an organization.

2.2 Boundary Work in Corporate Nomadism

Organizational boundaries are demarcations that differentiate an organization's internal workings from its interactions with the external environment (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). However, boundaries also exist within organizations, such as between organizational units or individuals (Lomi et al., 2014; Waizenegger et al., 2023). These boundaries become apparent through various means, such as hierarchical structures, functional domains, or geographical distance (Asatiani et al., 2021; Schotter et al., 2017). Organizational members may find value in elements outside the boundaries within which they typically operate, such as resources, knowledge, or interactions with external stakeholders (Faik et al., 2019; Velter et al., 2020). Individuals who operate near organizational boundaries and perform tasks that relate the organization to elements outside of it have been theorized as boundary spanners (Leifer & Delbecq, 1978; Levina & Vaast, 2005). Prevailing theory suggests that the stronger the identification of a boundary spanner with an organization, the crisper the boundary between them and the external (Korschun, 2015; Shi et al., 2023). Aside from spanning boundaries, organizational members can establish new boundaries to protect the autonomy, prestige, and control of organizational resources (Whitford & Zirpoli, 2014; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Existing boundaries, in turn, can be breached to undermine the legitimacy of a boundary (Postmes et al., 1998). What studies concerning these traditional forms of working at and across boundaries (spanning, closing, breaching) have in common is that they understand boundaries as relatively static and crisp (Levina & Vaast, 2005; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005).

To employ a theoretical lens that understands organizational boundaries as more elastic and malleable, which is more in alignment with what we see in corporate nomadism, we turn to the broader notion of boundary work. Langley et al. (2019) defined boundary work as the "purposeful individual and collective effort to influence the social, symbolic, material, or temporal boundaries, demarcations; and distinctions affecting groups, occupations, and organizations" (p. 704). Previous studies can be categorized into research on three types of boundary work: competitive, collaborative, and configurational. Table 1 provides an overview of these types of boundary work and how each applies to corporate nomadism.

In this study, we mobilize boundary work as a theoretical lens because corporate nomads interact with two disparate fields (corporate work and digital nomadism) while being subject to tensions between rigid definitions and proponents that keep these fields separate (Frickel, 2004). This means that corporate nomads' boundary work either succeeds or fails to hold these two fields together with their competing values and worldviews. In addition, studying boundary work in the context of corporate nomads may allow us to take a more "fine-grained approach to the actual work itself" (Langley et al., 2019, p. 53), especially with regard to the role IT plays in boundary work. Corporate nomads may only maintain legitimate organizational membership because digital work serves as the common denominator that permeates both corporate work and digital nomadism. Alas, the boundary work literature provides little insight into the role of IT in microlevel boundary work. We know how occupational groups negotiate new boundaries *because of* new IT (Barrett et al., 2012) and how individuals use IT to create objects to span boundaries (Levina & Vaast, 2005). However, we do not know how individuals use IT to work alongside the boundaries of two disparate fields—one that decouples work from locality through digital work (digital nomadism) and one that undergoes a digital transformation but historically ties work to physical objects (corporate work) (Bailey et al., 2012). Therefore, we dedicate the remainder of this article to empirically investigating boundary work in the context of corporate nomadism and theorizing how corporate nomads use IT to reconcile their nomadic work life with their organizational environments.

3 Research Design

In this study, we followed a qualitative approach to develop new theory (Burton-Jones et al., 2015) that can help us understand how corporate nomads change boundaries in their organizations. Existing research has a large overhang toward the perspective of digital nomads and their individual preferences and experiences (Richter & Richter, 2020). This means that samples have been drawn primarily from a digital nomad population that operates outside organizational boundaries, resulting in few empirical accounts that inform the debate on corporate nomadism. To remedy this issue, we conducted interviews with 37 corporate nomads from various knowledge work industries (Myers & Newman, 2007). The data collection was carried out over the course of three waves, which allowed us to iteratively refine our theory development in line with established guidelines on grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). An overview of the complete interview sample can be found in the Appendix. In the following sections, we describe the steps we took for data collection and analysis and how these were intertwined within and across the three waves.

Table 1. Overview of the Three Types of Boundary Work Defined by Langley et al. (2019) and Their Relevance to This Study

Type	Description	Relevance to this study	Supporting literature
Competitive boundary work	*Focuses on how people defend, contest, and create boundaries to distinguish themselves from others to achieve some kind of advantage. Boundary relations here are often constructed as a dichotomy that assigns superior legitimacy and power to the favored side while excluding the other.* (Langley et al., 2019, p. 9)	Competitive boundary work applies to corporate nomads who contest existing boundaries to gain a nonprofessional advantage (perpetual traveling). Moreover, the organizational environment (i.e., managers, coworkers) may engage in competitive boundary work to defend the position that the superior legitimacy of organizational membership is grounded in location dependence.	Frick & Marx, 2021; Kong et al., 2019; Langley et al., 2019
Collaborative boundary work	*Practices through which groups, occupations, and organizations work at boundaries to develop and sustain patterns of collaboration and coordination in settings where groups cannot achieve collective goals alone. The practices of collaborative boundary work emerge as people work in inter-occupational teams, produce services, and construct inter-organizational collaboration.* (Langley et al., 2019, p. 26)	Collaborative boundary work applies to corporate nomadism, as it requires teamwork across standard locations and times. A corporate nomad and their coworkers need to engage in negotiations about boundary relations because their individual nomadic arrangements violate what is standard, acceptable, or expected. This distinguishes corporate nomadism from accepted group-level remote work practices in virtual or hybrid teams.	Barrett et al., 2012; Langley et al., 2019; Marx et al., 2023
Configurational boundary work	*[Situations] in which managers, institutional entrepreneurs, or leaders work to reshape the boundary landscape of others to orient emerging patterns of competition and collaboration, often combining elements of both.* (Langley et al., 2019, p. 41)	Configurational boundary work applies to corporate nomads and their managers who manipulate *some* boundaries (e.g., the spatial and temporal boundaries of the corporate nomad) while defending others (e.g., group-level organizational routines or proprietary IT).	Langley et al., 2019; Marx et al., 2023; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010

3.1 Wave 1: Exploring the Phenomenon of Corporate Nomadism

In the first wave of interviews (*n* = 12), we sought to better understand the phenomenon of corporate nomadism and how it differs from the original notion of digital nomadism. To draw the sample, we used personal contacts and social media, such as LinkedIn and Instagram, to recruit informants. The inclusion criteria for qualifying as a corporate nomad were (1) at least 12 months of experience in engaging in perpetual travel while working and (2) at least 6 months of experience as a full-time employee during this time. Freelancers who worked with companies on project-based contracts were not considered for the study. The interviews took place partly in person in Bali, Indonesia, and partly via the video conferencing tool Zoom. During the first half of each interview, the questions were open-ended and broadly focused on the individual's experience as a

corporate nomad. The second half of each interview was steered toward the development of the corporate nomad experience over time. This included questions about the relationships and interactions between the corporate nomad and the organizational environment (e.g., management and coworkers). The analysis of the data was conducted by two researchers, who applied initial coding techniques and constantly compared emerging codes (Charmaz, 2014). At the end of our first analysis, which resulted from this wave, we developed a list of initial first-order codes that largely revolved around *trade-offs* that corporate nomads and their organizational environments had to make for corporate nomadism to work. At the same time, we identified fields of tension in which trade-offs would not suffice because a corporate nomad would either breach what was standard, acceptable, or expected or leave the organization. Consequently, through engagement with the literature, we decided to include boundary work as a theoretical lens. The

boundary work literature (e.g., Langley et al., 2019; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010) provided us with useful terminology and theoretical concepts that helped us better understand how corporate nomads are able to contest traditional values and norms in their organizations.

3.2 Wave 2: Adding Boundary Work as a Theoretical Lens

In the second wave of interviews (*n* = 14), we focused on improving our understanding of how corporate nomads perform boundary work. Boundary work served our theorizing as a clear construct-in-use (Suddaby, 2010) and informed our subsequent data collection and analysis through added focus. However, we kept inductive logic to approach our theorizing, applied axial coding techniques to explore connections between the initial codes, and created larger, second-order codes (Charmaz, 2014). To obtain additional data, we used the same inclusion criteria and interviewee recruitment channels as in the first wave. This time, however, we used a semi-structured interview guide that could be spontaneously adapted to the interview situation. First, the guide included questions about accessing resources encapsulated by organizational boundaries while working as a nomad (e.g., "To what extent can you access the technological infrastructure of your company?"). Second, the guide provided questions about the resources and relationships a corporate nomad accesses outside their organization (e.g., "To what extent do you work with people from outside your organization?"). Third, the guide included questions about the role of technology in managing relationships and collaboration (e.g., "What importance do you ascribe to the workplace IT you use for nurturing work relationships?"). The analysis of these data was again conducted by two researchers, who constantly compared the emerging codes with our list of initial codes from the first wave. At the end of this wave, we developed a full data structure of first-order, second-order, and third-order codes and a first version of a theoretical model that connected the larger second-order and third-order codes.

3.3 Wave 3: Refining the Theoretical Model

The third wave of interviews (*n* = 11) was informed by the draft of the theoretical model and aimed to refine it further. At this point, the model suggested that the process of altering organizational boundaries was largely governed by individual initiatives that were negotiated between the corporate nomad and their organizational environment. Moreover, the second-order codes of *testing* a nomad work mode and a clash of *resistance* and *advocacy* toward it characterized this phase, which we labeled with the third-order code *splintering*. We also found that both individual and organizational stakeholders accepted *trade-offs* and *risks* to reap individual and nonstrategic as well as collective and

strategic benefits from corporate nomadism (*calibrating*). However, the role of IT in this process was not as clear. Consequently, we used the third wave of interviews to validate the existing theoretical relationships proposed by our model and included questions specifically directed at the role of IT in the boundary work practices of corporate nomads. This resulted in the development of the third-order code of *harmonization* through shared *habits* and *rituals* that allow corporate nomads to *flexibly synchronize* their work with the organizational environment. We then theorized the role of IT for not only this but also all third-order codes, which we then labeled as "phases" (splintering, calibrating, and harmonizing). As a result of this step, we added three different spectra in which the characteristics of workplace IT can tilt the implementation of corporate nomadism more toward the values of corporate work or digital nomadism or create a balance. The poles of these spectra are *conformity vs. divergence* in the splintering phase, *control vs. self-management* in the calibrating phase, and *integration vs. segregation* in the harmonizing phase.

4 Findings

4.1 Becoming a Corporate Nomad

In the following, we present two cases of lived corporate nomad experiences to set the stage for subsequent theory development. We chose these cases because they exemplify two different experiences of corporate nomads that we identified repeatedly in our data. The major difference between the cases is that one represents successful boundary coworking between a corporate nomad and their organizational environment and the other represents unsuccessful boundary work in isolation within a more traditional work environment that eventually led the corporate nomad to terminate their organizational membership.

The first case is about "Tia" (name changed), a 28-year-old corporate nomad. She studied media and communications and then joined a marketing agency located in Germany. Initially, she started as a working student and then transitioned to a full-time position after finishing her degree. As a working student, she was allowed to work from home, so she never really cultivated a presence in the physical office. Later, she was promoted to junior consultant and became a client advisor. At the time of the interview, she was still working in the same agency as an online marketing strategist. The leadership team had established an open culture within the agency and was mindful of the well-being of the employees. In this context, flexible work arrangements, such as home offices or work-from-anywhere, were highly popular among the employees. As Tia described, the agency had undergone a digital workplace transformation, which had an impact on the communication technologies that she and her coworkers used in their jobs.

Because the agency works and communicates a lot with external partners and, of course, our customers, communication really takes place digitally. When I started, and that was 4 years ago now, we also still had telephones. Now, we still have telephones, and they work, but also only via a digital line, so to speak. To be more precise, the internet, which we receive as Wi-Fi, comes via the telephone, which serves as a digital port. Accordingly, it is no longer this classic landline telephone but an internet connection. This technology is called voice over IP. (I3)

In Tia's case, being a corporate nomad was not an idea that she came up with herself but something that grew out of the culture in the organization. When she described it in the interview, she used a vivid metaphor to convey why corporate nomadism was embraced by the organization and especially the leadership team.

Our boss teaches us that we are a team; no one works for themselves or alone. No one cooks their own porridge, but we cook a big soup together, and that's what you're given from day one. In addition to this pot—the big soup pot—you are given a huge, huge portion of trust. Right from the very first day. And I think it's also because we're "brought up" in this way that there's such a strong relationship of trust that our boss has no problem at all with it and knows exactly that, regardless of whether [Tia] is in Paris or Bali, she's going to do her work and will only finish her work once she's reached her goal for the day. And I think that's why it works so well and that's why he pushes it so much. (I3)

We asked Tia whether she encountered any challenges when she collaborated with clients who were not accustomed to this working culture. Tia said that the fact that she and many of her coworkers worked from anywhere in the world was not a problem for their clients. Rather than hiding it, she openly addressed being a corporate nomad to manage expectations.

Even though some of the customers are B2B SMEs [business-to-business small and medium enterprises] from Germany, they are still very open to this way of working and are not at all skeptical or worried or anything like that because we live and breathe this, and it is part of the culture. Somehow, this takes the customer into it right from the start and makes them understand that it works and that collaboration with them can also work successfully. (I3)

Throughout the interview, it became apparent that Tia sincerely enjoyed being a corporate nomad, privately and professionally. She was convinced that corporate nomadism not only provides opportunities for individuals but can also benefit the organization.

I would say that it is always an opportunity because the person or the digital nomad simply has a very open and much broader view and perspective than someone who works a lot or exclusively physically at the workplace. It brings inspiration and perhaps creativity and open-mindedness. I think that's definitely an opportunity that every company should take advantage of. (I3)

The second case tells the story of 34-year-old "Ben" (name changed), who, at the time of the interview, had left his job as a corporate nomad two months earlier. Together with his wife, he decided to further pursue the idea of digital nomadism while being a self-employment consultant to his company rather than a permanent employee. The reason for his decision was that being a corporate nomad had stirred up problems, which had accumulated over time and led to him quitting his job.

At the time we went digital, I was the managing director and authorized signatory. I was actually pretty high up in the hierarchy. There was only the managing director above me, but he had a very lax management style, so I could do whatever I wanted. I was a supervisor myself, so to speak. For me, the difficulty was always that the employees didn't think that I was the type who would go crazy and take trips around the world while others had to work hard. That used to be a difficulty for me because I had to be present. I always had to be there, even though I wasn't in Germany. So that was always the difficulty for me. (I7)

In Ben's case, acceptance of the corporate nomad model was not something that needed approval from a manager or supervisor. Instead, Ben had to fight for approval from his supervisees.

It's not like I talked to employees on the phone and showed them that I was sitting on a beach or something. You cannot do that. They would think, "What kind of boss are you?" Therefore, the whole thing was difficult. (I7)

Another stumbling block for his corporate nomad lifestyle was that he found it difficult to comply with insurance policies. While he and his wife were traveling through Europe in their campervan, Ben was technically operating in a gray area, considering his social security status.

It's just difficult to do that as an employee. There is this "A1 certificate" for social security. Normally, I had to do this when we went away for a longer period, and I clarified this with my work. Before we started our Europe trip, they were like, "Oh yes, you have to fill out this A1 certificate." I was like, "Yes, send it over." They sent it to me. And then you really had to fill in from when to when and to which places you would travel. You really had to fill in the exact hotel. I was like, "Well, I'm driving a camper. [I've] no idea where we will be at any time. I cannot fill it out, then?" Okay, then we just leave it for now. (I7)

Eventually, Ben quit his job and continued to work as an external consultant for the same company. He explained that in this role, he did the same work he had done before, but now he did not have to deal with legitimacy issues within the team or the bureaucratic hurdles of being a corporate nomad.

In the next section, we develop the theoretical concepts of *splintering, calibrating*, and *harmonizing*, which constitute the three phases of boundary coworking in the context of corporate nomadism. Whereas Tia and Ben represented two typical cases of becoming a corporate nomad, the subsequent theory development is based on the analysis of all 37 interviews and quotes and examples from the overall data collection.

5 Theory Development

5.1 Splintering

The first phase in which corporate nomads and actors from their organizational environments engage in boundary work is the splintering phase. This describes the individual deviation from grown practices and norms on the microlevel while keeping organizational boundaries in place at the macrolevel. A single nomadic employee within a settled corporate structure does not transform the entire workplace within that organization. A fundamental transformation of the organizational environment is not needed if all the requirements for the individual to conduct nomadic work are met. At the same time, the organizational environment must agree that the default mode of organizing work remains nonnomadic and that grown practices and norms remain settled. This is what distinguishes corporate nomadism, which is an individualistic form of organizing work, from collectivistic remote work and work-from-anywhere policies. The latter are based on location independence being the norm (e.g., in all-remote organizations), while corporate nomads act as outliers within an organizational environment that ascribes the legitimacy of organizational membership as superior to location dependence. Table 2 provides a full list of codes and a chain of evidence for the "splintering" phase.

Incorporating corporate nomads into established structures is a big leap for most organizations. The size of this leap is largely determined by preexisting structures, including IT and values, and how much those stand in contrast to the idea of digital nomadism. Corporate nomads often experience *resistance* within their organizations and/or the broader societal environment, which slows down their ability to deviate from established, location-dependent work practices. The bureaucracy within organizations was repeatedly named as a strong force of resistance against corporate nomadism. This primarily refers to corporate policies, insurance coverage, or a lack of digitization.

A challenge is that there are organizations that, for example, have mandatory meetings that must take place physically, that staff meetings must take place physically, or that the company cannot map that legally and insurance-wise at all. This can be a challenge in any case, and I also suspect that these could be criteria that exclude the person from the job despite perfect qualifications. (I3)

Even if their employer consents to a desired nomadic arrangement, corporate nomads face issues with tax legislation and other fiscal intricacies in certain countries. Although popular destinations such as Thailand and Indonesia have digital nomad visas in place, there is often no legislation in Western countries that makes provisions for corporate nomadism. However, most corporate nomads work for organizations that are headquartered in Western countries and are therefore obligated to the legal frameworks in these countries.

That's always the difficult thing with a registered address. And, of course, it makes total sense that you are registered somewhere so that you belong to some state and also have the right to vote and where you can be found, at least on paper. It makes sense, but it's just totally difficult when you imagine, "I want to be every day where I want to be." But the bureaucracy somehow collides with these thoughts that you have. (I7)

In certain cases, these restrictions are deemed unsurmountable and lead to termination of employment and no change in organizational boundaries. In other cases, depending on the regulations of the country in which the organization resides, corporate nomads often operate in legal gray areas. Interestingly, we found that larger corporations have fewer issues than smaller companies in terms of employing corporate nomads. This is because large corporations often have legal entities in different countries that can temporarily employ a corporate nomad. For example, a corporate nomad can travel across Spain (where they arrange a contract and salary payments) while still working with their team in the US.

Table 2. Full List of Codes and Chain of Evidence for "Splintering"

Empirical examples, quotes, illustrations	First-order codes	Second-order codes	Third-order code
Usually, the employees who work remotely, they can't travel. They need to inform their HR if they travel somewhere for more than a month. So again, it's a question of compliance. (I34)	Internal bureaucracy	Resistance	Splintering
Companies often just don't know how to deal with that, and they have to track a lot. Different employees might not be tax compliant because they have moved to another country and haven't informed anyone. Then, the company is still paying taxes in another country, so they kind of want to prevent themselves from taking these risks. (I34)	External regulations (taxes, insurance)		
If you have your culture, there is also a certain amount of change involved. It can happen that employees now say, "I want to work remotely, too, and I don't want to come into the office anymore." You have to be aware of how you will react to this beforehand— whether you can or want to implement it in this way. (I5)	Organizational culture shocks (envy, fairness)		
To retain people in the long term, employers have to offer something like this; otherwise, people will leave. So, from my point of view, this increases the attractiveness by 100%, really in every respect. (I28)	Employer branding (attracting and retaining talent)	Advocacy	
The company would then also have the costs of the office, electricity, and so on, which are no longer there. (I18)	Cost savings (office space, alimentation)		
As a mother of three, I really wish that this policy change had happened 10 years earlier. It would've insanely lightened my life. (I29)	Job satisfaction		
I went to Costa Rica for three months. I reduced my working hours to 50% to overlap with the time zone. And yeah, I mean, it worked great, even without being a fully remote company. (I35)	Workations	Testing	
Alright, there you go; you have two months. This is what people usually get done. (I1)	Limiting time for nomadic periods		
For the most part, it's self-directed work and also goal-oriented. … It's more or less up to you when and how you complete your projects and fulfill your tasks. (I9)	Earning trust advances		

A third force of resistance, besides organizational and legal issues, can occur in the form of social conflict, such as through perceived unfairness or envy among colleagues. In this case, the organizational environment— that is, managers and coworkers—rejects the idea of a corporate nomad being an exception to its values, norms, and structures concerning location-dependent corporate work. Our informants repeatedly named an open-minded leadership style as the key to moderating—and potentially overcoming—this resistance.

> *I see that it can also work differently. I see that old, existing structures can be broken up, because you don't have to stick to any almost dogmatic and hierarchical corporate structures; that it can work well with good personality and leadership qualities; and that, ultimately, good leadership is also characterized by the fact that you also look for the right employees. And then the whole question of trust doesn't even arise. If a boss says, "Okay, I don't know whether I can trust my employees when they work from home," then I can only say, "Okay, then you're either a bad boss or you've chosen your employees badly."* (I9)

Organizations and leaders who proactively cultivate an environment of *advocacy* for corporate nomadism do so because they see this arrangement as mutually beneficial. Consequently, they engage in boundary work with individuals who signal interest in becoming a corporate nomad. One convincing argument for organizational leadership to support corporate nomadism is the positive effect it has on attracting new talent and keeping existing talent in the company.

> *To retain people in the long term, employers have to offer something like this; otherwise, people will leave. From my point of view, this increases attractiveness by 100%, really, in every respect. I think it's just like a home office. If employers don't offer working from home, they're already out of the game, with the shortage of skilled workers.* (I28)

At the same time, many organizations realize that—as knowledge work becomes increasingly digital—that loosening their boundaries will expose them to entirely new markets for hiring talent. As opposed to being confined to a local radius, they may choose employees based on talent rather than location.

You can position yourself attractively as an employer, especially in this war of talents. Many people have the need to work freely and independently of location. Then of course you could theoretically recruit from the USA, or Japan, or China and of course you have a much larger talent pool there, which you can then use for your company. Especially when it comes to programmers, which are difficult to find on the market, it's quite good if you can look around abroad, which is what we do, for example. (I5)

Nomadic movements of employees can also work in favor of an organization, as they allow for them to build interorganizational relationships. Working with other organizations on-site rather than purely virtually can foster relationships much more quickly and create strong bonds, as I3 reports:

We traveled through the different countries all those years before [COVID-19] and got to know the agencies, were able to visit the agencies and work on small projects with them for the period we were there, which of course expanded our network enormously. (I3)

However, even if they embody an open-minded leadership style, a sudden switch to having some employees work nomadically poses a challenge for managers, especially those who work in organizations with strict hierarchical structures. To cushion the clash between the ideas of digital nomadism and traditional corporate work, a common practice to institutionalize corporate nomadism is *testing* the feasibility of this arrangement on a case-by-case basis. This can be a "workation" or a period of several weeks in which an employee engages in nomadic work. At the end of this test period, the employee and their supervisor discuss their experience and come to an agreement about possible long-term arrangements. Typically, this test period is the result of a bilateral negotiation between an employee and a supervisor.

Alright, there you go. You have two months. This is what people usually get done. And then you give them a chance to see if they can make it or not. I have met people who cannot work from home. They must be on vacation, or they must be in an office to get their mindset right. I think that's the biggest risk for companies to not find that person who can be productive from other locations. There is one more risk, though, and that is if a person is not technically versed ... You don't usually know when they're in front of you, unless you actually test them. (I1)

The role of workplace IT in the splintering phase depends on the extent to which the involved parties leverage the choice and characteristics of these technologies so that they promote divergence (e.g., a joint digital communication tool, such as Slack) or conformity (e.g., software that requires in-person training) in relation to the location dependence of corporate work.

I think it [Slack] is more of an advantage because you can communicate on the same channel and don't miss any information. If, let's say, half of you work in the office, it's possible that agreements are made that you don't notice as a digital nomad. And that's just not the case with us.

There is also a middle ground in some organizations.

A certain framework is then set by the company. Therefore, certain programs or devices are fixed. If I have programs that I work on myself but with nobody else, I have a free choice. (I9)

Table 3 provides an overview of boundary coworking in the "splintering" phase of corporate nomadism. Once a corporate nomad has successfully changed their boundaries enough to be able to geographically splinter themself off from their organizational environment, they enter a second phase of boundary coworking, as outlined below.

Table 3. Boundary Coworking in the Splintering Phase of Corporate Nomadism

Splintering	
Role of the corporate nomad	**Role of the organizational environment**
• Proposes individual change in work practices • Experiences resistance or acceptance from the organizational environment • Reaches an agreement to test new microlevel boundaries • Engages in work practices that promote *divergence*	• Reacts to proposals with resistance and/or advocacy • Engages in negotiations with the corporate nomad • Reaches an agreement to test new microlevel boundaries • Provides workplace characteristics that promote *conformity*

Theme	Example quotes
Resistance	*It is difficult to argue why one is allowed to do this and the other is not. Very difficult.* (I5) *Sometimes, when I am near the beach or am half in the jungle and somehow animals or the sound of the waves can be heard in the background, then the colleagues are jealous.* (I10)
Advocacy	*Theoretically, you could also recruit from the USA, Japan, or China, and, of course, you would have a much larger talent pool there, which you could then also use for your company.* (I5)
Testing	*I could go to Costa Rica for a bit, so I went and asked my manager and told him I was going to quit. I kind of blackmailed him, and he was like, "Okay, you can work remotely for three months."* (I35)

5.2 Calibrating

We found that corporate nomads change microlevel boundaries primarily in terms of geography, time, and technology. However, these changes affect their relationship with the immediate organizational environment. The adjustments that need to be made on both sides are critical to determining whether a corporate nomad model can work beyond a limited test period. The calibrating phase describes the process of negotiating the risks, opportunities, sacrifices, and rules between a corporate nomad and their organizational environment. If this negotiation turns out to be successful, both sides typically agree on several trade-offs that ensure that the corporate nomad can maintain legitimate organizational membership. If the negotiation fails and either side is unwilling to make certain trade-offs, the corporate nomad seizes their nomadic aspirations or gives up their organizational membership. Table 4 provides a full list of codes and a chain of evidence for the "calibrating" phase.

To assimilate into the organizational environment, corporate nomads need very proficient skills in communicating through IT. Oftentimes, this leads them to cultivate relationships with their coworkers through the same channels they use for their work-related communications. Therefore, many organizations establish *rules* that specifically apply to corporate nomads. These rules are often tied to communication behavior and the frequency that the supervisor expects.

> *Basically, we have two calls per week. All this is done using [Microsoft] Teams. The supervisor calls me, and then we review with a shared screen, and so on. In our internal communications, we will review ongoing tasks and new tasks.* (I4)

Interestingly, the perceived closeness within and effectiveness of digital communication, especially written communication, were assessed as unexpectedly high by the corporate nomads. In the absence of an alternative, they had developed skills in avoiding misunderstandings in written communication via WhatsApp and other messengers and had adjusted their use of IT until they came to a mutually agreed-upon workflow within their immediate organizational environment. At the same time, the absence of these skills provides one example of the many *risks* that corporate nomadism brings. Individuals may become socially isolated from their coworkers. The geographical distance that corporate nomads place between themselves and their coworkers uncouples existing boundaries from physical work (e.g., meeting in the office) and shifts them to virtual work (e.g., workplace technologies).

> *Email or WhatsApp is kind of like your lifeline to your coworkers or your customers, and it is also kind of anonymous. They might share more personal stuff with you since you are not there in person to judge them. It's actually being closer when you're not there; it sounds kind of counterintuitive, but when you're just writing, you actually get close to a person without any body language judgment, and that helps some people a lot.* (I1)

The success stories of corporate nomadism within our sample reveal that both sides need to make *sacrifices* for corporate nomadism to work. We grouped social sacrifices under "risks" because most corporate nomads were proficient enough in digital communication to alleviate these risks and have fulfilling social relationships within their organizations. Economic sacrifices were seen as more immutable.

> *I don't think I would be better paid. It's more a question of whether I might be paid less, as the company would then also have the costs of the office, electricity, and so on, which are no longer there.* (I18)

On the other hand, the corporate nomads explored ways to overcome the limitations of existing organizational boundaries. Acquiring skills or education outside organizational boundaries provided them with the personal benefits they aspired for and their organization with unintended *opportunities*. Many interviewees reported the personal development opportunities that their nomadic lifestyle afforded.

> *[Corporate nomadism] brings you to a place where you have the opportunity to develop professionally and personally, where someone trusts you and gives you the necessary tools to be able to perform in the best way. Tools such as technologies, benefits such as being able to work from wherever you want, and tools to also be able to enrich your knowledge. I think those would be the main aspects of a good work environment.* (I23)

These experiences were mainly private but affected their work in the long term. For example, learning a new language through private travel while working can help employees overcome many limitations of personal development. In a theoretical sense, corporate nomads shift organizational boundaries from institutionally discrete to individualistically open ones.

> *In IT, we need a lot of English. In school, we have learned all this, but if it is not applied, we simply forget. This was a reason for me wanting to improve my English to a level where I am fluent. And of course, Australia is an English-speaking country—why not go to Australia?* (I10)

<div align="center">**Table 4. Full List of Codes and Chain of Evidence for "Calibrating"**</div>

Empirical examples, quotes, illustrations	First-order codes	Second-order codes	Third-order code
My supervisor will check with me how and when I am available to work on this, based on the task I am supposed to work on. … Many items can come at the last minute and have to be considered a priority, so basically, we have two calls per week. (I4)	Strict reporting	Rules	Calibrating
Sometimes it's really unfortunate that my work location is far away from the shoot location, and when the event is like seven hours before or behind, due to the time difference, I try to structure my day accordingly to that event. (I1)	Technological standardization, time zone synchronization		
I've also met one or two people who were sometimes envious of what I did. (I10) *At some point, I stopped being allowed to turn on my camera because they could always see the sea in the background or cool landscape shots. That meant I had to turn off my camera.* (I2)	Location envy	Risks	
I like to work in a team to have a bit of interaction, but I know that, let's say, 60-70% of my character is more of a lone wolf. I prefer to write rather than talk. (I4)	Social isolation in the organization		
We're not chasing after the highest salary. We control our expenses, and it's more important to me to do something that I enjoy than to work for a company where it's not fun. To be honest, I'm not interested in what others in my position and at other agencies earn. (I7)	Giving up on higher corporate salaries or promotions	Sacrifices	
The only limitations that the company imposes on me are to always call at least my direct manager and let him know where I am working and to comply with the requirements of the city, office, or country in which I am working. (I23)	Giving up managerial control		
I often find that these typical clichés, you know, are broken, and I always find it cool to learn not only about the people behind them but also about the places and the culture. (I3)	Receiving a cultural education through travel	Opportunities	
At some point, it became established that we no longer give people our business card first but instead pull out our smartphone and say, "Hey, let's connect on LinkedIn." (I3)	Virtual networking through social media and online communities		
What has helped me a lot is the international network we are part of. There are also regular meetings. (I3)	Face-to-face networking through private movements		
I think digital nomads have different mindsets in that their work-life balance is more important than the career path. But not all digital nomads are freelancers. … Some of them still have to be online from 9 to 5. (I35)	Balancing work-life goals	Negotiating trade-offs	
The way they measure impact is not by holding people accountable in their seat but much more by the actual results they're providing. (I29)	Optimizing for output rather than input		

The more the way of interpreting corporate nomadism leans toward self-management rather than control, the more that *negotiating trade-offs* becomes necessary to sustain this arrangement in a traditional corporate environment. We found that most of the corporate nomads did not optimize for efficiency; that is, they often worked reduced hours or declined promotions to maintain their lifestyles. This has indirect consequences for the organizational environment. For example, the employer-employee relationship becomes more transactional and less committed. This allows individuals to diversify professionally and develop an identity that is not dominated by their corporate employment.

> *What does the world look like when you're a nomad but you have multiple employers or you're working on multiple different things?*

It's kind of crazy that you spend like 40 to 50 hours a week on one thing. I think people are multifaceted, and people should be able to explore multiple passions, whether they provide them income or not. ... Our entire society and systems are very much tied to this 40-hour working week, and healthcare is associated with that employer. ... And then the moment you say, "Okay, no. Actually, I want two contracts and two employers. I work for 30 hours here and have 10 system breaks. I think that's the next evolution for us." ... You know how when you invest money, you take a portfolio approach. You never invest in one thing, you invest in 10 things, or you invest in a stock that is made up of 10 things, like an ETF fund. It's the same with your career. ... Those days are gone where you did one thing, and then you did that one thing for 40 years. (I26)

Table 5 provides an overview of boundary coworking in the "calibrating" phase of corporate nomadism.

In most cases, the corporate nomads we interviewed were able to negotiate a sustainable arrangement with their organizational environment. Therefore, the final phase within the process of boundary coworking is "harmonizing," as corporate nomads must achieve some kind of equilibrium within the organizational environment.

5.3 Harmonizing

For corporate nomadism to be sustainably instantiated, management must align its leadership with the individual preferences of the corporate nomad and their coworkers. In the harmonizing phase, the corporate nomad and their organizational environment transition to an established way of working together and jointly develop rituals and habits that make the arrangement they have agreed upon permanent. In principle, managing a remote employee who works from home and managing a corporate nomad should not be very different. However, the element that makes management hesitant about embracing corporate nomadism is the lack of an option to bring nomadic employees back and have them join the office team again. It appears that once the point of incorporating corporate nomadism is reached, there is no way back, which makes managers more resistant to this change. In other words, once the boundary has been changed for the corporate nomad, it will not spring back to its old position. Table 6 provides a full list of codes and a chain of evidence for the harmonizing phase.

Table 5. Boundary Work in the Calibrating Phase of Corporate Nomadism

Calibrating	
Role of the individual	**Role of the organizational environment**
• Follows the rules • Takes risks and opportunities • Makes sacrifices • Accepts trade-offs • Engages in work practices that promote *self-management*	• Makes rules for the corporate nomad • Takes risks and opportunities • Makes sacrifices • Accepts trade-offs • Provides workplace characteristics that promote *control*

Theme	Example quotes
Rules	*We have agreed that we now always see Monday and Thursday as fixed meeting days, and now we do private appointments on the remaining days.* (I10)
Risks	*I completely missed the onboarding. I had to work on projects that I had no idea how to set up—no understanding, no background, no anything. We would be assigned to tasks and then get started. I had zero context, and therefore I found it super, super hard.* (I10)
Sacrifices	*You sometimes do things in your free time or use your cellphone outside work because you simply appreciate this flexible way of working. You have to be able to distinguish between private and professional life, but of course, you have to be able to merge both to some extent. You have to like that. You have to be able to do that.* (I9)
Opportunities	*You don't have to work in an environment such as open-plan offices, where you permanently have distractions. Instead, you can work in a much more concentrated way.* (I9) *It seems like you have a better standard of living when you're actually choosing to live somewhere that has lower costs.* (I13)
Negotiating trade-offs	*It's harder to convince your manager to promote you if you're not physically there with them.* (I13) *Actually, the credo has always been that if you want to work remotely, you're a freelancer, and if you're a permanent employee, you still have to come into the office. My boss has now lifted that a bit for me—ahem—but it's also totally okay for the others because I had already been working with them for two years beforehand.* (I5)

Table 6. Full List of Codes and Chain of Evidence for "Harmonizing"

Empirical examples, quotes, illustrations	First-order codes	Second-order codes	Third-order code
For the people who work remotely, I think we're doing quite well, and the people actually feel that they are in good hands. For some time now, they have also been assigned a buddy—in other words, an employee who is available to answer questions about the job organization. projects, and whatever they may need help and advice on. (I9)	Aligning onboarding processes to nomadic work	Rituals	Harmonizing
We have annual meetings, and as part of my job, I travel, so I see my colleagues more often than at the annual meetings. So maybe for some employees, that would not be really enough, like those who have more like a stable job arrangement. (I34)	Recurring team events (virtual or face to face)		
When you are apart you actually have to write out every small step especially if there's a time difference so that they don't ask you follow-up questions. (I1) *This is done through [Microsoft] Teams. Basically, the supervisor is calling me and then we do a review with a shared screen and so on. We will review the ongoing task and the new task. With colleagues, when I need some information or when the colleagues need help, we will do this through [Microsoft] Teams—and I also use it for communicating with clients.* (I4)	Regularly connecting to centralized digital work infrastructure	Habits	
From front to back, I can manage everything myself. Accordingly, I only have the basic task of looking after the leads that you get and closing them. How I divide that up in the end doesn't matter at all; i.e., I have a couple of core meetings a week that are sort of a jour fixe or something that I regularly exchange with my colleagues. Otherwise, it doesn't matter to people whether I make an appointment at 10 a.m., make an appointment at 11 a.m., or make an appointment at 11 p.m.—it doesn't matter at all. (I21)	Self-managing personal workplace IT		
You need to communicate with your employees or with a colleague and you also need to communicate with your customers. If it's not digital media or technology, then it's the telephone. There must always be communication media. (I3)	Perceiving closeness through synchronous workplace IT	Flexibly synchronizing	
You know from your private life that when you communicate somehow via Messenger, messages are often misinterpreted just because a smiley was not set. That's not usually the case for me at work. It feels like you can read each other's thoughts, and I immediately know what the other person wants. (I3)	Avoiding misinterpretations in asynchronous workplace IT		

The trusted environment required for corporate nomadism to work is often created through IT-mediated rituals (e.g., weekly) and in-person events (e.g., annually). Location-based coworkers typically have additional in-person rituals at a higher frequency. Forgoing these opportunities to socialize with coworkers is a sacrifice made by corporate nomads. In the context of all-remote organizations, the coordination to create these rituals becomes even more complex because the whole workforce is distributed globally or works nomadically.

> *Ideally, I would also have more offline communication with my colleagues. It would be nice if we had an office, like where we would go once a month, for example, like an office in the country—not necessarily in your city—where maybe you gather with your colleagues. Because we are all remote and located globally, of course, we don't often have these opportunities to gather. Like we have, like, annual gatherings. Um, so you are still—it's not hybrid work; it's like full remote. I would like to see the company organize some hubs in different regions so that workers can come in and, for a couple of days, stay together and then go back.* (I7)

Table 7. Boundary Work in the "Harmonizing" Phase of Corporate Nomadism

Harmonizing	
Role of the individual	**Role of the organizational environment**
• Develops IT-mediated recurring work habits • Engages in work practices that promote *segregation*	• Develops IT-mediated (high-frequency) and in-person (low-frequency) rituals with the corporate nomad • Provides workplace characteristics that promote *integration*
Themes	**Example quotes**
Rituals	*Of course, you have less contact with people you don't actually work with. Then, of course, you also have contact across departments with the people who come in for coffee, lunch, and so on. Ultimately, in our case in our company, it's not as much as you might think because with all the video conferences and so on, as well as the private chats and so on, you actually have a lot of contact with the others and also this kind of contact. So at least I don't miss anything now. (I9)* *I also try to make in-person contact, and if I'm traveling somewhere for a few weeks, then I also try to make physical contacts—i.e., offline. It works really well in coworking spaces, for example, where you approach people and say, "Hey, where are you from?" or, rather, "Do you speak English?" or whatever language. Yes, and then you try to make contact somehow. And of course, that works best if you sit there for a long time—i.e., a long time during the day when you go to a coworking space. (I10)*
Habits	*You develop a relationship with the customers and the coworkers, and sometimes you don't know their faces. It's like a digital relationship without judgment but also with human handwritten emails, if that makes sense. The human touch in the wording. (I1)* *I also have colleagues who are very close friends of mine. This means that after work, I just feel like I'm constantly chatting with them. I don't chat with them on Slack but on a messenger, for example. And we talk about shared interests, what we're currently eating, and so on, just like friends do." (I3)*
Flexibly synchronizing	*I make sure I have enough FaceTime with my manager or with my colleagues. If I have an issue, I put in time with them, recurring once every week or once every two weeks to actually voice those concerns. I think it'll just be about having FaceTime with them regularly enough that I'm not just sending them random emails that I'm actually efficiently working. That is key. (I13)*

A major part of harmonizing nomadic work and the corporate environment is the management of workplace IT (e.g., Slack) and other technologies (e.g., operational systems to interact with clients). In this boundary coworking phase, the most important role of these tools is to integrate geographically splintered corporate nomads into communication structures, processes, and social structures. This can create IT-mediated distractions because the work *habits* of corporate nomads, unlike the habits of their location-based coworkers, are typically more digital. To be integrated, corporate nomads often cannot get around using synchronous IT—although many favor asynchronous IT that fosters spatiotemporal segregation. To resolve this tension, both corporate nomads and their corporate environment settle with *flexibly synchronizing* work progress, with both sides respecting each other's preferences and tools.

> *A lot of stuff happens on Slack. ... Then we use Google Docs and Sheets and presentations and whatnot for a more structured sort of thinking. Since I work in the design function, a lot of our work is conducted in Figma, which is a design tool, and it also invites collaboration. ... Then, we use Jira for planning and figuring out what we want to build, road mapping, and all that kind of stuff. There's like a whole bunch of tools that we use. You need at least five or six main ones. (I26)*

Table 7 provides an overview of boundary coworking in the harmonizing phase of corporate nomadism.

6 Discussion

6.1 A Process Model of Boundary Coworking in Corporate Nomadism

In this paper, we explore the phenomenon of corporate nomadism and theorized three phases of boundary work that emerged in this context: (1) splintering, (2) calibrating, and (3) harmonizing. One salient finding of our analysis is that at no point in time during the journey of becoming a corporate nomad does boundary work occur in isolation. Instead, boundary work in this context is highly dependent on mutual engagement and the input of both the corporate nomad and their immediate organizational environment. Individuals engage in boundary work to achieve extended work-life boundaries that enable them to maintain a desired nomadic lifestyle while preserving financial and social stability. Corporate nomadism further offers networking opportunities, professional development in foreign countries, geoarbitrage (e.g., lower cost of living), and personal freedom. We found corporate nomads to be spatiotemporal outliers within otherwise settled corporate environments. They challenge microlevel boundaries to engage in a nomadic lifestyle, but through the defense of macrolevel

boundaries, their organizational environments ensure that corporate work and digital nomadism remain distinct. Yet organizations must loosen certain microlevel boundaries for corporate nomadism to be a possibility. They do so because they expect advantages in talent acquisition (e.g., accessing a global hiring market, signaling attractiveness) and retention (e.g., increasing job satisfaction). We now discuss the three phases of boundary coworking in which both corporate nomads and their organizational environment engage, and how these phases are interconnected. If it is not advertised by an employer, a prospective corporate nomad typically requests a nomadic work arrangement for nonstrategic reasons (e.g., perpetual traveling as a lifestyle choice), while the corporate environment (e.g., supervisors, coworkers) resists this change for strategic (or tactical) reasons (e.g., maintaining control and protecting existing boundaries). In some cases, organizations anticipate such requests by proactively advertising nomadic work arrangements for different strategic (or tactical) reasons (e.g., employer branding). The clash between resistance and advocacy for corporate nomad arrangements often culminates in the compromise of proposing a test. If advocacy grows stronger than resistance, existing boundaries (e.g., geographical or cultural) start to change to an extent that allows the nomadic model to segue into a long-term arrangement. In this phase, the routines and habits of using IT ensure that the corporate nomad and their organizational environment flexibly synchronize their efforts. This means that the work outputs of the corporate nomad contribute to group-level efforts and group-level initiatives inform the individual efforts of the corporate nomad. For boundary coworking to succeed in this phase, the corporate nomad strikes a balance between conformity with and divergence from corporate work processes, structures, and norms.

As boundary coworking unfolds, the parties involved begin to realize that corporate nomadism that goes beyond workations or a clearly defined work-from-anywhere policy (which would not require an individual to "splinter") involves risks (e.g., organizational culture shocks or social isolation) and sacrifices (e.g., lack of control or reduced salary) on both sides. However, corporate nomadism also promises opportunities that neither side wants to miss (e.g., employee retention or personal development). This often culminates in rules and trade-offs upon which both sides agree. The more different a corporate nomad arrangement is from the default way of organizing in the organization, the more trade-offs need to be made. Hence, working as a corporate nomad can be a very different experience depending on the organizational environment. While some arrangements involve strict rules, more technological standardization, and fixed targets, other arrangements are quite the opposite. In either case, an arrangement is negotiated that aims to reduce uncertainty, manage expectations, and establish virtual workflows that incorporate corporate nomads. While most of the individuals we interviewed reported little supervisor control and relaxed leadership styles, some cases of strict targets and structured reporting were included in the sample. When segueing the corporate nomad arrangement into a permanent way of working, individuals find creative ways to use workplace IT to create closeness with their supervisors, coworkers, and clients. The increased efforts of using IT to create habits at the individual level and rituals at the group level determine the extent to which a corporate nomad is integrated into or segregated from their organizational environment.

The three phases of boundary coworking unfold in a field of tension between the corporate nomad and their organizational environment. The former is informed by the broader idea of digital nomadism, while the latter defines boundaries based on the norms, values, and beliefs of corporate work. Boundary coworking progresses successfully if the actors involved strike a balance between conformity, control, and integration on the part of the organization and divergence, self-management, and segregation on the part of the corporate nomad. Consequently, boundary coworking may fail if the corporate nomad arrangement gravitates toward the extreme end of the spectrum in one of the three phases. For example, if an organization expects too much conformity from a corporate nomad, the "testing" in the splintering phase may turn out to be unsuccessful. The same may happen if a prospective corporate nomad shows too much divergence, such as ignoring certain organizational norms. Figure 1 shows the three phases of a process model of boundary coworking in the context of corporate nomadism.

Despite the prevalent assumption that digital nomadism and corporate work are incompatible conceptions of work, we challenge this with our perspective of corporate nomadism. Digital nomadism and corporate work can intertwine at the periphery of organizational boundaries if both the individual and the organizational environment engage in joint boundary work (i.e., boundary coworking) that, among other things, involves trade-offs on each side of this arrangement. We also find that the way corporate nomads change organizational boundaries at the microlevel is purposeful but not strategic. This means that they typically have no overarching organizational goal in mind, nor do they aim to impose a radical transformation of work onto others at the group level. A more accurate description would be that changes to group-level boundaries can occur as a second-order effect after the initial defense of macrolevel boundaries. For example, other organizational members may begin to reinterpret organizational boundaries in other contexts because the corporate nomad arrangement inspired them to do so.
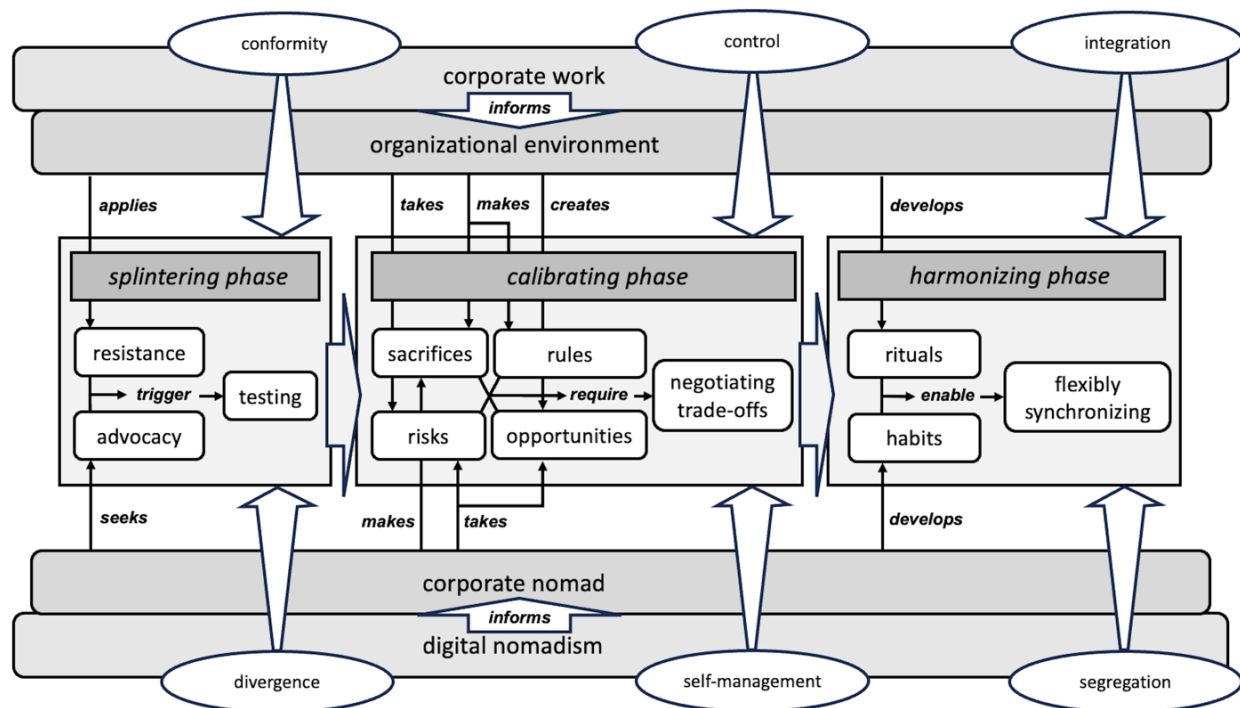
Figure 1. Process Model of Boundary Coworking in the Context of Corporate Nomadism

6.2 Theoretical Implications

Although corporate nomads are location independent, their independence in other dimensions of work (e.g., material, spatial, or temporal) (Prester et al., 2023) ranges on a spectrum. Previous work has theorized one possible spectrum between the extremes of Taylorist factory-style knowledge work (e.g., clickworkers) and hypermobile, independent knowledge work (e.g., digital nomads) (Wang et al., 2020). Although they move in a hypermobile fashion, corporate nomads find themselves dispersed across this spectrum but, in most cases, not on either side of the extreme (Marx et al., 2023). Our study adds to this understanding of knowledge work by showing that different interpretations of corporate nomadism unearth multiple spectra on which an archetype can operate. For example, on the spectrum of *conformity vs. divergence*, a corporate nomad can gravitate toward the extreme of conformity by sticking to the core working hours of their location-based organization in a different time zone. Another corporate nomad may diverge from this (e.g., in the case of Tia) and work in their own time as long as predefined productivity goals are met (Aroles et al., 2020; Schlagwein & Jarrahi, 2020). Similarly, a corporate nomad may experience little independence on the spectrum of *control vs. self-management* because their boundary work in the calibrating phase has resulted in them adhering to the use of proprietary workplace IT through which their supervisor exerts control (Frick & Marx, 2021). Furthermore, IT-mediated and in-person rituals and habits can range on the spectrum of *integration vs.*

separation. If they escalate to one of these extremes (e.g., in the case of Ben), the corporate nomad may lose their claim for legitimate organizational membership.

Our process model extends the existing theoretical understanding of corporate nomadism, which has previously been characterized rather pessimistically. The phenomenon of digital nomads working for organizations has been subject to constant conflict either because of mismatching values (Kong et al., 2019) or due to the logical consequence of digital nomadism being "an extreme form of capitalism" (Aroles et al., 2020, p. 126). Our sample might have been subject to some "survivorship bias," but it suggested that corporate nomadism as we increasingly see it bridges the hitherto antithetical conceptions and ideologies of corporate work and digital nomadism. In this regard, our process model adds to this debate by explaining how corporate nomads and their organizational environments engage in boundary coworking that navigates both individualistic microlevel and collectivistic macrolevel interests. Furthermore, our findings show that corporate nomadism is a unique phenomenon that deserves to be conceptually demarcated from digital nomadism (Hensellek et al., 2024; Schlagwein & Jarrahi, 2020) at the individual level and work-from-anywhere (Choudhury et al., 2021; Voll et al., 2023) at the organizational level.

Our study further informs existing theories on boundary work. Our case of corporate nomadism shows that organizational actors can combine microlevel "collaborative" boundary work (i.e., jointly changing the spatiotemporal boundaries for an individual) with

macrolevel "competitive" boundary work (i.e., the organizational environment defending the notion that location dependence defines legitimate organizational membership) (Langley et al., 2019). Previous theories have largely assumed that microlevel boundary work is performed with the intention of also changing group-level boundaries. We find that workplace IT enables this "asynchronicity" of boundaries because these tools can replace geographical and temporal proximity as the common denominator in organizational knowledge work. This contributes a technological dimension to the literature on "configurational" boundary work (Frickel, 2004; Langley et al., 2019; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Previous work has theorized only the role of technology for boundary spanning (Levina & Vaast, 2005), which is one particular type of collaborative boundary work, but it has disregarded technology in configurational boundary work, which occurs when boundaries are "manipulated in order to ensure that certain activities are brought together, while others are at least temporarily kept apart" (Langley et al., 2019, p. 41).

Although we claim that the corporate nomads we investigated worked *at* rather than *across* boundaries, this does not mean that they could not engage in other types of boundary work, such as boundary spanning (Korschun, 2015; Levina & Vaast, 2005). For example, by developing good relationships with external stakeholders, they may bring knowledge or resources into the organization by interacting with the external (Faik et al., 2019; Velter et al., 2020). Boundary spanning in the context of corporate nomadism would certainly be interesting if we could show that corporate nomads transfer knowledge from the external (e.g., through interactions in coworking spaces or virtual digital nomad communities) into their organizations. However, we saw little evidence of this in our data. We believe that corporate nomads introduce organizations to knowledge, resources, and ideas from digital nomadism to some extent, but we consider this more of a second-order effect that future research will need to explore.

6.3 Practical Implications

Our study informs practitioners who work as or work with corporate nomads. Negotiating and managing the trade-offs that come with corporate nomadism is of particular interest in this context. First, to establish corporate nomadism as a viable work arrangement in an organization, it is imperative to understand the motivators of different stakeholder groups to resist or advocate corporate nomadism. While the prospective corporate nomad might strive for a social and economic safety net while pursuing a desired location-independent lifestyle, a managing supervisor might be concerned about weakened productivity and organizational commitment. As with resolving an agency problem, both "agents" need to decrease information asymmetry and provide advances of mutual trust.

In this context, our findings suggest that a very simple solution to this problem is to start with a test period and a subsequent evaluation. If all sides agree upon a long-term solution that involves nomadic work, all stakeholders are advised to avoid the emergence of different "tiers" of workers, as can be observed in the context of hybrid work (Sundermeier, 2022). From a management perspective, the "nomadic" aspect of corporate nomadism adds very little complexity in terms of potential downsides compared to other remote work arrangements, such as working from home. However, we wish to stress that this small detail has a tremendous upside that organizations can use to their advantage. This includes but is not limited to employer branding (attracting and retaining talent), networking, continuing education, and (digital) workplace innovation.

7 Conclusion

This study provides evidence that corporate work and digital nomadism are not incompatible. We found that corporate nomads change microlevel boundaries to engage in a nomadic lifestyle, but through the defense of macrolevel boundaries, their organizational environment ensures that corporate work and digital nomadism remain distinct fields. Contrary to a rigid dichotomy, we found that corporate nomads navigate between the extremes of independent knowledge work and more constrained forms of organizational engagement. This nuanced perspective challenges previous juxtapositions of digital nomadism and corporate work, which have presented both knowledge work ideologies as inherently conflicting. Based on these findings, we developed an inductive process model of boundary coworking in the context of corporate nomadism. We theorized the three phases of (1) splintering, (2) calibrating, and (3) harmonizing, which underscore that corporate nomads are individuals who perform individualistic boundary work to become spatiotemporal outliers. This demarcates corporate nomadism from often restrictive work-from-anywhere policies that represent a conformist macrolevel view of alleged location-independent corporate work.

Our study is limited in generalizability, as we focused on corporate nomads working for companies from Western countries. The chosen sample might not represent all types of corporate nomads and could be subject to survivorship bias, as it included mainly those who successfully managed to establish nomadic work arrangements within their organizations. Therefore, readers should make their own judgments about the extent to which our findings and theory apply to other contexts. As our investigation primarily focused on the viewpoint of corporate nomads, future research should encompass the broader organizational context, including management, coworkers, and team-level structures. Understanding the interactions and perspectives of these stakeholders can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implications and dynamics of corporate nomadism and push the boundaries of what we consider a legitimate knowledge worker avatar.

References

Aroles, J., Granter, E., & Devaujany, F.-X. (2020). "Becoming mainstream": the professionalisation and corporatisation of digital nomadism. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, *35*(1), 114-129.

Asatiani, A., Hämäläinen, J., Penttinen, E., & Rossi, M. (2021). Constructing continuity across the organisational culture boundary in a highly virtual work environment. *Information Systems Journal*, *31*(1), 62-93.

Asatiani, A., & Norström, L. (2023). Information systems for sustainable remote workplaces. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *32*(3), 1-36.

Bailey, D. E., Leonardi, P. M., & Barley, S. R. (2012). The Lure of the Virtual. *Organization Science*, *23*(5), 1485-1504.

Barrett, M., Oborn, E., Orlikowski, W. J., & Yates, J. (2012). Reconfiguring boundary relations: Robotic innovations in pharmacy work. *Organization Science*, *23*(5), 1448-1466.

Bonneau, C., Aroles, J., & Estagnasié, C. (2023). Romanticisation and monetisation of the digital nomad lifestyle: The role played by online narratives in shaping professional identity work. *Organization*, *30*(1), 65-88.

Burton-Jones, A., McLean, E. R., & Monod, E. (2015). Theoretical perspectives in IS research: from variance and process to conceptual latitude and conceptual fit. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *24*(6), 664-679.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Choudhury, P., Foroughi, C., & Larson, B. (2021). Work-from-anywhere: The productivity effects of geographic flexibility. *Strategic Management Journal*, *42*(4), 655-683.

Delaney, K. (2023). *A "Cisco island" for digital nomads*. Cisco. https://newsroom.cisco.com/c/r/newsroom/en/us/a/y2023/m05/a-cisco-island-for-digital-nomads.html

Faik, I., Thompson, M., & Walsham, G. (2019). Designing for ICT-enabled openness in bureaucratic organizations: Problematizing, shifting, and augmenting boundary work. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *20*(6), 681-701.

Fernández-Aráoz, C. (2022). The rise of the "corporate nomad." *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2022/03/the-rise-of-the-corporate-nomad

Frick, N., & Marx, J. (2021). Integrating digital nomads in corporate structures: Managerial contemplations. *Proceedings of the 54th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 2111-2120).

Frickel, S. (2004). Building an interdiscipline: Collective action framing and the rise of genetic toxicology. *Social Problems*, *51*(2), 269-287.

Garud, R., Gehman, J., & Karunakaran, A. (2014). Boundaries, breaches, and bridges: The case of Climategate. *Research Policy*, *43*(1), 60-73.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine.

Hensellek, S., Weißwange, J., de Groot, J. M., & Oers, N. (2024). The digital nomad lifecycle: Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to start, maintain, and abandon digital nomadism. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Information Systems*.

Jarrahi, M. H., Philips, G., Sutherland, W., Sawyer, S., & Erickson, I. (2019). Personalization of knowledge, personal knowledge ecology, and digital nomadism. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *70*(4), 313-324.

Jarrahi, M. H., Sawyer, S., & Erickson, I. (2022). Digital assemblages, information infrastructures, and mobile knowledge work. *Journal of Information Technology*, *37*(3), 230-249.

Jiwasiddi, A., Schlagwein, D., Cahalane, M., Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., Leong, C., & Ractham, P. (2024). Digital nomadism as a new part of the visitor economy: The case of the "digital nomad capital" Chiang Mai, Thailand. *Information Systems Journal*, *34*(5), 1493-1535.

Kaplan, S., Milde, J., & Cowan, R. S. (2017). Symbiont practices in boundary spanning: Bridging the cognitive and political divides in interdisciplinary research. *Academy of Management Journal*, *60*(4), 1387-1414.

Kong, D., Schlagwein, D., & Cecez-Kecmanovic, D. (2019). Issues in digital nomad-corporate work: An institutional theory perspective. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Information Systems*.

Korschun, D. (2015). Boundary-spanning employees and relationships with external stakeholders: A social identity approach. *The Academy of Management Review*, *40*(4), 611-629.

Kurkland, N. B., & Bailey, D. E. (1999). The advantages and challenges of working here, there anywhere, and anytime. *Organizational Dynamics*, *28*(2), 53-68.

Langley, A., Lindberg, K., Mørk, B. E., Nicolini, D., Raviola, E., & Walter, L. (2019). Boundary work among groups, occupations, and organizations: From cartography to process. *Academy of Management Annals*, *13*(2), 704-736.

Leifer, R., & Delbecq, A. (1978). Organizational/environmental interchange: A model of boundary spanning activity. *The Academy of Management Review*, *3*(1), 40-50.

Levina, N., & Vaast, E. (2005). The emergence of boundary spanning competence in practice: Implications for implementation and use of information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, *29*(2), 335-363.

Lomi, A., Lusher, D., Pattison, P. E., & Robins, G. (2014). The focused organization of advice relations: A study in boundary crossing. *Organization Science*, *25*(2), 438-457.

Lunden, I. (2022). *Remote raises $300M more, now at a $3B+ valuation, to manage payments and more for globally distributed workforces.* TechCrunch. https://techcrunch.com/2022/04/05/remote-payroll-hr-workforce-3-billion/

Marx, J., Stieglitz, S., Brünker, F., & Mirbabaie, M. (2023). Home (office) is where your heart is: Exploring the identity of the "corporate nomad" knowledge worker archetype. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, *65*, 293-308.

Myers, M. D., & Newman, M. (2007). The qualitative interview in IS research: Examining the craft. *Information and Organization*, *17*(1), 2-26.

Nash, C., Jarrahi, M. H., Sutherland, W., & Phillips, G. (2018). Digital nomads beyond the buzzword: Defining digital nomadic work and use of digital technologies. In Chowdhury, G., McLeod, J., Gillet, V., Willett, P. (Eds.), *Transforming digital worlds: iConference 2018* (pp. 207-217). Springer

Postmes, T., Spears, R., & Lea, M. (1998). breaching or building social boundaries? Side-effects of computer-mediated communication. *Communication Research*, *25*(6), 689-715.

Prester, J., Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., & Schlagwein, D. (2023). Performing identities in unsettled digital work: The becoming of "digital nomads." *Journal of Information Technology*, *38*(4), 372-501.

Reichenberger, I. (2018). Digital nomads—A quest for holistic freedom in work and leisure. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *21*(3), 364-380.

Richter, S., & Richter, A. (2020). Digital Nomads. *Business and Information Systems Engineering*, *62*(1), 77-81.

Santos, F. M., & Eisenhardt, K. M. (2005). Organizational boundaries and theories of organization. *Organization Science*, *16*(5), 491-508.

Schlagwein, D. (2018). "Escaping the rat race": Justifications in digital nomadism. *Proceedings of the 26th European Conference on Information Systems*.

Schlagwein, D., & Jarrahi, M. H. (2020). The mobilities of digital work: The case of digital nomadism. *Proceedings of the 28th European Conference on Information Systems*.

Schotter, A. P. J., Mudambi, R., Doz, Y. L., & Gaur, A. (2017). Boundary spanning in global organizations. *Journal of Management Studies*, *54*(4), 403-421.

Shawkat, S., Rozan, M. Z. A., Salim, N. B., & Shehzad, H. M. F. (2021). Digital nomads: A systematic literature review. *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Research and Innovation in Information Systems*.

Shi, Y., Cui, T., & Kurnia, S. (2023). Value co-creation for digital innovation: An interorganizational boundary-spanning perspective. *Information & Management*, *60*(5), 1-12.

Shirish, A., Srivastava, S. C., & Boughzala, I. (2023). Contextualizing team adaptation for fostering creative outcomes in multicultural virtual teams: A mixed methods approach. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *24*(3), 700-744.

Smite, D., Moe, N. B., Hildrum, J., Gonzalez-Huerta, J., & Mendez, D. (2023). Work-from-home is here to stay: Call for flexibility in post-pandemic work policies. *Journal of Systems and Software*, *195*, 1-12.

Suddaby, R. (2010). Editor's comments: Construct clarity in theories of management and organization. *The Academy of Management Review*, *35*(3), 346-357.

Sundermeier, J. (2022). Lessons for and from digital workplace transformation in times of crisis. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, *21*(4), 253-268.

Vega, G. (2020). Not just a tourist destination: Why Spain's Canary Islands are hoping to attract 30,000 remote workers. *El Pais*. https://english.elpais.com/economy_and_business/2020-11-10/not-just-a-tourist-destination-why-spains-canary-islands-are-hoping-to-attract-30000-remote-workers.html

Velter, M. G. E., Bitzer, V., Bocken, N. M. P., & Kemp, R. (2020). Sustainable business model innovation: The role of boundary work for multi-stakeholder alignment. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *247*, 1-17.

Voll, K., Gauger, F., & Pfnür, A. (2023). Work from anywhere: traditional workation, coworkation and workation retreats: a conceptual review. *World Leisure Journal*, *65*(2), 150-174.

Waizenegger, L., Remus, U., Maier, R., & Kolb, D. (2023). Did you get my email?!—Leveraging boundary work tactics to safeguard connectivity boundaries. *Journal of Information Technology*, *39*(1), 123-148.

Wang, B., Schlagwein, D., Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., & Cahalane, M. C. (2018). Digital work and high-tech wanderers: Three theoretical framings and a research agenda for digital nomadism. *Proceedings of the Australasian Conference on Information Systems*.

Wang, B., Schlagwein, D., Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., & Cahalane, M. C. (2020). Beyond the factory paradigm: Digital nomadism and the digital future(s) of knowledge work post-COVID-19. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *21*(6), 1379-1401.

Whitford, J., & Zirpoli, F. (2014). Pragmatism, practice, and the boundaries of organization. *Organization Science*, *25*(6), 1823-1839.

Zietsma, C., & Lawrence, T. B. (2010). Institutional work in the transformation of an organizational field: The interplay of boundary work and practice work. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *55*(2), 189-221.

Appendix

Table A1. Overview of the Interview Sample

ID	Position	Gender	Age	Description of organization	Interview duration
Wave 1					
I1	Photo editor	Male	25	Location-based event management agency, in which only photo editors work location-independent	57:35
I2	Recruiting specialist	Female	30	Location-based IT firm with ~400 employees, of which only I2 works nomadically or remotely	52:53
I3	Online marketing manager	Female	28	Marketing services agency with location-based clients but a work-from-anywhere policy for all employees	1:00:50
I4	Pre-sales manager	Male	40	IT company with department-specific policies; sales department works fully remote	57:05
I5	Recruiting specialist	Female	28	Location-based human resource service agency with only I5 working nomadically and one other employee working from home	40:07
I6	Head of global strategy	Male	44	Global Fortune 500 IT company with a minority of employees working remotely	41:21
I7	Online marketing manager	Male	32	Location-based marketing services agency with a minority of employees working remotely	1:27:17
I8	Web-designer	Female	34	Location-based human resource service firm with only I8 working nomadically or remotely	1:27:17
I9	Lead generation expert	Female	40	Location-based marketing services agency with a minority of employees working remotely	40:23
I10	IT specialist	Male	33	Location-based IT service provider with only IT specialists working remotely or nomadically	49:30
I11	Online marketing manager	Female	34	Location-based marketing services agency with a majority of employees working remotely	55:57
I12	Social media manager	Female	23	Location-based marketing services agency with a majority of employees working remotely	40:41
Wave 2					
I13	Risk strategist	Male	25	Global financial technology company with a minority of employees working remotely	33:09
I14	Brand manager	Female	32	Location-based manufacturing company with a minority of employees working remotely	29:06
I15	Financial analyst	Female	33	Global financial services company with a minority of employees working remotely	26:32
I16	Junior account manager	Female	23	Location-based marketing services agency with a majority of employees working remotely	28:03
I17	Human resource manager	Female	24	Location-based energy start-up with a minority of employees working remotely	26:45
I18	Junior consultant	Female	25	Location-based business consulting firm with a majority of employees working remotely	28:03
I19	Sales manager	Female	53	Global information technology company with a minority of employees working remotely	50:00
I20	Head of marketing	Male	28	Location-based editorial service company with a minority of the ~150 employees working remotely	38:55
I21	Junior sales manager	Male	26	Location-based IT consulting firm with a majority of employees working remotely	24:45
I22	Chief sales officer	Male	36	Location-based IT consulting firm with a majority of employees working remotely	28:43
I23	Senior project manager	Male	30	Global IT Services company with a minority of employees working remotely	25:21
I24	Partnership agent	Female	27	Global Fortune 500 IT firm with a minority of the ~300,000 employees working remotely	32:56
I25	Business analyst	Female	30	Global IT services company with a minority of employees working remotely	22:43
I26	Design manager	Male	33	Global streaming and media company with a minority of the ~8,000 employees working remotely	42:32

				Wave 3		
I27	Marketing manager	Female	26	Location-based software-as-a-service company with a minority of employees working remotely	36:23
I28	Human resource manager	Female	32	Location-based software-as-a-service company with a minority of employees working remotely	30:03
I29	Senior design director	Female	53	Global streaming and media company with a minority of employees working remotely	31:36
I30	Project manager	Male	36	Global IT services company with a minority of the ~2,000 employees working remotely	23:55
I31	Design lead	Female	33	Location-based financial technology start-up with a minority of the ~100 employees working remotely	27:34
I32	Senior account manager	Male	43	Global IT services company with a minority of the ~75,000 employees working remotely	31:17
I33	Project manager	Female	27	Global energy provider with a minority of the ~72,000 employees working remotely	34:22
I34	Business development manager	Female	27	Distributed IT services company with all ~200 employees working remotely	39:45
I35	Web designer	Male	35	Location-based IT services company with a minority of employees working remotely	37:35
I36	Financial analyst	Male	24	Global financial services company with a minority of employees working remotely	26:45
I37	Senior content manager	Female	37	IT Services company with a majority of employees working remotely	46:54

About the Authors

Julian Marx is a lecturer in the School of Computing and Information Systems at The University of Melbourne. Before this position, he was a PhD student at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. In 2022, he graduated with distinction in information systems. In 2019 and 2020, he was a visiting scholar at the University of Sydney Business School (Australia) and the University of Agder (Norway). His current research focuses on the future of work and social media. His work has been published in *Journal of Management Information Systems, Information Systems Journal, Journal of Information Technology, Information & Management,* and *Business & Information Systems Engineering.*

Milad Mirbabaie is a full professor of information systems at the University of Bamberg, Germany. Before this position, he was a junior professor at Paderborn University, interim professor of information systems at the University of Bremen, and team leader and post-doc of sociotechnical systems at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. He studied information systems at the University of Hamburg and received his PhD from the University of Münster, Germany. He has published in reputable journals such as *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Journal of Information Technology*, *Electronic Markets*, *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, and *Internet Research*. His work focuses on artificial intelligence, AI-based systems, social media, digital work, sustainability, and crisis management. In 2017, one of his articles was awarded the Claudio Ciborra Award at the European Conference on Information Systems for the most innovative research article.

Stefan Stieglitz is a full professor of business information systems and digital transformation at the University of Potsdam, Germany, and the director of the Competence Center Connected Organization. Previously, he served as an assistant professor at the University of Münster and as a professor at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. He has also held positions as a visiting professor and as an honorary professor at the University of Sydney, Australia. In his research, he investigates the impact of digital transformation on organizations, individuals, and society. His work has been published in reputable journals such as the *Journal of Management Information Systems*, the *European Journal of Information Systems*, the *Journal of Information Technology*, and *Business & Information Systems Engineering*. Among other honors, his articles have received the AIS Senior Scholars Best IS Publications Award and the Stafford Beer Medal.