

# Critical-Theoretic Review and Research Agenda on Digital Nomadism

*Literature Review*

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## Abstract

*The emerging phenomenon of digital nomadism attracts interest and scrutiny in public and scholarly discourse, provoking questions about normative concerns. Engaging with such questions, we conduct a literature review on digital nomadism informed by critical-theoretic IS research. We read and analyze the literature on digital nomadism from the critical-theoretic perspectives of empowerment and emancipation, exploitation and marginalization, systems and structures, agency and technology, environment and sustainability, and ethics and ethos. On this basis, we infer 16 knowledge claims that the reviewed literature makes about digital nomadism; and we propose illustrative examples of future research questions for critical-theoretic IS research on digital nomadism.*

**Keywords:** Digital nomadism, digital work, critical theory, literature review, research agenda.

## Introduction

Digital nomadism has been predicted for a while but has only recently become a recognized emerging global phenomenon. The 1997 book “Digital Nomad” imagined a future of jet-setting knowledge workers (Makimoto and Manners 1997). Enabled by IT innovations (ubiquitous Internet access, mobile devices, online marketplaces, etc.) and inspired by popular books such as “The Four-Hour Work Week” (Ferriss 2007), digital nomadism is now a lived reality. Digital nomadism, recognized since the mid-2010s as a coherent social practice, refers to a lifestyle of working digitally, overseas travel, and expat living (Schlagwein 2018). In this way, digital nomadism is sui generis a digital phenomenon (not an existing practice digitally transformed or digital added in), of interest to IS research.

Digital nomadism is increasingly attracting interest and scrutiny in public and scholarly discourse. Digital nomadism seems to promise new opportunities for both pragmatic ends like ‘geo-arbitrage’ and idealistic ends like ‘freedom’ (Reichenberger 2018; von Zumbusch and Lalicic 2020), not only for the digital nomads but also for the economic prosperity of communities they visit and where they make their living, such as in Chiang Mai, Thailand (Jiwasiddi et al. 2024). Yet digital nomads are also criticized for alleged negative impacts on local communities, such as gentrification and pricing-out locals, and alleged lack of respect for local culture and customs (Thompson 2021; Woldoff and Litchfield 2021). These divergent views on digital nomadism are not only about the nature and effects of digital nomadism (i.e., the current state of practice),

but also about normative and ethical concerns (i.e., are digital nomads' practices ethical and how things ought to be). The literature on these issues is fragmented and lacking in coherent evidence (Hannonen 2020). It is therefore necessary to better understand whether digital nomadism is “good” for digital nomads, host communities and society at large, and how these can be judged.

Such understanding have been sought within critical-theoretic information systems (IS) research. The impact of IS on society — here, the economic, technological, and societal implications of digital nomadism — are of central concern to critical-theoretic IS research (Cecez Kecmanovic et al. 2008; Lyytinen 1992; Myers and Klein 2011; Richardson and Robinson 2007). Critical-theoretic IS research seeks to critique the status quo by exposing issues within social systems resulting from the use of IT (Orlikowski and Baroudi 1991; Richardson and Robinson 2007), challenging the common assumption that the central purpose of IT (as well as research on IT) is to increase efficiency and profitability within the current state of affairs (Lyytinen 1992). Such research asks questions about the impacts of IT on people (workers, citizens), strengthening existing power structures and maintaining privilege, and is generally concerned with increased control, oppression and authoritarian management through digital technologies (Cecez Kecmanovic et al. 2008; Hirschheim and Klein 1994).

Despite the evident need for critical work, prior reviews on digital nomadism taking this kind of critical-theoretic stance are notably absent. Rather, those reviews have largely focused on broad conceptual categories (de Almeida et al. 2021; Orel 2023) and bibliometric analysis (Šimová 2022), without a particular critical-theoretical stance on the digital nomadism literature to date, or providing an agenda for such work. We therefore review the literature on digital nomadism to answer the following research questions:

1. *How can we understand digital nomadism from a critical-theoretic stance?* In other words, we seek to assess what critical-theoretic knowledge can be inferred from the existing research literature, even if it may not have been conducted from a critical-theoretic stance.
2. *How could critical-theoretic perspective contribute to further understanding of digital nomadism?* In other words, we seek to develop a research agenda for future critical-theoretic work on digital nomadism.

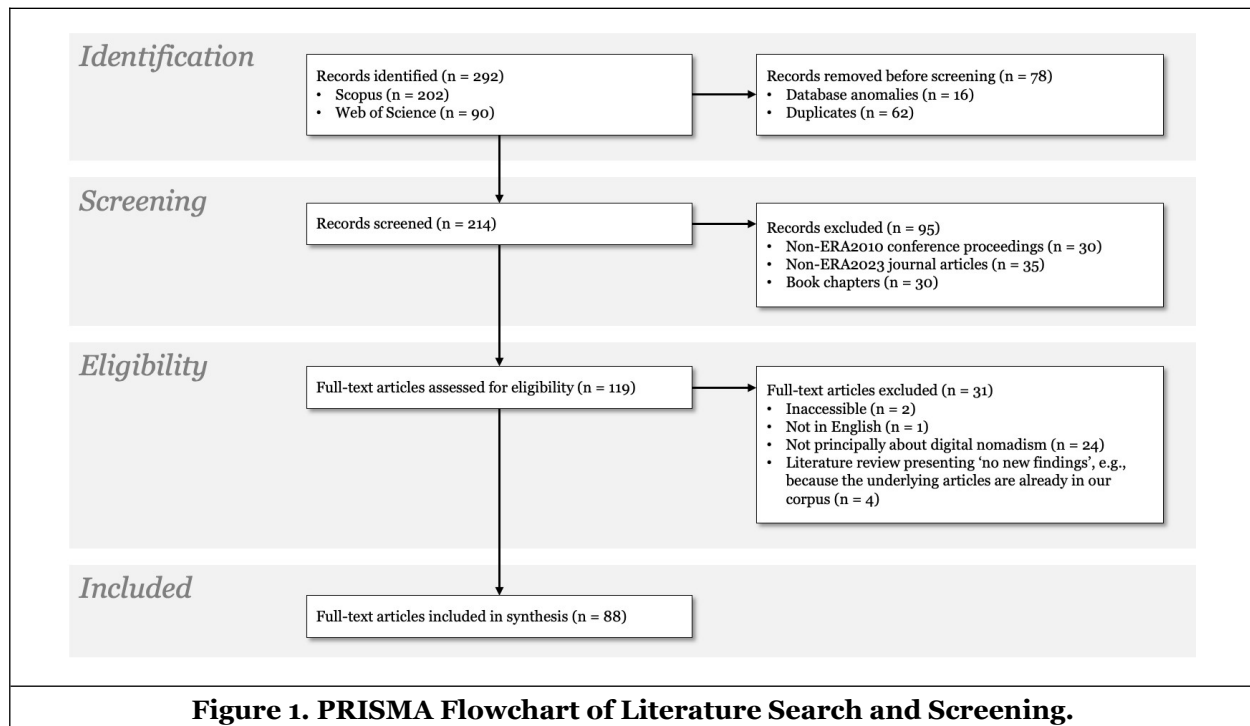
To answer the two research questions, we developed “critical-theoretic perspectives” (areas of concern and interest) for digital nomadism—based on prior critical work on IS and digital phenomena—to reframe and reanalyze the existing literature on digital nomadism. This analysis results in a set of critical knowledge claims as far as they can be inferred from the existing research. Based on the problematizations and tensions emerging from this reframing and reanalysis, we propose a research agenda for future critical-theoretic IS research on digital nomadism. Overall, we critically assess the state of critical-theoretic knowledge about digital nomadism and propose illustrative future directions.

## **Literature Review Method**

Our literature review is critical in a dual sense: ‘critical’ in the sense of following the critical research paradigm (of IS) as a consistent theoretical framework and is ‘critical’ in the sense of general critical-reflective (critical thinking, such as in judging what is absent from the literature). In doing so, our literature review combines the ‘descriptive’ and ‘critical’ review genres (Paré et al. 2015): we present “interpretable patterns or trends with respect to pre-existing propositions, theories, methodologies or findings” (Paré et al. 2015, p. 186) in line with a descriptive review, but also reveal “contradictions, controversies, or inconsistencies” (Paré et al. 2015, p. 189) based on critical interpretive synthesis.

To undertake the review, we followed a hermeneutic orientation towards our reading of the literature (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic 2014), infused with critical-theoretic concerns. To manage datasets generated by these iterative search processes (i.e., literature corpus) and analysis/interpretation processes (i.e., qualitative synthesis results), and to mitigate any associated data entry errors, we followed a tool-support architecture (Bandara et al. 2015), with reference management based on CoLRev version 0.11.0 (Wagner and Prester 2024), and qualitative data analysis based on YAML (Wang 2022b). Our literature search was based on a keyword search of “digital nomad OR digital nomadism” through Scopus and Web of Science, run on multiple occasions and most recently on 22 April 2024, resulting in 214 unique results as per the PRISMA flowchart (Page et al. 2021) in Figure 1 (in line with the research questions, the scope of our literature review was focused specifically on digital nomadism, and does not claim to cover related topics more broadly — e.g., remote work, digital work, global mobility, expat life). In each run of the search, the

CoLRev software tool assigned a unique identifier to ensure that screening, reading, analysis, and interpretation could take place in parallel with multiple rounds of searching and to ensure that every single search result was accounted for. In order to retrieve relevant literature whilst maintaining academic rigor, we called upon the most inclusive journal and conference list that we were aware of, the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) lists (Australian Research Council 2010; Australian Research Council 2023). The most recent journal list (2023) had 26,246 known peer-reviewed academic journals; the most recent conference list (2010) had 1,952 known peer-reviewed academic conferences. We removed all results not matched to these lists, thus reducing our corpus from  $n = 214$  to  $n = 119$ , as per Figure 1. To ensure correct application of the ERA lists, we enlisted the support of a research assistant to perform the same task independently; we eliminated data entry errors by using the results to cross-check one another.



For the analysis, we read the 119 full-text articles and excluded 31 for various reasons, as outlined in Figure 1 above. In the end, we had 88 full-text articles. Based on our reading, content analysis, and interpretation of these 88 articles, we coded the articles according to categories of knowledge claims made by these articles (first-order codes), aggregating these knowledge claims according to clusters of critical-theoretic concerns and perspectives (second-order codes). This kind of coding followed the qualitative analysis methodology developed by Gioia et al. (2012) and adapted for literature reviews (e.g., by Holzmann and Gregori 2023; Kraus et al. 2022). The results of all of our coding are presented in the next section, in which the knowledge claims (KC1, KC2 ... KC16) constitute the first-order codes formulated based on what the literature says, and the framework of six critical-theoretic perspectives constitutes the second-order codes.

To be clear, our literature review is descriptive and critical rather than a systematic meta-analysis; we do not claim that we have a ‘complete set’ of research articles, but rather that we identified a relevant set of articles based on our prior knowledge, deep reading and informed judgement. In other words, we created “a revealing but manageable sample ... rather than aiming for vacuum cleaning” (Alvesson and Sandberg 2020, p. 1298). In line with our hermeneutic orientation towards the literature (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic 2014), it is important to note that our review was a work of interpretation and not deterministically reproducible by other researchers, while being documented in detail. Our review, based on our set of critical-theoretic perspectives, does not constitute the only possible way of interpreting the literature in this manner, nor does its contribution (i.e., its ability to address our research questions) depend on such deterministic reproducibility (Rowe 2017). We constructed the critical-theoretic perspectives reflexively, not from a ‘blank slate’ (Urquhart and Fernández 2013), but rather based on the synthesis of our

interpretation of the literature with our background knowledge on critical-theoretic IS research (for more details, please refer to Cecez-Kecmanovic 2011; Cecez-Kecmanovic 2017; Schlagwein 2021; Schlagwein et al. 2018; Wang 2022a; only key references are cited in this paper). That said, we believe that our review provides a well-grounded synthesis of knowledge claims from the literature on digital nomadism from a critical-theoretical stance and opens new critically informed pathways for future research.

## Critical-Theoretic Perspectives on Digital Nomadism

This section presents the findings of our literature review, based on the results of our coding and analysis, within the framework of six “critical-theoretic perspectives”. For each of the six critical-theoretic perspectives, we first provide a brief explanation of its meaning, followed by the relevant knowledge claims (KC1, KC2 ... KC16) coming from the literature on digital nomadism.

As we are taking a critical theory perspective on digital nomadism, the review assumes familiarity with critical theory and the critical paradigm in IS research and the social sciences (Chua 1986; Orlikowski and Baroudi 1991). A thorough introduction to critical theory and critical-theoretic IS research perspective was beyond the scope of this paper, but many useful readings could be found elsewhere (e.g., Cecez Kecmanovic et al. 2008; Myers and Klein 2011; Stahl 2011). In very brief, critical theory, emerging primarily out of post-Marxian (and post-national socialism) German sociology (‘Frankfurt School’), does not accept the objectivist perspective of positivism, which may treat the social sciences ‘as if’ a natural science (Schlagwein 2021), but focuses on social and societal issues as ‘man-made’ and socially constructed, based on values, and often considers ‘how the world could be otherwise’ (rather than accepting it as a natural landscape). As such, critical-theoretic research focused on topics such as ethics, values, politics, and social injustices.

### ***Empowerment and Emancipation***

In critical-theoretic IS research, emancipation broadly refers to people living “the best possible lives they could or to achieve their potential” (Stahl 2011, pp. 200-201), and empowerment is about providing these opportunities (Stahl 2008). When reading the literature on digital nomadism from this critical-theoretic perspective, the first knowledge claim that we have identified is that:

*KC1. Digital nomadism involves individuals using digital technologies to empower themselves through the refusal of conformity to society-imposed lifestyle patterns.*

Emancipation from conformity to a society-imposed lifestyle stands out as one of the most prominent motivations for individuals to pursue digital nomadism. Digital nomads quoted in studies have referred to this society-imposed lifestyle variously as “the rat race” (Schlagwein 2018, p. 3), “the script” (Mancinelli 2020, p. 427) and “professional drudgery” (Stumpf et al. 2022, p. 5205).

Digital technologies make possible the digital nomads’ opposition to this society-imposed lifestyle. Digital work technologies, for example, make possible an alternative to the typical regimented ‘9-to-5’ work routine (Wang et al. 2019) and the commute to a physical downtown office overseen by “someone else who would control my time and freedom” (digital nomad quoted in Aroles et al. 2020, p. 121). The same spirit of resistance is seen in digital nomads’ broader opposition to the “predictable social path, based on the accumulation of material goods and status markers—a diploma, a well-paid job, a mortgage, a car—triggered by social competition” (Mancinelli 2020, p. 427). In this way, digital nomads challenge entrenched social norms and instead pursue freedom (Matos and Ardévol 2021; Orel 2019; Reichenberger 2018; von Zumbusch and Lalicic 2020). Yet, after further assessing the literature on digital nomadism from the perspective of “empowerment and emancipation”, a related but different knowledge claim emerges:

*KC2. Digital nomadism empowers individuals by rewarding their ability to exercise and sustain specific personal and professional competencies, especially in relation to digital technologies and digital literacy.*

There seem to be many digital, personal and professional competencies required for digital nomadism. Tending to these competencies appears to reward digital nomads richly. Digital nomads gain opportunities to see the world; to spend time with family more flexibly (Mancinelli 2020); to increase their social networks and meet like-minded people (Schlagwein 2018), further enhancing their social capital and network capital; and to potentially take advantage of ‘time zone arbitrage’ (Frick and Marx 2021), i.e., when working

remotely and asynchronously with a client in a different time zone to their own, the window of opportunity for collaboration may actually increase rather than decrease. Digital nomads may even benefit from the common practice of nomadically moving with the seasons, for example avoiding a harsh winter by scheduling an end-of-year trip to a tropical destination (Nash et al. 2018).

Digital technologies are central to these personal and professional competencies. Digital nomads are required to gain proficiency with new technologies quickly, and coordinate between complex configurations and sociomaterial assemblages of digital platforms, ecosystems and tools (Ingvarsson 2023; Nash et al. 2021; Prester et al. 2019), through which they navigate complex social networks such as supply chains, potential clients, business contacts, collaborators, other digital nomads, and legal and bureaucratic systems (Hall et al. 2019), accumulating and maintaining social capital and network capital (Mancinelli 2020) all via digital communication systems. Through those digital communication systems, digital nomads not only undertake the work given by their clients, but also the ‘meta-work’ associated with setting up work activities in their nomadic settings (Aroles et al. 2023). Those working not as freelancers or entrepreneurs but as nomadic employees (‘corporate nomads’) must navigate specific technical challenges such as using internal corporate software and devices in a more mobile manner than they were designed for (Marx et al. 2023). In their personal lives, digital nomads must be flexible and resilient, being able to draw on digital information resources to navigate amenities and services (e.g., healthcare) in unfamiliar environments (Ehn et al. 2022) and construct a feeling of ‘home’ on the go, without the usual comforts of a settled family home (de Loryn 2021; Mancinelli 2018), in some cases with accompanying family members and even home-schooling children in a manner referred to as ‘roadschooling’ or ‘worldschooling’ (Mancinelli 2018; Sotomayor 2022). In summary, digital nomadism can be an empowering reward if one can harness the possibilities presented by digital technologies to construct one’s world, such that in that world, one can see “liquid living not as precarious, but as a source of control and agency” (Atanasova et al. 2024, p. 1258). Vice versa, the digital nomad lifestyle is only accessible to those with digital competencies – discussed next.

### ***Exploitation and Marginalization***

In critical-theoretic IS research, sensitizing oneself to incidences of exploitation and marginalization reveals otherwise hidden injustices (Marjanovic et al. 2021b) and unintended consequences (Vaidya and Myers 2020). In the literature on digital nomadism, we identified the following relevant knowledge claim:

*KC3. Digital nomads are, at least in many cases, privileged individuals who are using digital technologies to exploit global inequalities.*

Digital nomads are said to have privileges such as ‘passport strength’ and use ‘geo-arbitrage’. ‘Passport strength’ – referring to the number of destinations that a particular nation’s passport grants holders’ access to – is notable for its essential role in allowing digital nomads to be ‘nomadic’ at all, but varies considerably around the world, resulting in disparity between digital nomads depending on the passport that one carries (Mancinelli and Germann Molz 2024). Meanwhile, ‘geo-arbitrage’ – referring to the practice of earning a high income while living in low-cost destinations, i.e., leveraging currency differences – is practiced by many digital nomads to maximize their purchasing power (Hall et al. 2019; Mancinelli 2020; Stumpf et al. 2022). Notably, the current circumstances of both passport strength and geo-arbitrage favour specific powerful and/or developed nations (e.g., Europe, North America, Australia, the ‘Global North’), such that digital nomads are often citizens from those nations travelling to destinations in comparatively less powerful and/or developed nations (e.g., Central and South-East Asia, Africa, South America, the ‘Global South’) (Andrejuk 2022; de Almeida et al. 2022b; Hannonen 2024; Hong 2023).

Digital technologies enable the rapid discovery of opportunities to exercise such privileges, for example on Internet forums and social media reports on the destinations that are relatively most favourable to digital nomads (de Almeida et al. 2022b). Although digital nomads bring economic activity into those destinations, their enhanced purchasing power also risks expediting processes of gentrification that may eventually push locals out of their own hometown or homeland (McElroy 2020), in what arguably resembles (neo)colonialism (Hong 2023; McElroy 2020). Because they do come from this position of power when they enter local communities, digital nomads may gain further privileges. Local economies have been observed to self-restructure to provide services that cater for digital nomads and are of comparably less relevance for local, settled citizens (Hannonen et al. 2023; Ji et al. 2024; MacRae 2016; Orel 2020; Pacheco and Azevedo 2022; Um 2023). However, further reading the literature from the perspective of “Exploitation and Marginalization”, a different knowledge claim also emerges:

*KC4. Digital nomads are aware of, and take actions to mitigate, their exploitative privileges.*

As Hall et al. (2019) observe, “[digital nomads] are often concerned that [their] actions ... can amount to exploitation of people in developing and third-world nations” (p. 443). As a mitigating response to their exploitative and marginalizing impacts, digital nomads often engage in pro-social volunteering projects, often referred to as ‘co-giving’ since they are often attached to coworking spaces (Wang et al. 2019).

Digital technologies are, in many instances, that which digital nomads can contribute to local communities. A specialized form of such ‘co-giving’ is ‘co-learning’ (Jiwasiddi et al. 2024), involving digital nomads providing informal education and training on the skills they possess that are lacking in the local community – notably proficiency with digital technologies (Wang et al. 2019), but also related skills such as proficiency with the English language (Green 2020) – resulting in knowledge spillover and inspiration effects that would otherwise not be possible (Jiwasiddi et al. 2024). Also in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital nomads are increasingly mindful of providing for their own needs and wellbeing in order to avoid becoming a burden on under-resourced local infrastructure (Holleran and Notting 2023). Finally, a knowledge claim emerges of digital nomads’ own experience of exploitation and marginalization:

*KC5. Digital nomads are themselves sometimes exploited or marginalized; for example, in forms mediated by digital work platforms.*

Although digital nomads do experience many advantages over others, they are not immune from the experience of being disadvantaged. In their professional lives, digital nomads may be overlooked for jobs in favor of more traditional employees (Andrejuk 2022; Frick and Marx 2021), or find themselves more susceptible to dismissal due to typical remote work issues such as unstable internet connectivity and miscommunication (Green 2020; Kong et al. 2019). Given this weakened negotiating position, digital nomads sometimes feel pressured to work longer hours for no additional pay if working as corporate nomads (Marx et al. 2023), or may even work for free if starting up nomadic freelancing or entrepreneurial pursuits (Cook 2023). The overall professional position of the digital nomad is, as Ens et al. (2018) put it, a life of high mobility but high precarity. Meanwhile, in their personal lives, digital nomads may receive judgmental assessments from family members who are skeptical about their life choices (Atanasova et al. 2024; Holleran and Notting 2023; Mancinelli 2018). Yet digital nomads have been anecdotally reported to have experienced discrimination based on ethnicity, gender or sexuality (Hong 2023) and have also been reported to feel negatively perceived by local citizens at their destination (Miocevic 2024), potentially related to concerns about their reputation as privileged outsiders (cf. KC3). Ironically, digital nomads are arguably not actually the most privileged outsiders, compared to company-funded business travelers and ‘neo-nomadic’ jet-setting wealthy elite (Ens et al. 2018; Hannonen 2020; Parreño-Castellano et al. 2022).

Digital technologies may, in some cases, be implicated in this exploitation/marginalization. Sometimes it is the failure of digital technologies (or their perceived propensity towards failure), as in the case of digital nomads’ perceived unstable internet connectivity (Green 2020; Kong et al. 2019). Yet sometimes it is a matter of digital technologies working as intended, but not in favor of the digital nomads. For example, digital nomads working as freelancers on gig-economy digital work platforms report that when there are disputes, platforms tend to err towards the side of the client rather than the freelancing digital nomad, all while allegedly taking a large cut of the digital nomads’ income as overhead fees (Wang et al. 2019).

## ***Systems and Structures***

In critical-theoretic IS research, particular attention is given to the issues arising from systems and structures of human interaction. These systems and structures relate to the critical role of power, and how power is established and entrenched, for example capitalism (Zuboff 2015) and the bureaucratic nation state (Rowe et al. 2020). When reading the literature on digital nomadism from this critical-theoretic perspective, somewhat contradictory and paradoxical knowledge claims emerge about the systems/structures of capitalism and the nation state. The first such knowledge claim is as follows:

*KC6. Digital nomadism entails resistance against prevailing logics and practices of capitalism and corporatism.*

Digital nomadism is said to be a “form of resistance against the capitalistic mode of production” (Mancinelli 2018, p. 314). Many digital nomads reject inflexible and inefficient corporate employment arrangements of work, in favor of working independently as freelancers and micro-enterprise entrepreneurs and outsourcing

work to other such freelancers and entrepreneurs (Wang et al. 2020; Wang et al. 2019). Even those working as corporate nomads resist the capitalistic mode of production in that they challenge traditional corporate norms, policies and boundaries and provoke the reconsideration thereof (Richter and Richter 2020).

Digital technologies, notably, enable digital nomads to resist the (traditionally) capitalist notion of wealth in the form of physical assets and possessions, since assets can now be materialized in digital form (Wang et al. 2019). In the same spirit, digital nomads seem to favor the reinvestment of income back into their entrepreneurial pursuits, self-improvement, and creative passions (Atanasova et al. 2024). However, a contradictory knowledge claim is also visible in the literature:

*KC7. Digital nomadism perpetuates prevailing logics and practices of capitalism and the market economy.*

Although nominally resisting several logics and practices of capitalism, such as ‘the corporation’ and ‘wage slavery’, digital nomads simultaneously endorse and take advantage of several other logics and practices of capitalism, such as entrepreneurship, globalization and, generally speaking, ‘the free market economy’.

Digital technologies — laptops, smartphones, ‘cloud’ computing, etc. — are still manufactured, developed and programmed largely within the system of global capitalism (Wang et al. 2019); without these, digital nomadism would not be possible. The literature also suggests that the international digital nomad community, though largely formed through digital channels, also maintains an important physical presence coalescing around paid events and environments such as digital nomad cruises, conferences, coworking spaces and co-living spaces (Aroles et al. 2020; Chevtaeva and Denizci-Guillet 2021; Lee et al. 2019). These may be helpful for the digital nomads who can afford them, but represent a barrier to those who cannot (Aroles et al. 2020). The former, in effect, form a distinct socioeconomic class (Aroles et al. 2020; Bergan et al. 2021), one that has been observed to become disconnected from and unable to empathize with (Bergan et al. 2021; Bozzi 2020; Parreño-Castellano et al. 2022) the working-class laborers who provide their food, shelter, transportation, and personal services at geo-arbitraged low costs.

Just as digital nomadism has contradictory or paradoxical relationships with capitalism, it seems to have similarly contradictory or paradoxical relationships with the nation state. We observe the knowledge claim:

*KC8. Digital nomadism entails independence from the constraints of being a settled citizen of (the) nation state(s).*

Essentially, the claim is that digital nomadism constitutes “a challenge to the logic and authority of the State and its established structures” (Aroles et al. 2020, p. 125). With their lifestyles of interjurisdictional prospecting (Wang et al. 2019), digital nomads are arguably treated as guests wherever they tread, reaping many of the benefits of living in a nation state whilst evading many of the usual responsibilities of doing so, notably avoiding certain types of taxation by maintaining tax residency statuses in a grey area of legality (Amaddeo 2023), and bypassing visa restrictions including via so-called ‘visa runs’ (renewing tourist visas over and over by briefly exiting and re-entering countries) (Mancinelli and Germann Molz 2024; Prester et al. 2023). Yet digital nomads simultaneously reserve the right to fall back on the nation state, for example “flying back to the nation state” during the COVID-19 pandemic (Holleran 2022, p. 837).

Digital technologies are necessary for this kind of independence, for example in the form of digital means of storing wealth and conducting transactions that are fluid between national governments: including offshore investment funds, cryptocurrencies, prepaid debit cards, gift cards, and credit card points (Wang et al. 2019). The challenge posed by digital nomadism to the nation state is such that some scholars, such as Webb (2024), argue that the entire relationship between the individual, society and the nation state may need to be renegotiated. Yet we also observe the following contrasting knowledge claim being made:

*KC9. The nation state has substantial leverage in its balance of power with the digital nomads; digital nomadism is dependent on the support of (the) nation state(s).*

Digital nomads’ ability to travel is ultimately at the mercy of nation states’ border control and visa regulations (Hannonen 2022; Lacárcel et al. 2024; Mancinelli 2020; Mancinelli and Germann Molz 2024; Xiao and Lutz 2024); they travel on passports and engage with nation-state institutions that represent their social contracts and obligations to the nation state (Cook 2022). Loopholes exploited by digital nomads (e.g., relating to visas and taxation), can be closed with policy changes (Kostic 2019; Ouro 2023; Pignatari 2023; Tyutyuryukov and Guseva 2021). Despite constructing a feeling of ‘home’ on the go (cf. KC2), digital

nomads' legal statuses — as visitors rather than citizens in most of their destinations — are based on paperwork rather than sentiment; they quickly learn that their entitlements to public services are not at the level they would have experienced in the jurisdiction of their citizenship (Ehn et al. 2022; Holleran 2022).

Digital technologies are thus central not only to digital nomads' independence from the nation state, but also their continued dependence on the same nation state. For example, as Cook (2022) points out, digital nomads are using digital technologies to continue filing taxes somewhere in the world. Some jurisdictions are even starting to issue specialized digital nomad visas, thus gaining regulatory visibility over digital nomads yet also supporting their own strategic goals related to tourism, labor market, entrepreneurship, and skilled immigration (Amaddeo 2023; Bednorz 2024; Mancinelli and Germann Molz 2024; Poulaki et al. 2023; Sánchez-Vergara et al. 2023; Zhang et al. 2024; Zhou et al. 2024), particularly in the case of developing nations (Foley et al. 2022; Hermann and Paris 2020). In many cases, what is attractive about digital nomads to the nation state is the prospect of converting them back into settlers, so-called 'digital expats', resulting in the transfer of wealth and entrepreneurship (Amaddeo 2023). In sum, the nation state supports digital nomadism insofar as digital nomadism advances the interests of the nation state.

### **Agency and Technology**

In critical-theoretic IS research, particular attention is also given to the issues arising from the interplay between human agency/power and technology, including the activities and materials associated with such technology such as information flows (Cecez-Kecmanovic and Marjanovic 2018). When reading the literature on digital nomadism from this critical-theoretic perspective, we observe that:

*KC10. Digital nomads exercise their agency by taking advantage of the benefits afforded by modern digital tools and platforms.*

Digital technologies enable digital nomads to make a living, such that they have digital goods and services to sell, and thus, income to make (Hannonen 2020). These are in many cases based on established digital technologies, but in many other cases digital nomads are at the forefront of experimental technologies such as cryptocurrencies and decentralized finance (de Almeida et al. 2023a). The digital nomads' personal and professional lives are likewise supported by their digitally mediated access to essential goods and services (Hannonen et al. 2023), which enable spatial, temporal, organizational and technological flexibility, albeit limited by the constraints of the current technology (Jarrahi et al. 2021). For example, a digital nomad may choose to use virtual private network and phone call forwarding services to disguise their location (Schwarz et al. 2022). The transformation of personal possessions and records from the physical to the digital is also fundamental to the digital nomads' ability to conduct knowledge work from anywhere while carrying relatively minimal baggage (Nash et al. 2018; Prester et al. 2023). Digital nomads also benefit enormously from the range of online communities that cater to their socializing and professional networking needs (Jarrahi et al. 2019; Lee et al. 2019; Miguel et al. 2023b; Pita et al. 2022), including dedicated digital nomad forums and websites that provide crucial safety and travel information for digital nomads (de Almeida et al. 2022a; Prester et al. 2020). In summary, "my computer, which was just a tool to work, is now a tool for me to live" (digital nomad quoted in Prester et al. 2023, p. 449). However, the digital nomads' use of technology is not completely unproblematic:

*KC11. The design of digital work technologies appear to embody a 'Protestant work ethic', emphasizing productive and enterprising uses of one's time.*

Digital technologies used by digital nomads appear to embody a 'Protestant work ethic', a term that originates from the philosophy of Weber (1905), referring to a work ethic characterized by religious devotion to maximizing productive and enterprising uses of one's time. The literature on digital nomadism associates digital nomadism with a digital "upgraded expression of Max Weber's Protestant work ethic" (Cook 2020, p. 384). For example, digital nomads often use calendar software that allows clients to book appointments that, by default, assumes that people are always available to work, so "sometimes I forget to block my evenings and then I get a meeting booking when I actually wanted to visit the night market" (digital nomad quoted in Prester et al. 2021, p. 7), or worse, "waking up at 3 o'clock in the morning if your client wants an 11 am meeting in Sydney" (digital nomad quoted in Kong et al. 2019). In this way, the agency of digital nomads tends towards subordination beneath the agency of those who designed the digital nomads' technology, and the agency of those who digital nomads work with. Similarly, although digital nomads use their laptop computers for both professional work activities and personal leisure activities,



they often find themselves nudged to prioritize the former over the latter, e.g., by the “Momentum dashboard” that sets one’s browser homepage to be a reminder to focus on work and minimize distractions (Cook 2020). Even digital nomads’ leisure time is often dominated by leisure apps that promote productive leisure (Cook 2020). These tendencies are amplified when digital nomads live in ‘co-living’ arrangements with other digital nomads who adopt similar practices, collectively creating an environment characterized by “an ‘overflowing’ of work into the domestic ... [where] home [is] a place where economy is lived and produced” (Bergan et al. 2021, p. 1214). However, as Kesküla (2023) reminds us, “rather than taking the nomads’ obsession with productivity at face value ... [we should] take seriously their self-representations as workers who consciously choose rest or exercise over work and try to claim back autonomy over their work, lives, and bodies”: digital nomads work hard and are thus rewarded (cf. KC1). Further reading the literature from the perspective of “agency and technology”, an additional knowledge claim emerges:

*KC12. The prevailing logics of social media put paradoxical pressure on digital nomads to both present a sanitized image of digital nomadism and yet also maintain authenticity.*

Digital nomads are often highly visible on social media, particularly those whose line of work involves social media, such as travel bloggers (Willment 2020) and influencers (Bonneau et al. 2022). Digital nomads in other lines of work also find their presence on social media beneficial to their ‘personal branding’ (Cook 2022). Central to the representation of digital nomads on social media is “the laptop on the beach trope so often used to convey the ideal of freedom” (Cook 2020, p. 384). Multiple studies have reported that, in reality, this is “glamorous but inaccurate” (Nash et al. 2021, p. 275); “it’s impossible to see anything on a laptop in direct sunlight, and no one is ever going to put an expensive MacBook anywhere near sand or water” (digital nomad quoted in Cook 2020, p. 384). Such imagery may be more indicative of the practice of ‘staged authenticity’ (Willment 2020, p. 403), spending “half an hour to an hour to get the right lighting” for a photograph, ironically for a photograph to be later shared on social media as “captured in the moment” (Willment 2020, p. 408). This ‘staged authenticity’ is exacerbated by the presence of ‘digital nomad lifestyle promoters’, digital nomads who build a personal brand and online following around the idea of digital nomadism itself (Bonneau et al. 2022). Following these cases in the literature, the motivations often seem to trace back to specific aspects of how these social media platforms are designed.

Digital technologies’ underlying design should not be overlooked when considering these concerns. The absurdity of ‘staged authenticity’ can be traced back to how social media platforms push performance metrics such as ‘likes’, ‘shares’ and other forms of ‘engagement’ that reflect human appreciation for the competing qualities of both production value and apparent spontaneous authenticity (Willment 2020). The unrealistic and exaggerated ‘laptop on the beach’ can be traced back to social media platforms’ systems of tagging content, particularly geotagging (Bozzi 2020), which incentivizes digital nomads to post photos of themselves with laptops in absurd locations, because these social media posts are more readily discovered due to their geographic metadata. Yet digital nomads are, paradoxically, also highly cognizant of the “trap of inauthenticity and self-editing”, making efforts to be “disciplined about being careful to be genuine, authentic” and exhibiting candor such as “I have like a bad day or whatever or some issues, I just as well publish it because it’s important to know that to travel or whatever nomadic lifestyle is, you know, has its downsides” (digital nomads quoted in Miguel et al. 2023a).

### ***Environment and Sustainability***

In critical-theoretic IS research, “it is now reasonable to treat the environment as having joined economic and social needs” (Clarke and Davison 2020, p. 488) due to the entanglement of computing with unsustainable business practices and environmental degradation. When reading the literature on digital nomadism from this critical-theoretic perspective, we observe that:

*KC13. Digital nomadism relies on practices that are environmentally unsustainable in their current form, though some of these have been reconsidered or disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

The digital nomads, by definition, travel extensively, whether by civic aviation (Hong 2023), or on resource-intensive digital nomad ocean cruises (Aroles et al. 2020; Nash et al. 2021), or by living and travelling nomadically in recreational vehicles (‘van life’) (Eager et al. 2022; Gretzel and Hardy 2019), though not all those engaging in ‘van life’ are digital nomads (Muhs et al. 2024). We are not aware of any existing study that assesses the actual environmental impact of digital nomadism in any of those modes individually or by

comparison across those modes. We do note that digital nomadism may see a shift towards less intensive travel and longer stays in destinations in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the phenomenon named the ‘slowmad’ (de Almeida et al. 2023b). On the other hand, we also observe the emergence of the following knowledge claim being made in the literature:

*KC14. Digital nomadism provides an opportunity for knowledge workers to reduce environmental damage.*

Similar to how digital nomadism may exhibit exploitative privilege but also intentionally make efforts to mitigate (cf. KC4 and KC5), digital nomads are aware of and concerned about their environmental impact (Mourato et al. 2023). In efforts to mitigate their environmental impact, digital nomads may seek a slower pace of travel, staying in each place for a few months and then moving to another nearby location (Matos and Ardévol 2021; Wang et al. 2019). Digital nomads may also refer to the (cf. KC10) transformation of personal possessions and records from the physical to the digital (Aroles et al. 2020; Atanasova and Eckhardt 2021), “the compression of the former suburban home into a suitcase and a carry-on – the two pieces of luggage each family member is entitled to – and the consequent drastic downsizing of material possessions” (Mancinelli 2018, p. 315). The physical constraints of their limited baggage allowances seems to result in “a turn from excessive acquisition of possessions ... to strategic intentionality of consumption and careful curation of valued objects” (Atanasova and Eckhardt 2021, p. 490), especially items of sentimental value rather than economic exchange value (Schwarz et al. 2022). This practice is sometimes related to digital nomads’ idealized aspiration for minimalism (Nash et al. 2018; Schwarz et al. 2022) or transcendental and spiritual practices such as a philosophy of detachment from material possessions (Wang et al. 2019), which may come with reduced environmental impact.

## **Ethics and Ethos**

Given the normative orientation of critical-theoretic IS research, ethics is central in critical-theoretic IS research (Stahl 2008). Such consideration of ethics is not limited to ethical and moral traditions, rules, regulations and frameworks; but also, individuals’ value systems and worldviews, their *ethos* (Figueras et al. 2022). Reading the literature on digital nomadism from this critical-theoretic perspective, we observe:

*KC15. Many digital nomads appear to be generally interested in living ethically; based on a community ethos and often embracing spirituality.*

Studies indicate that many digital nomads are generally interested in living “ethically”. Digital nomads express their own concerns about the ethicality of their actions (Hall et al. 2019). Digital nomads’ ethics may emerge based on ‘civic’ value (wanting to be a good citizen, even if not of one nation state) (Schlagwein 2018). Many digital nomads seem to be interested in projects and practices that have a beneficial impact on communities and societies, not merely as a form of compensating for their privilege (cf. KC5) but also as an expression of an ethical worldview wherein they would be dissatisfied with a life in which they “don’t feel like [they are] contributing anything to the world” (Reichenberger 2018, p. 375). Aside from civic-oriented mindsets and intuitive ethics, some digital nomads’ ethical stances are influenced by an ethos associated with spirituality. Digital nomadism seems to emerge as “a spiritual journey within a religious community, for those who identified with one” (Mancinelli 2018, p. 314). In some cases, this is a general sense of a spirituality associated with a vague but reassuring belief in the inherent benevolence of the universe, the cosmos, or some higher power (Holleran and Notting 2023). However, after further assessing the literature from the perspective of “Ethics and Ethos”, an additional knowledge claim emerges:

*KC16. Digital nomads sometimes behave in ways that seem unethical but cannot be clearly ethically assessed due to the lack of consensus regarding ethical standards and the diverse ethos of digital nomadism.*

A benchmark of what a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ digital nomad looks like seems difficult to agree upon. On the one hand, digital nomads are reported to take actions that are “[neither] super legal [nor] super illegal” (Holleran and Notting 2023, p. 1349), especially in relation to abiding by border control and taxation regulations (Hall et al. 2019). The ethical justification for this behavior is often something like “this approach is not about deception, but rather a practical approach to avoiding problems that may occur when operating within a grey legal area” (Hall et al. 2019, p. 443), following the pragmatic and spiritually free ethos of digital nomadism outlined above in KC15. Some of the critique of digital nomadism and such associated actions are not directed towards the individual digital nomads but the arguably unjust systemic

issues that lead to the existence of digital nomadism as a collective phenomenon: “not only is the third-world exploited as a site of tourism and cheap labour, it is also a dumping ground for the insecure and maladjusted subjects of the first-world, protected by their governments but ultimately outsourced to the third-world to manage” (Hong 2023, p. 524). On the other hand, it is also the case that many digital nomads are aware of their privileges and use these privileges to bring benefits to local communities (cf. KC4). Indeed, such polarized views of digital nomads as ‘heroes’ or ‘villains’ (Jiwasiddi et al. 2024, p. 28) often overlook nuances, ethical dilemmas and the clash of competing ethical standards or ethos across which there is no consensus across cultures and peoples. One example is the instance of an American digital nomad promoting Bali as LGBT-friendly (a controversial claim given the legal and social norms regarding LGBT in Muslim-majority Indonesia), leading to public outcry and her deportation for breaching the conditions of her entry on a tourist visa (Hong 2023; Sanul 2022). Another is the question of one’s ethical responsibility or obligation to repay the demographic dividend of childhood education and healthcare provided by one’s origin nation (Webb 2024). For all these questions of ethics and potentially unethical action, the literature draws attention to controversies and dilemmas, revealing the lack of consensus on relevant ethical standards and the diverse ethos of digital nomadism.

## Developing a Critical Research Agenda on Digital Nomadism

Having reviewed the literature, we now turn our attention towards formulating a research agenda. In Table 1 overleaf, we summarize the knowledge claims presented above and outline, upfront, a set of 15 illustrative examples of future research questions (FRQs), which are then described in further detail in the text below the table. Being illustrative examples, which we have developed in accordance with the principle of reflexivity and dialectical reasoning in critical IS research (Cecez-Kecmanovic 2017; Rowe 2018), these FRQs are merely indicative of a diverse range of possible research questions. These FRQs are thus not intended to limit or constrain future research, and we encourage readers to also exercise the same principle of reflexivity and dialectical reasoning to develop research questions of interest to their own critical agenda.

<b>Critical-Theoretic Perspective</b>	<b>Knowledge Claims (KCs) (What we already know, or can infer, from the reviewed literature)</b>	<b>Future Research Questions (FRQ) (What is not yet known from reviewed literature; what we need to know)</b>
<b>Empowerment &amp; Emancipation</b>	<p><b>KC1.</b> Digital nomadism involves individuals using digital technologies to empower themselves through the refusal of conformity to society-imposed lifestyle patterns.</p> <p><b>KC2.</b> Digital nomadism empowers individuals by rewarding their ability to exercise and sustain specific personal and professional competencies, especially in relation to digital technologies and digital literacy.</p>	<p><b>FRQ1.</b> How may digital nomadism be excluding some people?</p> <p><b>FRQ2.</b> How may ‘digital’ aspects of digital nomadism be relevant for non-nomadic digital workers?</p>
<b>Exploitation &amp; Marginalization</b>	<p><b>KC3.</b> Digital nomads are, at least in many cases, privileged individuals who are using digital technologies to exploit global inequalities.</p> <p><b>KC4.</b> Digital nomads are aware of, and take actions to mitigate, their exploitative privileges.</p> <p><b>KC5.</b> Digital nomads are themselves sometimes exploited or marginalized; for example, in forms mediated by digital work platforms.</p>	<p><b>FRQ3.</b> How could digital technologies provide opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of co-giving and other altruistic digital nomad initiatives?</p> <p><b>FRQ4.</b> How to make sense of the apparent paradox or contradictory narratives that digital nomads are privileged individuals who exploit inequalities vs. digital nomads are themselves exploited and marginalized? (KC3 vs. KC5)</p>
<b>Systems &amp; Structures</b>	<p><b>KC6.</b> Digital nomadism entails resistance against the prevailing logics and practices of capitalism and corporatism.</p> <p><b>KC7.</b> Digital nomadism perpetuates the prevailing logics and practices of capitalism and the market economy.</p> <p><b>KC8.</b> Digital nomadism entails independence from the constraints of being a settled citizen of (the) nation state(s).</p> <p><b>KC9.</b> The nation state has substantial leverage, also enabled by digital technologies, in its balance of power with the digital nomads; digital</p>	<p><b>FRQ5.</b> How to make sense of the apparent paradox or contradictory narratives that digital nomads resist yet also perpetuate capitalism? (KC6 vs. KC7)</p> <p><b>FRQ6.</b> How to make sense of the apparent paradox or contradictory narratives that digital nomads become more independent from yet also more dependent on the nation state? (KC8 vs. KC9)</p>

	nomadism is dependent on the support of (the) nation state(s).	
<b>Agency &amp; Technology</b>	<p><b>KC10.</b> Digital nomads exercise their agency by taking advantage of the benefits afforded by modern digital tools and platforms.</p> <p><b>KC11.</b> The design of digital work technologies appear to embody a ‘Protestant work ethic’, emphasizing productive and enterprising uses of one’s time.</p> <p><b>KC12.</b> The prevailing logics of social media put paradoxical pressure on digital nomads to both present a sanitized image of digital nomadism and yet also maintain authenticity.</p>	<p><b>FRQ7.</b> How to make sense of the apparent paradox or contradictory narratives between the emancipatory and oppressive aspects of digital nomads’ engagement with digital technologies? (<i>KC1 vs. KC11</i>)</p> <p><b>FRQ8.</b> How do digital nomads navigate the paradoxical tensions between authenticity and social media production value? (<i>KC12</i>)</p>
<b>Environment &amp; Sustainability</b>	<p><b>KC13.</b> Digital nomadism relies on practices that are environmentally unsustainable in their current form, though some of these have been reconsidered or disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p><b>KC14.</b> Digital nomadism provides an opportunity for knowledge workers to reduce environmental damage.</p>	<p><b>FRQ9.</b> How to quantify the overall impact of digital nomadism on the natural environment?</p> <p><b>FRQ10.</b> How to define the configurations of digital nomadism that are beneficial for or harmful to the natural environment?</p> <p><b>FRQ11.</b> How could digital technologies support efforts to make digital nomadism more environmentally friendly or sustainable?</p>
<b>Ethics &amp; Ethos</b>	<p><b>KC15.</b> Many digital nomads appear to be generally interested in living ethically; based on a community ethos and often embracing spirituality.</p> <p><b>KC16.</b> Digital nomads sometimes behave in ways that seem unethical but cannot be clearly ethically assessed due to the lack of consensus regarding ethical standards and the diverse ethos of digital nomadism.</p>	<p><b>FRQ12.</b> How do digital nomads make sense of their own ethical position or ethos?</p> <p><b>FRQ13.</b> How to make sense of the ethics and ethos of digital nomadism according to various stakeholder perspectives or ethical systems?</p> <p><b>FRQ14.</b> How are digital technologies and their design related to digital nomads’ ethics and ethos?</p> <p><b>FRQ15.</b> How could public policy align the ethics, ethos and interest of digital nomads with those of stakeholders in the nation state?</p>
<b>Table 1. Overview of Literature Review and Research Agenda.</b>		

To demonstrate how a research agenda could be constructed from these illustrative examples of FRQs, we present below a set of research themes, each of which draws on multiple FRQs. In doing so, they also highlight how various KCs are related, particularly as outlined in Theme 2. We also note that, in line with the sociotechnical axis of cohesion (Sarker et al. 2019), the themes incorporate a range of sociocentric, sociotechnical, and technocentric perspectives.

**Theme 1 – “Desperately seeking the ‘digital’ in digital nomadism”:** Aside from the articles central to the critical-theoretic perspective of “Agency and Technology” (cf. KC10, KC11, KC12), much of the literature takes a predominantly social (Sarker et al. 2019) view of the phenomenon of digital nomadism. Indeed, much of this literature is published in non-IS outlets in fields of business, tourism, and social sciences. This is not surprising given the sociological interest in digital nomadism, and indeed even in the IS discipline there has been a history of “desperately seeking the ‘IT [artifact]’ in IT research” (Orlikowski and Iacono 2001; Weber 2003). However, this observation raises the possibility of enhancing the critical-theoretic perspectives on digital nomadism by introducing uniquely sociotechnical perspectives that are largely absent in all the knowledge claims derived from existing literature on digital nomadism (apart from KC10, KC11, and KC12). The role of “the digital” and IT seems underappreciated in digital nomadism research to date, especially in relation to ‘environment and sustainability’ and ‘ethics and ethos’ (KC13, KC14, KC15, and KC16). Inspired by the research agenda on digital “x” (Baiyere et al. 2023), we therefore ask future research questions to focus on the role of IT (such as the Internet) and what is so special about the ‘digital’ aspect of digital nomadism (FRQ2, FRQ3, FRQ11, FRQ14) vis-à-vis critical theory. Such future research could explore the emancipatory potentials of technology (e.g., Kane et al. 2021) to augment digital nomads’ altruistic co-giving and co-learning endeavors (cf. KC4), whilst cautiously paying attention to the risk of such emancipatory potentials being undermined by the likes of sociocultural nuances (e.g., Vaidya and Myers 2020) and digital solutionism (e.g., Rowe et al. 2020). Sociomaterial theorizing (e.g., Marjanovic et al. 2021a) may be particularly productive for these future research questions.

**Theme 2 — Investigating the critical-theoretic paradoxes of digital nomadism:** The literature thus far refers to the paradoxical aspects of digital nomadism (e.g., Lee et al. 2019; Mancinelli 2018; Mancinelli and Germann Molz 2024; Marx et al. 2023) as well as related, paradoxical concepts: for example, Richter and Richter (2020) make the connection between digital nomadism and the “autonomy paradox” of knowledge work in general (Mazmanian et al. 2013). As we reviewed the digital nomadism literature, we noted paradoxes emerging from the knowledge claims that we have identified: that digital nomads are apparently privileged yet also marginalized (KC3 vs. KC5); that they resist capitalism and yet perpetuate it (KC6 vs. KC7); that they escape from and yet are ever bound by the nation state (KC8 vs. KC9); that they are pressured towards both candid authenticity and production value (KC12); that they rely on extensive environmentally impactful travel and yet also represent an opportunity to reduce environmental damage (KC13 vs. KC14). We therefore suggest future research questions to probe deeper on each of these paradoxes of the critical-theoretic perspectives on digital nomadism (FRQ4, FRQ5, FRQ6, FRQ7, FRQ8). In Table 1, we have placed in parenthesis — for each of these future research questions — the specific paradoxes to be addressed. These could be addressed based on clarification of connections between levels of organizing, based on temporality or dialectical synthesis (Ciriello and Mathiassen 2022; van de Ven and Poole 1995), or a novel other approach. We note that although the paradox of digital nomads’ candid authenticity vs. production value (KC12) is a ‘paradoxical tension’ (Smith and Lewis 2011) or ‘professional paradox’ (Wang et al. 2023) between two competing courses of action, all the other paradoxes here are ‘scholarly paradoxes’ the exploration of which have generated insightful explanations in other contexts (Wang et al. 2023).

**Theme 3 — Understanding the ethos of digital nomadism to understand its ethics:** As outlined in our literature review, many digital nomads appear to be generally interested in living ethically (cf. KC15), but when it comes to actually assessing their often ethically complicated behavior, there is no consensus on ethical standards and the ethos of digital nomadism is characterized by diversity in mindsets, worldviews, backgrounds, life experiences, etc. (cf. KC16). One place to start could be to learn more about how digital nomads think about their own ethics. Existing knowledge about digital nomads’ ethical perspectives is insightful but relatively vague (cf. KC15); we could not find any study that thoroughly investigates, from the digital nomads’ perspective, how they engage in sensemaking about their own ethical systems or indeed even their own ethos; we therefore call for this future research (FRQ11). Another approach could be to analytically engage with the ethical issues and ethically problematic scenarios of digital nomadism (cf. KC16), for example based on stakeholder analysis (e.g., Techatassanasoontorn et al. 2023) or based on established frameworks such as the “big three” ethical theories of consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics (e.g., Gal et al. 2022); we therefore also call for this future research (FRQ12, FRQ15).

**Theme 4 — Advancing the critical-theoretic research stream on digital nomadism overall:** In addition to the above, we also ask the more conventional critical-theoretic questions to advance the critical-theoretic research stream on digital nomadism overall, in general. Questions about who is excluded from digital nomadism (FRQ1), how digital nomadism impacts the natural environment (FRQ9) and how to improve the position of that impact (FRQ10) are seemingly more straightforward but are not trivial to tackle; research on environment and sustainability is notoriously absent in general in the IS discipline (Gholami et al. 2016), let alone in the very specific context of digital nomadism. Nonetheless, these remain important questions to ask if the critical-theoretic research stream on digital nomadism is to advance.

## **Conclusion**

This review engages with the scrutiny that digital nomadism has been attracting by taking a critical stance. Our literature review of 88 articles on digital nomadism addresses the question of how we can understand digital nomadism from a critical-theoretic stance, by way of the six critical-theoretic perspectives that have enabled the identification of 16 knowledge claims present in existing literature (KC1, KC2 ... KC16). On that basis, our research agenda addresses the question of how critical-theoretic perspectives could contribute to the understanding of digital nomadism. These are not merely scholarly exercises but seek to engage with the big questions about digital nomadism. We anticipate that, by presenting this material in the year when the ICIS conference is in Thailand, the home of the “digital nomad capital of the world” (Bonneau et al. 2022, p. 66), we would have the opportunity to serendipitously work with the IS community and other stakeholders to share knowledge on digital nomadism and work towards timely critical-theoretic IS research on digital nomadism.

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