

## Panel I: Digital Nomads and Placeless Work

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### Keynote Introduction

Technological change especially affects labour markets and social policies regarding the way we “do” work. But our knowledge on the consequences of digitalization and new technologies for mobile labour and migrants’ lives is still limited. A major cleavage seems to arise between those workers that are able to organize their working schedule with high degrees of spatial and temporal freedom and those workers, whose work is neatly tied to place and strict working hours. It comes as no surprise, that the category of the “digital nomad” has attracted much attention over the past decade and that most of the literature is inspired by some sort of ‘positive thinking’ on the restructuring of global and international labour markets. Accordingly, topoi of lifestyle and community are frequently attributed to this fraction of the working force. Many studies concentrate on the perspective of the studied group itself and does focus on the work-related practicalities and on the places where digital nomads live. Less attention is given to the (more invisible) harsh realities that are behind the demonstrated fancy lifestyle: loneliness of many individuals, missing transnational social security schemes and difficult pathways of return to the labour markets in the country of origin. Our panel looks on those self-perceptions (Toivananen, Helsinki) and on new definitions of digital nomadism (Nina Willment, University of York, United Kingdom), on the numbers concerning welfare and social security (Cathy Yang Liu and Rory Renzy, Georgia State University) and on how global economic and spatial hierarchies have become part of the making of digital nomadism (Shahanaz Parven, University of Palermo). Our panel discusses these tensions between perceived freedom and real societal challenges critically.

### Biography

Felicitas Hillmann, professor, is head of the networking unit Paradigm Shift at the Institute of Urban and Regional Planning at TU Berlin. She coordinates a working group on “New technologies, migration and the future of work” and edits the special issue on the topic with the journal *Glocalism*. Her recent publications include “Moving nurses to cities: On how migration industries feed into glocal urban assemblages in the care sector” in *Urban Studies* with Margaret Walton-Roberts and Brenda Yeoh. Her forthcoming edited volume with Michael Samers is titled: “Cities, migration, and governance: Beyond scales and levels” (2023).