

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

Faculty of Social Sciences

School of Economics and Business Administration

Kateryna Nahorna

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROLE IDENTITY SALIENCE AND WORK
AND HOME PERMEABILITY IN ESTONIAN TECH COMPANIES

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Supervisor: Lecturer Anne Aidla

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I have written this Bachelor's Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Introduction

Work and home are the two domains in which we spend the majority of our lives, and how we manage their boundaries has a significant impact on us. One of the essential characteristics of boundaries, which will be discussed in this thesis, is their permeability, which can be described as the extent of a role's tolerance to the intrusion of psychological and behavioral aspects of the other role while the individual is physically situated in the first one (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate 2000; Clarck 2000).

Many have argued that the way people allow permeations from one domain to another affects stress levels, productivity, psychological detachment, and well-being of individuals, as well as causes work-family conflict (Kreiner 2006; Sonnentag & Bayer 2005; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell 2006; Duke & Montag, 2017). The research is especially relevant now, after the COVID-19 epidemic, which introduced more autonomy to the employee's choice to work from home. To the people who telework this gave more freedom in arranging the working hours in a way to not interfere with personal needs. However, the workers' inability to detach from work psychologically and behaviourally after working hours has increased. The European Working Conditions Telephone Survey (EWCTS) carried out in 2021 has shown that people working from home tend to stress about work 9% more than people who do not telework. (Eurofound, 2022)

Given these ramifications of border permeabilities, it is critical to understand their sources better. The work and family domains have specific roles attached to them, such as a colleague, an employee, a manager, a parent, a spouse, or a friend, and individuals tend to put internalized meanings to these roles, making up their role identities (Stets, 2006). Additionally, individuals may choose to attach more value to one of the identities, making it salient (Thoits, 1992). The choice to use role identity salience as a variable in this study is due to the proposition that individuals tend to choose to allow more permeability from one domain into another based on which role they prefer to identify themselves more (Kreiner, Hollensbe & Sheep, 2006; Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000; Parasuraman & Greenhaus 2002).

Previous research regarding this topic has derived mixed results. While some have confirmed their hypothesis that work identity salience positively correlates with work-to-home permeability (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006; Hecht & Allen, 2009; Capitano & Greenhaus, 2017), others were not able to support this notion (Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten & Greenhaus, 2018). There is less research on role identity saliences and the home-to-work permeability relationship, as only two studies have discussed this before, conducted by

Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006) and Hecht and Allen (2009). Regarding the home role identity salience and its relationship with work-to-home permeability, again no consensus is present. The majority, Hecht and Allen (2009), Capitano and Greenhaus (2017), Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten and Greenhaus, (2018) found a negative relationship. However, there is still one study by Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006), where no correlation was present.

Thus, a research gap exists due to a general lack of agreement in previous studies. This thesis will also focus on the relationship between boundaries' permeability in the context of companies in the technology sector, which has never been researched before, presenting an additional research gap.

This research aims to determine the relationship between work and home role identity salience and work and nonwork permeability in the context of workers in the technology sector in Estonia. The author will analyze the previous studies, conduct their own empirical study, and compare the findings to provide a further discussion of the observed phenomena and the possible reasons for the disagreement in the field. The research tasks to achieve the aim are:

- Present and analyze previous definitions of key concepts "permeability" and "role identity salience."
- Provide theoretical background on work and home boundary management, permeability, and role identity salience.
- Provide an overview of the previous empirical studies done on the relationship between role identity salience and work and home boundaries' permeability.
- Collect data on individuals' permeability behavior and role identity salience via a survey.
- Analyze the data using correlation and comparison of means
- Conclude by presenting and discussing the results of the empirical research and compare the results with the findings of the previous researchers

This thesis consists both of the theoretical and empirical parts. Chapter 1 will present an analysis of definitions of the key concepts, theoretical background, and an overview of empirical studies. Chapter 2 will discuss the methodology used to conduct the empirical research and the empirical analysis of the data gathered. Further, the results will be compared with those of previous studies.

Keywords: permeability, role identity salience, boundary management, work domain, nonwork domain

1. Theoretical framework on boundaries' permeability and role identity salience

1.1. Analysis of the concepts of work-home permeability and role identity salience

The first subchapter will explore the definitions related to the thesis's topic: permeability and role identity salience.

Firstly, this subchapter is going to focus on permeability. The author has collected seven definitions, which are presented in Table 1. It is essential to consider that there is a significant amount of second source definitions in the table. The reason for their usage is that the original sources were either unavailable or did not have an exact definition. Nevertheless, the definitions in the table still provide a good overview of how the term is being presented by the researchers differently.

Table 1

"Permeability" definitions

Author(s)	Year and page	Definition
Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate	2000, p.474	Permeability is the degree to which a role allows one to be physically located in the role's domain but psychologically and/or behaviorally involved in another role (Pleck, 1977; Richter, 1992).
Russo, Ollier-Malaterre, Kossek & Ohana	2018, p.2	Permeability, which refers to the ease with which individuals situated in one role manage tasks related to another role (Ashforth et al., 2000).
Araujo, Tureta & Araujo	2015, p.567	Permeability refers to space and can be understood as the adaptability of an individual to meet the demands from one domain in a space that belongs to a different domain (Ashforth et al., 2000; Sandaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008).
Tang & Hornung	2015, p. 942	Energetic spillover, e.g. emotion, mood, or behavior, pass from one domain to another (Ashforth et al., 2000).
Lawson, Davis, Crouter & O'Neill	2013, p.274	Permeable boundaries refer to the lack of segmentation or the degree of fluidity between the domains of work and family.
Clark	2000, p.756	"Permeability" is the degree to which elements from other domains may enter (Beach, 1989; Hall & Richter, 1988; Piotrowski, 1978).
Las Heras, Trefal & Escribano	2015, p.58	Permeability of people's boundaries between work and family describes how easily one role invades and assumes the territory of another (Pleck, 1977)

Sources: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

The two most commonly used definitions in the literature concerning work-to-home boundary permeability were composed by Clarck (2000) and Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000). The reason is that these works are considered the foundation for the research of boundary management (Cobb, Murphy, Thomas, Katz & Rudolf 2022). Thus, their definitions can be regarded as the standard. More often than not, they were just quoted directly in other works not mentioned in the table. For example, in the works of Ryu (2022), Shumate and Janet Fulk (2004), Xu, Wang, Han, Huang and Huang (2022), Schieman, Whitestone and Gundy (2006), Yasir, Majid, Yasir and Khan (2019) and others. Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate's (2000) definition is more specific and, as seen from Table 1, has also regularly been paraphrased by other authors, leaving out or adding additional details.

For example, Russo, Ollier-Malaterre, Kossek, and Ohana (2018) and Araujo, Tureta, and Araujo (2015) decided to leave out the psychological involvement of the intruding role, leaving only the behavioral aspect. Thus, for example, people worrying about their work tasks at home would not be permeating the home boundary as per this definition. Only if they were doing the actual tasks would it count as a permeation. Also, instead of the role's permission to permeate the domain, in their definition, it is now how easily an individual, so to say, succeeds in handling the permeations of an intruding role.

Just stating the behavioral and leaving out the psychological aspect as the above authors have done is not sufficient to grasp the whole essence of the concept. Thinking or worrying about the other domain is quite an intruding situation. In the author of this thesis's opinion, if a person is troubled or upset about their personal life during work, it is a valid interruption of the physical space, as it will, most likely, affect the decision-making, interactions with colleagues, and even can be the pushing point for a behavioral interruption.

Tang and Hornung (2015) discarded the involvement of a role or even the individual in this "spillover," implying that this phenomenon is not influenced by them. However, what instead influences it, they did not specify.

All of the definitions collected incorporate different aspects. There is not a single component which is present in all of them. Additionally, most of the definitions tend to be very vague and leave much space for interpreting what the author actually means by some words. For example, Clarck (2000) does not specify what is meant by the "elements" that enter the domain. From the definition itself, it is not evident if this refers to actions, thoughts, feelings, or some other aspect invading the domain. Heras, Trefal, and Escribano (2015) do not provide an indication of how one role invades and, consequently, which aspects of the role.

There are a few criteria on which the definitions could be compared; see Table 2.

One can find two criteria in Table 2, which were mentioned more than others: invasion of physical space and degree. Four out of seven authors agree and mention that an important characteristic of permeability is that one role infiltrates the physical location of another. A theoretical example of this aspect was provided by Clarck (2000), where an individual has a closed home office (a physical space of a work role). However, family members often walk in to have a conversation with the individual (home role interruption).

Another four agree that this invasion has a degree. This means it is not a fixed event, and its extent may vary. However, it is interesting to note that in one of the definitions by Lawson, Davis, Crouter, and O'Neill (2013), they managed to put in conflicting points. At first, stating that permeability is a total integration of the domains, but later contradicted themselves, saying that this integration may also have a degree.

Table 2

“Permeability” definitions comparison

Author(s) & year	Invasion of physical space	Individual' s responsibility	Psychological spillover	Behavioural spillover	Degree	Role' s responsibility
Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000	+	-	+	+	+	+
Russo, Ollier-Malaterre, Kossek & Ohana, 2018	+	+	-	+	-	-
Araujo, Tureta & Araujo, 2015	+	+	+	+	-	-
Tang & Hornung, 2015	-	-	+	-	-	-
Lawson, Davis, Crouter & O'Neill, 2013	-	-	-	-	+	-
Clark, 2000	-	-	-	-	+	-
Las Heras,Trefal & Escribano, 2015	+	-	-	-	+	+

Notes: “-”- not mentioned, “+”- mentioned

Sources: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

The following two criteria by popularity are permeability being a psychological and a behavioral spillover. They are mentioned in three out of seven different definitions. In the example of work-to-home permeability, psychological spillover would mean that a person could worry about their work while at home. For instance, Choroszewicz and Kay (2019) conducted a study on Finnish and Canadian lawyers, where the participants reported finding it challenging to detach from their work at home psychologically. The lawyers often found themselves thinking of specific clients or cases. As for the behavioral spillover, a person might engage in work-related activities while at home, like taking phone calls or answering emails.

Lastly, who is responsible for the occurrence of permeability is questioned. Two definitions agree that it is the individual's responsibility, meaning they can decide on how much and which permeations they would allow. The other two definitions think that it is the role itself that outlines the time, space, and the extent of the permeations.

It is essential to note the distinction between an individual and a role. A role is something that individuals assign to themselves, and it involves multiple factors, such as rules and expectations (Biddle, 1986). Again, a great example to better understand the distinction is provided in the study conducted by Choroszewicz and Kay (2019) on lawyers. It outlines how the role is responsible for permeability. As reported in that research, people in this profession are often expected to be "on-call." Most participants would always answer their phones outside of office hours if there was a client emergency. This behavior is mainly outlined by the responsibilities implied by the role and are not so much in the control of the individual.

Overall, it can be said that the existent definitions are quite vague and tend to differ. Thus, it is difficult to understand what is meant by permeability. Combining the definitions shown above, the author of this thesis has compiled their own. Permeability can be defined as the degree of invasion of the physical space of one role by psychological and behavioral aspects of another role, such as thoughts or feelings about that role or actions relevant to it.

First of all, this definition covers two elements that were mentioned in the majority of other definitions: degree and invasion of physical space. Secondly, the most common aspects that invade the role were included. Thirdly, examples of certain elements were added to the definition to clarify further how the physical space is invaded. This definition aims to encompass the most commonly addressed aspects of the concept, as well as provide clear examples of the invading factors.

Secondly, this subchapter focuses on role identity salience, which is later in this thesis referred to as RIS. Identity can be defined as a certain image of self to which one commits. This image consists of appearance, psychological aspects and actions of that self (Reed, Forehand, Puntoni & Warlop, 2012). A role means a certain group of behaviors, rules, and expectations that are taken on by the social actors and are accepted and expected by other members of society (Biddle, 1986). A person has many roles and may identify with some of them; for role identification, a process named self-categorization needs to occur, where a person, through self-reflection, classifies themselves as a member of a particular group or role within an organized society (Stets & Burke, 2000). Lastly, as the role identities are created, some of them can be more salient or central than others. The author has collected six definitions of role identity salience, which can be found in Table 3.

As can be seen from Table 2, this concept is quite mature, with one of the earliest definitions being created over 50 years ago. Still, throughout the years, the understanding of the term diverged, and no consensus is present among researchers. Marcussen, Ritter, and Safron (2004) argued that salience is usually perceived by theorists in 2 different ways.

Table 3

“Role identity salience” definitions

Author(s)	Year and page	Definition
Thoits	1991, p. 105	The term "salience" is used here to refer to the subjective importance that a person attaches to a particular role-identity
Thoits	1992, p.237	Salience refers here to the subjective importance that a person attaches to each [role] identity
Stryker	1968, p. 560	The probability, for a given person, of a given identity being invoked in a variety of situations
Lobel	1991, p.511	The likelihood that it [the role identity] will be switched on in a given situation
Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy and Hannum	2012, p.114	The relative value the individual places on his or her different [role] identities which is often related to the time and energy invested in a role (Thoits, 1991)
Winkel and Clayton	2010, p. 337	Role salience is a person's psychological dedication to a role and his/her intention to devote time and energy to attaining success in that role (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, 1986)

Sources: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

One of which is RIS being an indicator of a person's future behavior. This view corresponds to definitions by Stryker (1986) and Lobel (1991). Their definitions of the concept can be perceived as quite vague and may cause some confusion, as it is unclear what this likelihood depends on and which situations are taken into account. Thus, it can be considered as insufficient to define the concept.

The other way to perceive RIS, as per Marcussen, Ritter, and Safron (2004), is as the value of a given identity to a person, which relates to the definitions made by Thoits both in 1991 and 1992. While both of Thoits' definitions might seem identical at first, there is a difference between them. In the earlier one, Thoits (1991) noted that salience is attached to one identity, whereas in the older one, salience is present for multiple identities.

Definitions by Thoits can be considered quite fundamental, as they are primarily used in relevant literature with little to no changes. Some examples include Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten and Greenhaus (2018), paraphrasing Thoits' 1992 definition as: "the importance that individuals attach to each of their role identities (p. 101)," and Lu, Lu, Du and Brough (2016) where they referred to the definition made by Thoits in 1991 the following way: "...the subjective importance of a role to an individual (p. 237)."

The latest definitions presented in Table 3 show a few changes. Additional factors have been added, such as the investment of resources into the salient role and the commitment to it with the intention to succeed in the role.

Similarly, to permeability, it can be concluded that the definitions made by authors differ significantly and incorporate a variety of aspects. It is crucial to define factors inside the definitions that portray similarities and disparities to further understand the concept. The author of this thesis has found 5 of such aspects, which are presented in Table 4.

The first and most popular element is the importance or value of a role to a person. More than half of definitions mention that salience is a function of the significance of a given identity/identities. It is important to note that while Winkel and Clayton (2010) did not use the word value specifically, they still mentioned dedication. Usually, when a person is committed to something, it is of great importance to them. Thus, the author of this thesis interpreted dedication as an indirect reference to value, and Winkel and Clayton's (2010) definition has also been considered to include this factor.

Table 4

“Role identity salience” definitions comparison

Author(s) & year	Importance/ value	Investment of resources	Probability of enactment	Attaining success	Multiple roles
Thoits, 1991	+	-	-	-	-
Thoits, 1992	+	-	-	-	+
Stryker 1968	-	-	+	-	-
Lobel, 1991	-	-	+	-	-
Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy and Hannum, 2012	+	+	-	-	+
Winkel and Clayton, 2010	+	+	-	+	-

Notes: “-”- not mentioned, “+”- mentioned

Sources: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

The second factor is the investment of resources. It has been mentioned in two of the latest definitions of RIS by Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy, and Hannum (2012) and Winkel and Clayton (2010). This factor refers to the intention or the fact of a person dedicating time and energy to their salient role. For example, if a person has a salient work identity, they are willing to put additional effort into their careers and spend more time at the office or doing their work tasks in general.

The third factor is the probability of enactment. It means that the more salient a role is, the more an individual is inclined to portray that role in a multitude of situations. It has been mentioned in only two definitions by Lobel (1991) and Stryker (1968). As noted previously, this aspect is quite confusing because it is unclear which situations are considered. Stryker (1968) mentioned that it is primarily relevant but not limited to settings where the roles are mixed. He provided an example where a person has to interact with a colleague who is simultaneously their family member. How they interact depends on which identity is more salient for the individual. For instance, if the home role identity is more important, a person would talk about family matters with this colleague rather than work issues.

The fourth factor is attaining success, which has only been mentioned in one of the definitions by Winkel and Clayton (2010). It means a person is driven to achieve prosperity in their salient role. These authors also noted psychological dedication as a characteristic of RIS, implying that there is a particular goal present related to the role.

The fifth element is multiple roles. Some in their definitions imply that only one identity can be salient. Others, the minority in this table, suggest that salience can be relevant for multiple identities simultaneously. However, this may be just a matter of improper wording. It is theorized that identity salience organizes identities in a hierarchical order (Stryker 1986, Thoits 1991). Therefore, it is logical that salience is applied to multiple role identities within one person to a different degree, and the definitions that mention only one role are debatable.

Generally, based on the factors in Table 4, the definitions can be split into three categories. The first group addresses role identity salience as the chance that the particular identity will be activated in various situations. The second group addresses the concept as the value that an individual assigns to a role identity. The third group sees salience as something that encourages the person to invest temporal and psychological resources into the salient role.

To address the concept appropriately, these groups need to be merged. The author of this thesis decided to compile a definition of their own by merging the previous ones. Role identity salience is the relative value an individual assigns to each of their role identities, based on which it is decided how much energy and time goes into each role, as well as the probability of the role being activated in situations where multiple roles are applicable.

From the definitions mentioned above themselves, it can be assumed that role identity salience has a relationship with permeability. As defined by the author of this thesis, permeability is caused by psychological and behavioral invasion of one role, and role identity salience results in larger contributions of time and energy into a salient role. Therefore, it can be so that a person who is willing to spend a lot of time and energy in a role can do so also in the sacrifice of another.

To summarize, this subchapter provided an overview and analyzed the existing definitions of permeability and role identity salience. It has been found that researchers have divergent views on the concepts. Additionally, the author has compiled their own definitions incorporating the most important aspects.

1.2. Comparison of boundary and border theories and the role of role identification

This subchapter provides an overview of the theoretical background of boundary permeability management and role identification in work and home domains, and a comparison of boundary and border theories will be made.

The boundary theory by Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000) and the border theory by Clark (2000) are the two most prominent theories that lie in the basis of research regarding boundary management between work and family roles (Allen, Cho & Meier 2014). Both of them describe what influences borders/boundaries and how individuals manage those. As can be seen from Table 5, definitions of boundaries and borders do not differ that much, and they essentially mean the same thing. For the sake of convenience, the author is going to use the word "boundary" for both of the concepts, as this term is mostly used in relevant literature.

Both of the theories bring out different features of boundaries. Flexibility and permeability are presented as the main ones in both Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate's (2000) and Clark's (2000) research.

Table 5

Comparison of border and boundary theories

	Boundary theory	Border theory
Definition	A role boundary refers to whatever delimits the perimeter – and thereby the scope – of a role (p.474)	Borders are lines of demarcation between domains, defining the point at which domain-relevant behavior begins or ends (p.756)
Key features of borders/boundaries	Flexibility, permeability	Flexibility, permeability, blending, border strength
Factors affecting the boundaries/borders	Role identification, situational strength, culture	Influence, identity, border-keepers, and other domain members
The effect of role identification/identity on boundaries	An increased pursuit to convey and blend the role with other roles. More difficulties in exiting the identity role and more ease in entering it.	Increased pursuit to control boundaries with the intent to become superior in the internalized domain. Better balance between work and home.

Sources: Compiled by author based on Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000) and Clark (2000)

Scholars state that individuals have the ability to influence their role boundaries to a particular extent in ways that will satisfy them. Additionally, there is a certain segmentation-integration continuum present, and people may choose how much they want to integrate or

segment their roles. When it comes to this topic, both of the theories mention the sociological work of Nippert-Eng (1996) that describes specific examples of how people practice their boundary work, which, as specified in the same article, refers to the "process of creating and maintaining more or less distinct territories of the self (p. 569)."

Through her illustrations, Nippert-Eng (1996) also describes the way that people choose to lie at a certain point in the integration-segmentation continuum. Total segmentation would be for the roles to be physically, temporally, and psychologically absolutely non-overlapping. On the other hand, extreme integration means no distinction at all between the roles. The integrator essentially has one mentality for work and home. Space and time also become non-differential between roles.

Returning to the comparison of border and boundary theories, the choice of how to manage boundaries and where to lie on the segmentation-integration continuum depends on a few factors. As can be seen from Table 5, one of the prominent factors affecting the individuals' desire to reshape their boundaries outlined in both of the theories is identity/role identification. The scholars argue that if a person identifies more with one role, then their commitment to its domain and activities is higher.

Clark (2000) wrote that this prompts the ambition to alter the boundaries with the intention to develop more in the domain relevant to the role closely tied to identity, and this also contributes to a better work/family balance. Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000) also supported the idea that in the case of role identification, individuals are committed to managing their boundaries in a way that grants more value to the favored role. Additionally, it affects the ease of role transitions, such as role entry and exit. However, it is also important that not only the individual decides how their boundaries will be situated, but also the circumstances around them. People may have more control due to their commitment to the highly salient roles, but still, it is not absolute.

Not only do the boundary and border theories discuss how our identities influence our work and home borders, but research about role identity salience mentions the relationship of salience with role boundaries as well. It is expected to enact a highly salient role identity in a setting where multiple identities are applicable, as in the example provided in the previous subchapter where a person had to choose how to interact with a person who is both their colleague and family member (Stryker, 1968).

However, the enactment is not limited to only such circumstances. Stryker (1968) theorized that the highly salient role-identity might create situations to portray itself as well. Thus, people tend to act on their salient identities in places where it is not required to show

this identity. As an example, a person with a highly salient work identity will be more inclined to talk about their job tasks, colleagues, and office experiences with friends or family members at home to create a setting in which the identity can be acted out. In this way, the home boundary becomes permeated, and the person is able to display their salient identity as well.

Additionally, Thoits (1991) discussed that people are more committed to highly salient roles and are dedicated to following the expectations and rules of the roles diligently. Hence, on the example of highly salient work identity, it is logical that if a person works in a demanding field, then they would be inclined to permeate their home boundary to meet the demands. Additionally, Winkel and Clayton (2010) argued that people are committed to succeeding in their salient roles.

To conclude, this subchapter provided an overview of relevant theories that describe a relationship between role identity salience and boundaries' permeability. First of all, the author found that permeability is one of the key characteristics of work and home domains' boundaries. Secondly, theorists advise that role identification has an effect on how a person treats their boundaries. Those tend to be bent in the direction that satisfies the salient role. Lastly, it has been argued that the role itself tends to create situations to portray itself. From this subchapter, it can be concluded that role identity salience plays a significant role in the way we handle our boundaries. Later in this thesis, the author will proceed to empirically test whether there is indeed a relationship between salient roles and domain boundaries.

1.3. Overview of previous empirical studies on the asymmetry between work and home boundaries' permeability and the relationship with role identity salience

Firstly, this subchapter will present the overview of previous empirical studies regarding which boundary, work or family, is more permeable in general. Then, studies that explore the relationship between role identity salience and boundaries will be analyzed. In them, the ideas concerning identity and permeability described by scholars in the previous subchapter are going to be tested.

Firstly, this subchapter will focus on the empirical studies aimed to determine which domain permeability is higher in a broad sense, disregarding other variables. It has been theorized by Kossek and Lautsch (2012) that people may allocate boundary transitions between roles symmetrically or asymmetrically. One may choose to answer work emails at home but not to answer personal emails at work; another person may do the opposite. There have been two empirical studies done focusing specifically on boundary permeability

asymmetry without considering any other influences. One of the first empirical studies on this was conducted by Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992). They tested Pleck's (1977) theory on which boundaries are more permeable (work or home) and whether those differ between genders in permeability. However, in the surveys the author distributed, the items measured work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts, which is a different concept. Nevertheless, from that study, the author made a conclusion that work-to-family permeability is higher. This decision can be considered insufficient due to the basis (conflicts) on which permeability was measured.

Later on, Hecht and Allen (2009) continued to research which boundary is more permeable. This study used different terminology, referring to permeability as “boundary strength.” Still, the items for measuring this strength were consistent with permeability items in other empirical studies. Hecht and Allen (2009) confirmed the previous results of Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) that family boundary is indeed more permeable to work activities, in comparison with work boundary being less permeable to family activities, leaving the boundaries' permeability asymmetrical. While both of the researchers have reached an agreement on this matter, the way that both of them measured the respective variables is not sufficient.

Secondly, as this thesis focuses on role identity salience, studies exploring its relationship with permeability will be analyzed. Four studies were identified that were researching this matter; see Table 6. These studies also had additional topics and hypotheses in regard to permeability; however, here, the author of this thesis is going to focus only on hypotheses regarding role identification and permeability.

Before discussing the results of the studies, the methodology used by scholars will be reviewed. The data in all of the studies was gathered via surveys distributed digitally. Both correlation and regression analysis were used to extract the results. When it comes to the participants, employed individuals were used from different sectors, and in Hecht and Allen (2009), one part of the study used students to develop the scales.

It is important to note that Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten, and Greenhaus (2018) used in their study “permeability preference” in correlations with role identities. However, in the same study, they identified that it positively influences permeability behavior, so the author is going to use preference in the same meaning as just permeability in this overview.

As well as in Hecht and Allen's (2009) and Olson-Buchanan and Boswel's (2006) studies, just strong or high role identification was used as a variable instead of RIS. However, in their theoretical explanations, they outlined that they mean that these are the identities to

which people assign more value and resources, which corresponds with the definitions of RIS noted in subchapter 1.1 of this thesis.

Table 6

The relationship between RIS and permeability in empirical studies

Authors	Methods used	Sample	Work RIS to work-to-home permeability	Work RIS to home-to-work permeability	Home RIS to home-to-work permeability	Home RIS to work-to-home permeability
Olson-Buchanan & Boswell (2006)	Regression and correlation analysis	Non-academic staff of a public university	+	N/S	+	N/S
Hecht and Allen (2009)	Regression and correlation analysis	Undergraduate students and working alumni	+	-	N/S	-
Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten, and Greenhaus (2018)	Regression and correlation analysis	Employees of a private utility company	-	N/A	N/A	-
Capitano and Greenhaus (2017)	Regression and correlation analysis	Individuals from Selected Marine Corps Reserve	+	N/A	N/A	-

Notes: “-”- negatively related, “+”- positively related, “n/a”- not discussed in the study, “n/s” – not significant results

Source: Compiled by author based on the sources presented in the table

As can be seen from Table 6, there are contradicting results setting apart Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten, and Greenhaus (2018) from the other studies regarding home permeability in individuals with a salient work role identity. The relationship was negative. This would mean that a person would still be likely to choose not to permeate their home boundary, even if they identify more with their work role. The result is in contradiction not only with the other

empirical studies but with the ideas presented in boundary and border theories in the previous subchapter. The result based on the four studies regarding this aspect is inconclusive.

Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten, and Greenhaus (2018) proposed that this result opens a direction for future research to examine the factors that might interfere with the person's preference and ability to permeate boundaries. They hypothesized that their finding may be different from other researchers due to job specifications, cultural and organizational characteristics, or family characteristics. For instance, if the individual has children, they would not be so willing to permeate their home boundary, as even with a high work RIS, they would still value and protect the ability to spend time with their children.

Only two studies in this table have explored home RIS and home-to-work permeability. Again, the results differ. While Olson-Buchanan & Boswell (2006) found that there is a positive correlation between variables, Hecht and Allen (2009) derived no correlation at all. Hecht and Allen (2009) justified their result by speculating that the strength of work boundaries could also be influenced by the lack of ability of the individuals to permeate them.

In regards to work RIS relation to home-to-work permeability, only two studies have touched on the topic as well. Olson-Buchanan & Boswell (2006) did not derive a significant result, meaning there is no relationship present. Hecht and Allen (2009) found that these variables have a negative relationship between them, suggesting that work is less permeated when a person highly values the identity connected to it and vice versa.

Lastly, 3 out of 4 empirical studies found that there is a negative correlation between home RIS and work-to-home permeability, supporting the notion that individuals with home RIS strongly protect their home boundaries, leaving little space for the possibility to permeate them. However, 1 study by Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006) showed no relationship between the variables.

In general, it can be seen that the not significant results in the study conducted by Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006) show evidence of the protective element of a salient role identity being absent. In contrast to the enactment effect which is present, as seen from the positive correlations of work RIS and home permeability, and home RIS and work permeability in their research. In the example of a salient home role identity this would mean that a person commonly permeates their work boundary for instance by taking personal life related calls during their work. However, they as well do not refrain from taking work related calls at home, consequently not protecting their home boundary.

When it comes to the relationship between role identity salience and boundary permeability in the context of technology companies, it has not received any discussion. It is appealing to research this topic in the tech companies' context, as some specifics of the industry might cause a difference from the results of the aforementioned articles in this subchapter.

Some factors that differentiate the tech industry from others are more flexible work arrangements and a predominantly male industry (Kaduk, Genadek, Kelly & Moen, 2018; Rosales & Svensson, 2021). To further provide an understanding of the gender difference, it has been reported by the European Institute for Gender Equality in 2023 that only 17% of specialists in IT in the European Union were women. If compared to the samples in previous studies, in two of them most respondents were female, reaching around 70% of the sample (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006; Hecht & Allen, 2009).

Concerning gender, due to societal pressures, females are expected to be more inclined to permeate their work domain by external factors such as children and home responsibilities in general compared to men (Russo, Ollier-Malaterre, Kossek, & Ohana, 2018). For instance, in the survey distributed by Eurofound (2020), it was discovered that work is indeed interrupted by family more commonly for women. As tech is a predominantly male industry, it may be that the workers have more control of their boundaries, and internal factors such as role identity salience may relate to their boundaries' permeability to a greater extent.

Following with technology companies providing flexible work arrangements (Kaduk, Genadek, Kelly & Moen, 2018), it may give the employees better control of their boundaries. As Clark (2000) noted, people manage their borders in a way that allows them to achieve success in the salient role. As with flexible work, there are fewer organizational spatial and temporal constraints. This fact might give RIS more freedom to be a defining factor of boundaries, which may strengthen the relationship between RIS and permeability.

To conclude, from these studies, the relationship between role identity salience and boundary permeability cannot be definitively concluded. There are only a few studies present and they contradict in all of the studies relationships, so no unanimous notion for at least one of the aspects is present. In addition, the topic was not discussed specifically for the technology industry. This overview showed the existing research gap caused by contrasting outcomes of empirical research on the topic and non-existence of previous literature of the phenomenon in the technology sector. Further investigation should be conducted to determine the causes of conflicting results and provide an additional view.

2. Empirical research on the relationship between role identity salience and work and home permeability

2.1 Methodology of the empirical study

In this subchapter, the methodology which the author has used to conduct their empirical analysis will be discussed. This thesis intends to quantitatively explore the connection between work and home role identity saliences and work and home boundaries' permeability.

The methodology of the study is divided into six parts as follows: literature review, compiling the survey, distribution of the survey, data coding, analysis in SPSS, and results and discussion. Please see Figure 1, in which the whole process is described on the next page.

After the analysis and an overview of the previous literature on the topic has been done as the first step an online survey with relevant measurement tools was compiled. Measurement tools were used for home identity salience, work identity salience, work permeability, and home permeability. The respondents have also been asked additional questions, such as their age, job position, number of days they work from home in a week, and the company they work in, due to the author's decision to conduct a comparison of means analysis for groups outlined by these questions. These questions can be found in Appendix A of this thesis.

The reason for this will be described in the following sentences. Age groups were compared because it has been previously argued that generations perceive work differently. The younger generation is moving away from identifying with their job and being loyal to their place of work (Valickas & Jakstaite, 2017). Thus, the author wanted to test whether this notion would hold in this research, too, with younger people having a lower work identity than older people and if this would reflect on their permeability behaviors.

As for comparing the means for managers, previous studies suggest that managers are required to work longer hours and have more responsibilities than ordinary employees, as well as putting a lot of significance to their jobs (Ford & Collinson, 2011). The author assumed that in this study, the managers would also have a higher work role identity and have a tendency to permeate their home lives with work. Thus, this has been tested as well. The number of days working from home was asked to determine its relationship with the studied variables. Previous research has shown that it is harder to manage domain boundaries when teleworking. People struggle to keep up the borders and let work spill over into their homes more than when they work in the office (Kangas, Pensar & Rousi, 2023; Seeber & Erhardt, 2023).

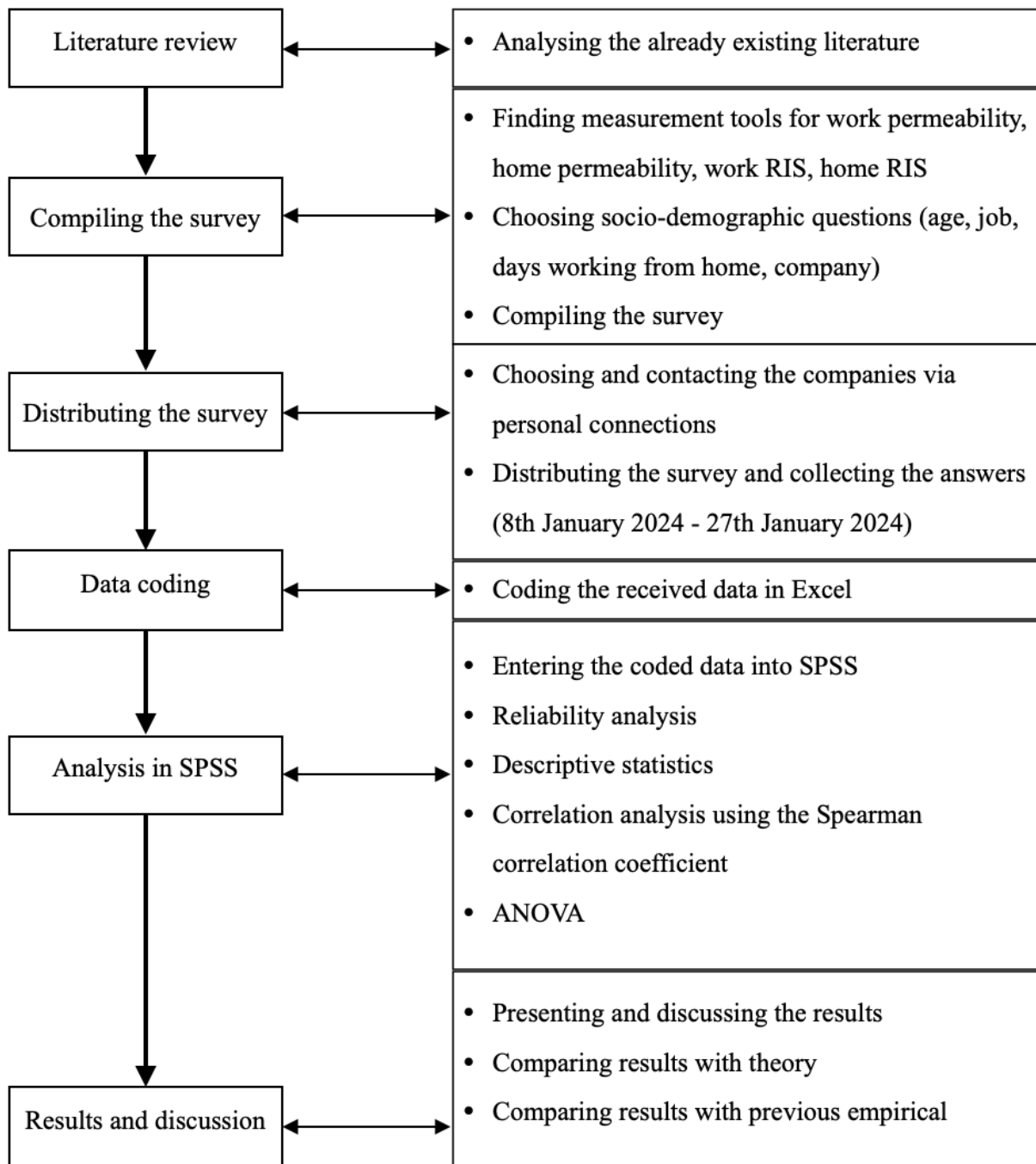


Figure 1: Methodology of the study

Source: compiled by author

The process of creating the survey started with the search for proper measurement tools, which is quite complicated due to a variety of factors. First of all, due to the fact that researchers use different terminology for identical concepts. Allen, Cho, and Meier (2014) pointed out several different concepts that are measured in the same way. For example, the authors found that researchers used almost identical items in order to research permeability, work-to-family transition, cross-role interruption behaviors, role referencing, role blurring, and work-family internal conflict. Secondly, there are no available measurement tools

specifically for RIS and permeability. Thus, commonly, researchers use items intended for other similar concepts and adapt them to their own topic. For instance, in studies by Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten, and Greenhaus (2018) and Capitano and Greenhaus (2017), items developed by Kanungo (1982) were used with the intent to measure RIS. However, they were initially created to measure work involvement.

Still, as Kanungo's (1982) scale is most popular when it comes to work RIS, it was also used in this study. It has ten items (e.g., The most important things that happen to me involve my present job; I live, eat, and breathe my job) and originally is measured with a 6-point agree-disagree response choice. However, in this study, a 5-point agree-disagree scale is used to match the other measurement tools.

For home role identity salience, scales by Yogev and Brett (1985), which were initially developed to measure family involvement, were utilized. The author modified the items as was done in a study by Olson-Buchanan and Oswell (2006). The original items are created with the inclusion only of the parent and spouse roles at home. However, this thesis has a more general approach. So "spouse" or "parent" are changed to "my role(s) in personal and family life." Initially, this tool contained ten items. However, 2 of the items have been left out in this empirical study. The item "I would be a less fulfilled person without my role(s) in personal and family life" was excluded due to being repeated twice, and the item "If I had it to do all over again, I would not have married my present spouse" was considered irrelevant by the author for the reason of current research having a more general approach to personal life. This measurement tool had a 5-point response format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

For measuring both work and home permeability, scales developed by Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy, and Hannum (2012) for interrupting behaviors will be used. Both scales for work and home have five statements each, and as in Yogev and Brett's (1985) tool, those are measured with responses from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A table with all of the items used in the distributed survey can be found in Appendix B.

After gathering the measurement tools, a survey was compiled using them. The second step was distributing the survey. The author has reached out to 3 large Estonian tech companies through personal connections, and the survey was distributed there through internal communication channels, such as email and corporate messengers, on 8th January 2024. The answers were collected until 27th January 2024. Overall, 192 responses were received.

Sample characteristics can be found in Table 7. The biggest number of responses was collected from Company A (80,2%), as the survey there was distributed via email to the whole office, while in the other two companies, distribution was constrained by only small teams. The sample consisted mainly of people aged 25-34 (47,4%). The specifics of the tech industry could explain this, as it is primarily oriented to recruit younger employees. A study conducted by Rosales and Svensson (2021) found that in these companies, the younger people are considered to be individuals under the age of 30-35, and the reason for the hiring trend is due to the perception and stereotypes attached to the older people (over 35 years old).

Table 7
Sample characteristics

Variable	Category	Distribution	Percentage
Age (years)	18-24	23	12%
	25-34	91	47,4%
	35-44	66	34,4%
	45-54	10	5,2%
	55-64	1	0,5%
	65 and over	0	0
	Prefer not to say	1	0,5%
Place of work	Company A	154	80,2%
	Company B	34	17,7%
	Company C	4	2,1%
Days per week working from home	0 days	29	15,1%
	1-2 days	58	30,2%
	3-4 days	69	35,9%
	5 days	36	18,8%
Role in the company	Upper management	1	0,5%
	Middle management	31	16,1%
	Senior specialist	52	27,1%
	Specialist	105	54,7%
	Intern	3	1,6%

Notes: N=192

Source: Compiled by author

They are perceived as less curious and advanced in technology, less innovative, and less able to adapt and learn new things. However, the following question arises: if there is such a trend, why do people aged 18-24 not make up the majority? This could be explained by the fact that most people of that age are still acquiring higher education, which may not be favorable to employers. Students need specific scheduling arrangements, which might not match the company's business needs and expectations. Students generally lack previous work experience and are still learning skills needed for the job.

As for the job position, regular specialist (54,7%) was the most reported one, which is logical, as they usually make up the biggest percentage of workers in companies as well. Also, the survey was not pushed to people with specific roles, so perhaps ordinary employees just had more interest and time to fill out the survey.

In addition, most of the respondents (84,9%) work from home for at least 1 day a week, which corresponds with theory that tech workers have quite flexible work arrangements, being able to choose where to work from (Kaduk, Genadek, Kelly & Moen, 2018).

Later, as the third and fourth steps, the responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS. Firstly, the reliability of the measurement tools has been established. Later, the author obtained descriptive statistics of the studied variables. Following this, correlation analysis using the Spearman correlation coefficient and analysis of variance were used to examine the data. The choice of the methods used is based on the previous subchapter, as the researchers have used it before in order to conduct their studies. The last step was presenting and discussing the results, comparing them with the theory and previous empirical studies. This way of conducting the study aims to provide a good overview of the relationship between role identity salience and boundaries' permeability at significance level 0,05.

2.2 Results and discussion of the empirical study on the relationship of boundaries' permeability and role identity salience

In this section, the results of the distributed survey will be analyzed and compared to those of previous empirical research.

Firstly, the author has measured the reliability of the measurement tools, as some of the statements from the original tools have been left out or modified. As can be seen from Table 8, all of the factors had Cronbach's Alpha more than 0,7. This is a satisfactory level of reliability and means that all of the variables have enough internal consistency within them (Cho & Kim, 2014).

Table 8
Reliability analysis of measurement tools

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Work identity	,85	10
Home identity	,80	8
Home permeability	,85	5
Work permeability	,79	5

Source: Compiled by author

Now that the reliability of measurement tools has been established, the author is going to proceed with analyzing descriptive statistics of researched variables. As stated in the previous subchapter, the items were measured on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). From Table 9, based on the means, it can be seen that the respondents of the study reported a higher level of home role identity salience and work permeability compared to their opposites. Thus, people give more value to their home lives compared to work, as well as allow home to interrupt work more. The finding that the work domain is more permeable than the home domain contradicts the previous discoveries on the topic by Hecht and Allen (2009) and Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992). These authors concluded in their studies that the boundaries are asymmetrical in the opposite way, and the home domain is more prone to being permeated by work activities than by work being permeated by home.

Table 9

Descriptive statistics of studied variables

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Work identity	2,66	2,70	,67	1,10	4,40
Home identity	3,76	3,75	,63	1,38	5,00
Home permeability	2,35	2,20	,87	1,00	4,40
Work permeability	3,66	3,60	,66	1,80	5,00

Notes: $N=192$

Source: compiled by author

Home RIS being higher than work RIS could be explained by multiple factors. Firstly, it has been argued that nowadays, people tend not to get attached to their jobs, changing positions and workplaces more often and engaging in alternative work arrangements. Thus, the idea of having a stable work identity is becoming outdated (Moser & Ashforth, 2021).

Secondly, as previously seen in the sample characteristics table (Table 7), this sample consists mainly of people from Generation Y, who are reported to attach less value to their work (Valickas & Jakstaite, 2017). Thirdly, there seems to be an overall trend of people starting to care about their work-life balance. For example, in a study conducted by Aoyagi and Munro (2019), individuals reported readiness to accept jobs with lower salaries if they had better work-life balance policies. Another example could be a study where it was researched why a number of consultants from elite consultancy firms have quit their jobs, with one of the big reasons being the search for an acceptable level of work-life balance, as they wanted to have time to care for their families (Bouwmeester & Slaats, 2024). Thus, it seems that people now tend to bring more attention and value to their family/home roles.

Regarding work being more permeable than home, it is essential to note that the study was carried out between individuals with an office job. Most of their time is spent in front of

a desk with a computer. Thus, it is easier for them to interrupt their work for personal reasons compared to people doing manual work.

The difference between studies may also lie in the time when they were conducted. Two of the items used to measure work permeability in this research involved monitoring or responding to personal communication while at work. Currently, we live in a world where mobile technologies are more accessible than ever, and it is easy to constantly keep in touch with relatives or friends on our smartphones (Ollier-Malaterre, Jacobs & Rothbard, 2019). Thus, a growing trend of cyberslacking is emerging, which can be defined as using mobile devices during working hours for nonwork-related activities, including personal communication (McBride, LeVassuer & Li, 2015). In a study carried out by a staffing agency "OfficeTeam" in 2017, employed individuals reported spending around 56 minutes per day cyberslacking. Thus, one of the reasons for higher work permeability could be this tendency.

In addition, this study was carried out after COVID-19, which has caused working from home to become more prevalent. A staggering percent (84,9%) of the respondents in this study work at home for at least 1-2 days a week, compared to the work of Hecht and Allen (2009), where only 6% of respondents were working primarily from a home office. While teleworking, there are no managers or colleagues around who can observe how you are working. Thus, the temptation and the possibility of interrupting work could be higher for this reason. Lastly, the previous studies were conducted in North America, where, as stated by Hecht and Allen (2009), there is a culturally strong fixation on professional development and achievements, so it is natural for people to permeate their homes more to fit into the overall expectations. In comparison, this study was conducted in Europe, where such notions are not as strong.

Moving onto standard deviation, for all of the variables, it is around 0,6. The only exception is home permeability, where it is higher, reaching 0,87. This indicates that people differed more in their answers regarding how much they allow work to permeate their home lives.

Following the descriptive statistics, the author has conducted a correlation analysis for the studied variables, see Table 10. An additional factor, working from home, has been added due to previous studies suggesting that it contributes to the blurring of home and work boundaries (Shirmohammadi, Beigi, Au & Tochia, 2023).

Table 10

Correlation between the studied variables and work-from-home

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1. Work identity	1,00				
2. Home identity	-,05	1,00			
3. Home permeability	,49**	-,04	1,00		
4. Work permeability	-,15*	,11	,13	1,00	
5. Work from home	-,02	-,004	,09	,09	1,00

Notes: $N=192$; **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Compiled by author

Firstly, the focus will be brought to the original studied variables excluding work from home. The results will be analyzed and compared to the ones that were described in previous empirical studies in subchapter 1.3 of this thesis. Additionally, the relationships between home RIS and work RIS and the relationship between home permeability and work permeability were studied and discussed in this thesis. Please find the relationships that will be studied in Figure 2.

From Table 10 only two statistically significant results can be seen, both of them concerning work role identity salience. The first one is a moderate positive correlation between work RIS and home permeability. This means that the more people value their work, the more they allow work to permeate their home boundaries and vice versa. This result is in accordance with boundary and border theories, as well as with 3 out of 4 empirical studies described before.

This research has received the same outcome as Capitano and Greenhaus (2017), Hecht and Allen (2009), and Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006). Thus, this notion could be

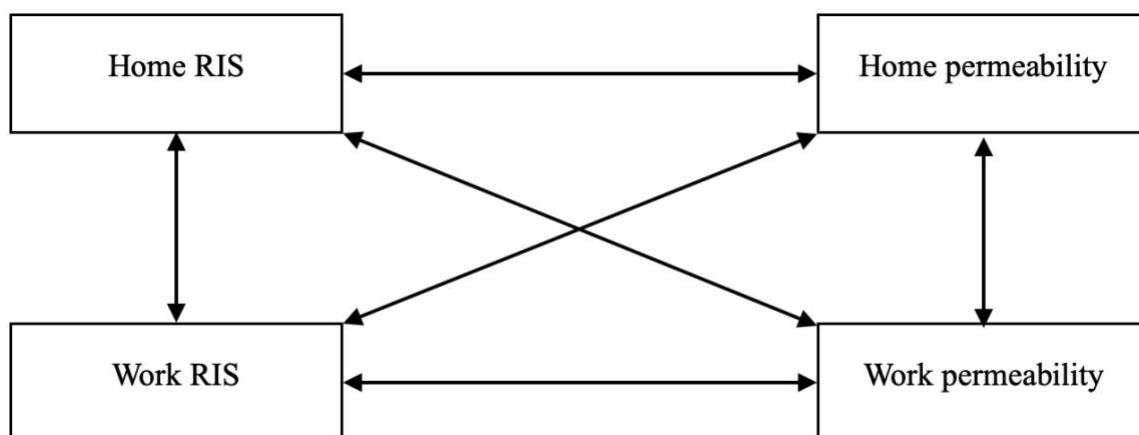


Figure 2: The studied relationships of variables

Source: compiled by author

considered quite universal. This outcome also matches one of the significant aspects of role identity salience – people devote more resources to achieve success in their salient role (Winkel & Clayton, 2010). Following this it would make sense that individuals could sacrifice their home lives to a certain extent to allocate more energy and time into their work. However, it could also go the opposite way. Perhaps individuals with very demanding positions in the company who are required by their job specifics to work out of office hours or always be "on-call" assign more value to their role to create a reason for working so much.

The second statistically significant result is that there is a low negative correlation present between work RIS and work permeability. This indicates that people who attach more value to their work choose to protect their work boundaries and do not allow home to permeate their work domain as much and vice versa. The outcome corresponds to the findings derived by Hecht and Allen on this matter (2009). It also supports the theoretical background, confirming that people try to control their boundaries in a way that would benefit their salient role (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000; Clark, 2000). By not responding, not checking personal-related communication, or taking care of personal needs during office hours, people with high work RIS could be more focused and thus deliver more results at work. Which in the end should benefit them.

In addition, the result in this thesis may be explained by the fact that tech is mainly a male industry (Rosales & Svensson, 2021). As mentioned in subchapter 1.3 of this thesis, males have fewer societal expectations of them to be caregivers in their families (Russo, Ollier-Malaterre, Kossek, & Ohana, 2018). Thus, there could be fewer external influences on them to permeate their work domain compared to women, and for most workers in the tech industry internal factors such as work RIS could be more defining of a lower work permeability.

It is important to remember that in this study, people generally reported a higher home role identity salience, as well as bringing their home lives into work more than vice versa. However, for the people who do have a strong work role identity salience, the tendency does not hold. They protect their work borders, and as for the home ones, they let their work spill into them.

As for the connections between home RIS and work boundary permeability, no statistically significant results were reached. A person's strong identification with their home life does not relate to how they treat their work boundaries and vice versa. Some of the results in the previous studies were contradictory. Hecht and Allen's (2009) research showed that

there is no relationship, and this notion matches the results of the current study. Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006) suggested that these variables have a positive correlation.

One way the result in this thesis and Hecht and Allen's (2009) work (no correlation between the variables) could be interpreted is that it is connected to the nature of the home role and the domain connected to it themselves. As stated in theory, people tend to bend boundaries in a way that would benefit their salient role and allow them to excel in it (Clark 2000; Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate 2000). Compared to the work domain, the home one can be considered not as demanding most of the time. Mostly, to excel as a parent/spouse/friend, there is no sense of urgency or pressure, no burning deadlines, challenging tasks, or constant demands from multiple stakeholders, as could be in work, that can prompt people with high work role identity salience to permeate the other domains in order to achieve success. In general, for the home domain, there are fewer occurrences that would strongly incline people to permeate their work. Thus, the relative timidness of the home domain can explain why there is no connection between home role identity salience and work permeability.

In addition, the result could be explained by fewer women working in tech (Rosales & Svensson, 2021). Men are not expected to be family caregivers that much (Russo, Ollier-Malaterre, Kossek, & Ohana, 2018). Thus, they may not be pushed to permeate their work domain by home matters, even if they have a high home RIS. For example, if there is a married couple with children, due to gender norms, the wife is more expected to take care of the child in different situations. As this takes off some of the parental responsibilities from the husband, they are not as inclined to permeate their work domain even if they have a high home RIS. Therefore, if tech has more males working in the industry, it could affect the derived outcome.

Furthermore, the non-significant relationship between home RIS and work permeability could be explained by flexible work arrangements that are common for employees in tech companies (Kaduk, Genadek, Kelly & Moen, 2018). If people can choose where and when to work, they can organize their work so that they do not have to be interrupted by their families despite having a high home RIS; thus, their work permeability does not have a relationship with high home RIS. In an extreme example, they could even work at night when everyone is sleeping, so there is no need to take care of family matters while working.

Additionally, no correlation between home RIS and home permeability has been detected in this study, which confirms the findings of Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006). This suggests that people do not permeate their home boundary less or more if they have a

high home RIS and vice versa. Even though this result contradicts the general notions of previous theoretical research, still as mentioned by Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000) in their boundary theory, the individual and their characteristics, in this case, role identity salience, are not always the only factor deciding how permeable the boundary is. It may be that for these companies, there are specific work circumstances that could affect the correlation here, making the amount the individuals bring work home out of their control, even if they have a high home RIS.

However, there were still three previous studies where it was determined that these two variables have a negative correlation, meaning that people who attach more value to their home lives have stronger home boundaries and vice versa (Capitano, DiRenzo, Aten & Greenhaus, 2018; Capitano & Greenhaus, 2017; Hecht & Allen, 2009).

Work and home permeability do not have a relationship between them. Consequently, people who permeate their work more do not permeate the home domain more, and vice versa. The finding implies that the domain boundaries are permeated asymmetrically. This result contradicts the theoretical suggestion from Nippert-Eng (1996) that people lie on a segmentation-integration continuum and treat both boundaries the same way. In her work, she explains that if home is permeated, then work is too; if home is kept separately from work, then work is also kept separately from home. In the current study, this is not the case. Results suggest that there is no relationship between the way people manage their boundaries.

Concerning the amount of time a person works from home, again, there were no correlations with other variables. This is an interesting result as it contradicts the previous findings and general consensus on the topic. It has been argued that telework increases the struggle of managing both work and home boundaries (Kangas, Pensar & Rousi, 2023; Seeber & Erhardt, 2023). It is hard to keep work away from home and home away from work when you are doing everything in the same space. Leung and Zhang (2017) found in their study that both of the domains' permeability show a positive relationship with the amount of time a person works from home.

Perhaps, in the current study, participants are very organized and efficiently employ boundary management tactics while teleworking. Therefore, there is no relationship with the permeabilities. In a study done by Shirmohammadi, Beigi, Au, and Tochia (2023), some strategies used by families working from home to segment the domains successfully were described. For example, people rearrange their flats to create a separate space for working. Another tactic is adjusting the work schedule if possible. One of the participants in the study by Shirmohammadi, Beigi, Au, and Tochia (2023) chooses to wake up very early to get their

work done before children wake up so no one can interrupt them. As well as a successful boundary management tactic is reaching an agreement with all family members when it is family time and when it is work time, and the person should not be interrupted. Thus, it may be that the participants in the study conducted for this thesis successfully implement such tactics in their daily lives.

Another perspective on this is that previous studies have shown that telework is more popular for people who are single and do not have children (Zhang, Moeckel, Moreno, Shuai & Gao, 2020). This would imply that people who do telework have fewer distractions at home than people who do not. Thus, there are fewer factors that prompt them to permeate any of the domains. For this reason, as well, there might be no correlation present in the current study.

Furthermore, the author has conducted a comparison of means analysis for different groups based on additional information collected about the respondents, such as age, occupation, and place of work.

To begin, the ANOVA method was used to compare the variables between 2 occupational categories: managers and non-managers. The results can be found in Table 11.

Table 11
ANOVA of managers and non-managers

Factors	Manager		Non-manager		F-stat	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Work identity	3,02	0,75	2,60	0,6	11,07	0,001**
Home identity	3,87	0,67	3,74	0,6	1,13	0,29
Home permeability	2,79	0,79	2,27	0,8	10,05	0,002*
Work permeability	3,73	0,66	3,64	0,6	0,40	0,53

*Notes: N(manager)=160, N(non-manager)=32 ; **. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level; *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.*

Source: Compiled based on survey results by author.

It was assumed that managers, due to the specifics of their work, have a more substantial work identity and may allow work to permeate home more than ordinary employees (Ford & Collinson, 2011). As can be seen from Table 11, this assumption has been confirmed. There is a statistically significant difference for work role identity salience and home permeability variables. Managers indeed see more value in their work role and are

more inclined to bring work home. This may be due to the increased number of responsibilities and expectations that managers have for them.

Afterward, the means of 4 different age groups were compared. As can be seen from Table 12, no statistically significant differences have been found between different ages.

Table 12
ANOVA of age groups

Factors	18-24		25-34		35-44		45 and older		F-stat	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Work identity	2,57	0,76	2,64	0,63	2,74	0,72	2,61	0,49	,51	0,68
Home identity	3,61	0,82	3,80	0,59	3,72	0,65	3,95	0,45	,94	0,42
Home permeability	2,03	0,83	2,29	0,88	2,51	0,83	2,53	1,02	2,14	0,10
Work permeability	3,76	0,82	3,63	0,71	3,66	0,58	3,65	0,39	0,23	0,88

Notes: $N(18-24)=23$, $N(25-34)=91$, $N(35-44)=66$, $N(45 \text{ and older})=11$

Source: Compiled based on survey results by author.

People from 18 years old to 45 years and older are similar in the amount of importance they attach to their work and home roles. In accordance with the total descriptive statistics in Table 6, all of the groups have higher home RIS compared to work RIS, and the permeability behavior does not differ between age groups.

However, there seems to be a trend that people aged 18-24 have the lowest home identity salience and home permeability. It may suggest that younger people do not place great value on their home role and tend to keep strong home borders, not letting work permeate them compared to other ages. Roles such as spouse or parent, which usually provide a lot of value to people, are not yet relevant for them.

Lastly, companies have been tested for differences in variables between themselves, as seen in Table 13.

As company C had only four responses, it was left out of this comparison. No significant results have been found, which indicates that the means of variables are the same for both companies. This is quite logical, as both of the companies in the study were from the same sector with people doing similar tasks at work. Thus, the identities and permeabilities should not differ much.

Table 13
ANOVA of between studied companies

Factors	Company 1		Company 2		F-stat	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Work identity	2,79	0,71	2,65	0,64	1,24	0,27
Home identity	3,73	0,67	3,75	0,62	0,02	0,88
Home permeability	2,42	0,86	2,33	0,85	0,34	0,56
Work permeability	3,67	0,75	3,65	0,63	0,03	0,86

Notes: $N(\text{company 1})=34$, $N(\text{company 2})=154$

Source: Compiled based on survey results by author.

To conclude, in this subchapter, the results of the distributed survey were analyzed using different methods, such as correlation using Spearman's coefficient and ANOVA, and interpreted in comparison to previous findings.

This research has a few implications. Firstly, as noted, the respondents reported a higher work permeability. This suggests that the employees are not focused during their work time as much, as they allow a lot of interruptions, such as monitoring or responding to personal communications, taking care of family needs during office hours. Future research needs to be conducted in order to understand what influences this behavior. Employers may need to look into how these permeations could be managed and whether new policies should be implemented to make the work boundary stronger.

Secondly, it has been found that while home role identity salience does not have any relationships with the variables, work role identity salience does. People who highly value their work roles tend to permeate their home boundaries by bringing work home. This is an important finding, as high permeation of home boundaries may lead to work-family conflict and job exhaustion (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006; Weinert, Maier, Laumer & Weitzel, 2024). Thus, further research should be done to understand how this can be prevented. In addition to this, employers may need to look into how they can avoid these outcomes by building work procedures in a way, that permeates their employees' home lives less. For example, organizations could make more flexible work arrangements to allow people more control over their work schedule, potentially reducing the need to bring work home this way. Furthermore, clear expectations and boundaries could be set to assist with the separation of domains. Additionally, special trainings could be conducted on time management and workers should be reminded not to bring work home.

In addition, it has been found that managers have a higher work role identity salience and home permeability. Thus, this category of employees needs special attention. Managers

should be able to clearly understand and set their boundaries, establishing with colleagues explicit rules on availability and times when work-related communications are acceptable. Additionally, organizations should think about how to address work that usually is done or needs to be done by employees outside of office hours in a way that does not put at risk their personal lives or adds overtime work.

Finally, it has been discovered that people who work from home more often do not allow more or less interruptions from one domain to another compared to people who work from home rarely. As this challenges the results of previous studies, it opens a door for the relationship of telework with permeabilities to be re-evaluated by researchers. Further steps could be taken to understand what affects how a person manages their boundaries while working at home. Furthermore, organizations and managers could re-examine their flexibility policies, allowing people to telework more if there is a need.

Conclusion

To conclude, in this thesis, the relationship between role identity salience and work and home permeabilities has been analyzed. The author has fulfilled all the research tasks set previously.

Firstly, definitions of permeability and role identity salience were analyzed, and the author created their own definitions. It has been determined that previous researchers deviated hugely in how they defined the concepts, involving or disregarding multiple aspects. For permeability, the author of this thesis defined six categories on which the preceding definitions can be compared: invasion of physical space, individual's responsibility, role's responsibility, psychological spillover, behavioral spillover, and degree. As a result, a new definition has been compiled incorporating the most mentioned factors: "Permeability is the degree of invasion of the physical space of one role by psychological and behavioral aspects of another role, such as thoughts or feelings about that role or actions relevant for it."

As for role identity salience, five factors have been noted and compared in previous definitions: importance/value, investment of resources, probability of enactment, attaining success, and multiple roles. Based on the analysis, the author derived their own definition of the concept: "Role identity salience is the relative value an individual assigns to each of their role identities, based on which it is decided how much energy and time goes into each role, as well as the probability of the role being activated in situations where multiple roles are applicable."

Secondly, theoretical background was provided on boundary management, permeability and role identity salience. Two main theoretical frameworks on which the

concept is based, the Border (Clarck, 2000) and the Boundary (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000) theories, were compared. It was outlined that permeability is an important characteristic of boundaries and is influenced by a person's identity.

Thirdly, previous empirical studies were analyzed. Even though there have been only a few studies done on the relationship, the findings in all of them contradict each other.

Then, the methodology was decided, and data was gathered and analyzed. A survey was compiled using relevant measurement tools from previous literature and adding socio-demographic questions, such as age, job, working from home, and the company. It was distributed among three large Estonian tech companies, and a total of 192 responses were collected. Later, the data was coded and inserted into SPSS, where correlation analysis was performed using Spearman's correlation coefficient and ANOVA.

Lastly, the results were interpreted, discussed, and compared with previous research. Findings provided a new outlook on the phenomenon. The results derived provide further implications for organizations and academics. Companies should recognize individual differences and understand how to help employees manage their boundaries accordingly. Overall, people tend to allow more interruptions into their work lives. Thus, it is vital that they do not interfere with job responsibilities. However, for people who especially value their work roles, it is the opposite. Their home lives are disrupted by work. As this might cause work-family conflict and burnout, employees need to learn how to manage and set clear boundaries effectively.

The research has some limitations. One of them is a relatively small sample size, which allows future researchers to conduct the same study for a bigger sample. As well as, most of the responses (80,2%) came from one company, which also makes it harder to generalize the results for the whole technology sector. In addition, in this thesis, a limited number of socio-demographic questions were asked in the survey for privacy concerns. This affected the ability to comprehensively analyze the derived results as things such as family status and number of children in the household would provide an additional outlook on the results of this study.

This study contributed to the literature by filling the gap of research on this topic in technology companies in Estonia. As well as this research provided an additional outlook on the question.

Research in this thesis showed the general direction of relationships between the variables. However, further analysis should be conducted on their influence on one another. This would allow for the research to have implications for companies to a greater extent.

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APPENDIX A

Socio-demographic questions used in the distributed survey

Measurement tools

Category	Question	Answers
Age	What is your age?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 18-24 ● 25-34 ● 35-44 ● 45-54 ● 55-64 ● 65 and over ● Prefer not to say
Job position	Which of the following best describes your current role in your company?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Upper management ● Middle management ● Specialist/Associate/Individual contributor ● Senior specialist ● Intern
Company	What is your place of work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Company A ● Company B ● Company C
Work from home	On average, how many days per week do you work from home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 0 days ● 1-2 days ● 3-4 days ● 5 days

Source: Compiled by author

APPENDIX B

Measurement tools for role identity salience and permeability used in the distributed survey

Measurement tools

Author	Concept	Items
Kanungo's (1982)	Work role identity salience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The most important things that happen to me involve my present job ● To me, my job is only a small part of who I am (R) ● I am very much involved personally in my job ● I live, eat and breathe my job ● Most of my interests are centered around my job ● I have very strong ties with my present job, which would be very difficult to break ● Usually I feel detached from my job (R) ● Most of my personal life goals are job-oriented ● I consider my job to be very central to my existence ● I like to be absorbed in my job most of the time
Yogev and Brett (1985)	Home role identity salience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A great satisfaction in my life comes from my role(s) in personal and family life. ● Quite often I plan ahead the next day's family activities. ● For me, days at home really fly by. ● I am very much involved personally with my family members' lives. ● I would be a less fulfilled person without my role(s) in personal and family life. ● The most important things that happen to me are related to my role(s) in personal and family life. ● If I had it to do all over again, I would not have married my present spouse. (R) (Left out) ● I would be a less fulfilled person without my role(s) in personal and family life. (Left out) ● Nothing is as important as being a spouse. ● I enjoy talking about my family with other people.
Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy and Hannum (2012)	Work permeability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I take care of personal and family needs during work ● I respond to personal communications (e.g., emails, texts and phone calls) during work ● I do not think about my family, friends, or personal interests while working so I can focus (R) ● When working from home, I handle personal or family responsibilities during work

Kossek,
Ruderman,
Braddy and
Hannum
(2012)

Home
permeability

- I monitor personal-related communications (e.g., emails, texts and phone calls) when I am working
- I regularly bring work home
- I respond to work-related communications (e.g., emails, texts and phone calls) during my personal time away from work
- I work during my vacations
- I allow work to interrupt me when I spend time with my family or friends
- I usually bring work materials with me when I attend personal or family activities

Source: Compiled by author

Notes: "R"-reverse scored

Resümee

ROLLI IDENTITEEDI TÄHTSUSTAMISE SEOS TÖÖ- JA KODU PIIRITLETUSEGA EESTI TEHNOLOOGIAETTEVÖTETES

Kateryna Nahorna

Bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on välja selgitada töö- ja kodu rolli identiteedi tähtsustamise ning töö- ja kodu piiritletuse seos tehnoloogiasektori töötajate kontekstis Eestis. See uuring täidab kahte uurimislünka. Esiteks on varasemad uuringud antud teemal andnud vastakaid tulemusi, seega on vaja täiendavat vaatenurka ja analüüsi. Teiseks ei ole nimetatud seost kunagi uuritud tehnoloogiaettevõtete kontekstis ega ka Eestis.

Autor tuletas omaenda määratlused võtmemõistetele eelnevates allikates toodud definitsioonide põhjal. Piiritletus väljendab seda, mil määral ühte rolli täites tegeletakse psühholoogiliselt (mõtted ja tunded) või käitumuslikult (tegevused) teise rolliga seotud aspektidega. Näiteks tööl olles tehakse isiklike kõnesid või loetakse isiklike e-maile. Rolli identiteedi tähtsustamine on suhteline väärtus, mida indiviid oma eri rollidele omistab ja millele tuginedes konkreetsele rollile rohkem aega ja energiat panustab ning millist rolli eelistab, kui tekib mitme rolli täimise vajadus. Näiteks kui inimene identifitseerib end põhiliselt tööga, siis on just tööga seotud mõtted, tunded ja tegevused prioriteetsed.

Teoreetilises osas selgus, et piiritletus on töö ja kodu vahelise tasakaalu üks olulisemaid elemente. Samuti on varasematest uuringutest teada, et see, millise rolliga inimene end rohkem identifitseerib, mõjutab piiritletust, kuid kuidas täpsemalt, on raske öelda, sest eri uuringud annavad vastakaid tulemusi.

Antud bakalaureusetöö empiirilise uuringu läbiviimiseks kasutati kvantitatiivset lähenemisviisi. Küsitlust levitati kolmes suures Eesti tehnoloogiasektori ettevõttes. Saadud valim koosnes 192 vastajast. Uuringu tulemused näitavad, et inimesed tegelevad tööl koduasjadega rohkem kui vastupidi. Erandiks on siinkohal juhid, kes võtavad just tööd rohkem koju kaasa kui mittejuhtival kohal töötavad vastajad. Selgus ka, et üldiselt vastajad identifitseerivad end rohkem koduga kui tööga ehk väärtustavad oma pereliikmeid ja nendega koos veedetud aega ja panustavad sellesse palju jms. Jällegi on erandiks juhid, kelle jaoks on just töö identiteet tähtsam võrreldes mittejuhtidega.

Kui vaadata seost rolli identiteedi ja piiritletuse vahel, siis selgub, et nendel, kes ennast rohkem töörolliga identifitseerivad, on suurem võimalus tööd koju kaasa võtta ning samas kalduvad nad vähem tööajal koduste asjadega tegelema. Kõrge kodurolliga identifitseerumine ei ole piiritletusega seotud.

Kokkuvõttes näitab see uuring, et teatud määral on piir töö ja kodu vahel hägustunud ja seda mõlemat pidi ehk teatud määral võetakse tööd koju kaasa ning teatud määral tegeletakse tööajal koduste asjadega. Suurem mure on aga just töö piiritletusega, seega tuleb teadlikumalt jälgida, et kõrvalised tegevused ei vähendaks töö produktiivsust. Väiksemaks probleemiks on see nendel, kes ennast tugevalt tööga identifitseerivad, kuid samal ajal on nende murekohas kodu piiritletus, mis võib kaasa tuua tervise jm probleemid, sest ei puhata end piisavalt välja. Eraldi tähelepanu vajavad siin juhid, kes ennast tugevamalt tööga identifitseerivad ning ka rohkem tööd koju kaasa võtavad kui mittejuhid.

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AND HOME PERMEABILITY IN ESTONIAN TECH COMPANIES

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