Geographies of Digital Nomadism: A Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, digital nomadism has gained increasing prominence in both academic and public discourse, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus has shifted from just the nomads themselves to also considering the destinations they inhabit and the broader spatial implications of their movement. This review sets out a research agenda based on emerging discussions about the geographies of digital nomadism, organized around four main thematic areas. The first cluster of scholarly works examines how digital nomads are understood at the crossroads of work-life, leisure and lifestyle mobility perspectives. The second part includes studies that explore how states are crafting migration regulations and programs to attract digital nomads, along with the difficulties that nomads face in navigating these evolving regulatory landscapes. The third cluster of scholarship investigates the intricate interplay between digital nomadism and housing, focussing on the rise of a medium-term rental market and diverse housing solutions tailored to digital nomads, while cautioning against the potential gentrifying effects of these emerging markets. Finally, the fourth segment of research examines the socio-economic infrastructural changes arising from the growing presence of digital nomadism within urban settlements. This includes their role in fostering local innovation as well as their influence in local economic and labour restructuring. The review concludes with a proposed agenda for future geographic research.

1 | Introduction

In recent years, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant rise in remote working arrangements. Digital technologies are enabling companies, employees, freelancers, and entrepreneurs to operate from virtually anywhere. In the US, 58% of workers—equivalent to 92 million employees—reported that they could work remotely either part-time or full-time (Dua et al. 2022). Similarly, in 2022, an average of 30% of workers in the EU engaged in remote work (Hurst 2023). Additionally, hybrid work models, where employees alternate between office and remote work, are anticipated to become more common, as companies reallocate budgets to facilitate remote work (Phillips 2020). Against this backdrop, digital nomadism, a term first coined by Makimoto and Manners (1997), is emerging as a prominent lifestyle enabled by these technological advancements. While early explorations of digital nomads' work practices existed (e.g., Sørensen 2002), it is only in the last decade that the phenomenon has gained significant academic and public attention, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic (Hannonen, Aguiar and Lehto 2023; Cook 2020b). Current debates now extend beyond the nomads themselves to include their impact on destinations and spatial dynamics. Despite the growing trend, Hannonen (2023) notes a significant lack of academic focus on how digital nomadism affects geographical spaces. As Hannonen (2023) argues, '*the major focus*

[has been] *on the travellers and their experiences*' (Ibid., p. 1) with less emphasis on their potential impact on local economies, cultural exchanges, and infrastructure demands. Given digital nomadism's potential to alter the characteristics and dynamics of various destinations, the absence of a geographic perspective represents a notable gap. This paper has two interconnected aims. First, it synthesizes existing scholarship to map the current state of research on digital nomadism. Second, it proposes a geographical research agenda that incorporates insights from related theoretical frameworks. While recent reviews (e.g., Cook 2023; Dreher and Triandafyllidou 2023; Orel 2023) have explored various aspects of digital nomadism, this study seeks to advance the conversation within geography by connecting and expanding relevant lines of inquiry, with particular attention to the structural dimensions of digital nomadism.

The following section outlines the academic debates on digital nomads' identity construction and lifestyle motivations. Section 3 highlights contributions that broaden the analysis of digital nomadism by examining state-specific migration regulatory systems, and by considering the array of migratory infrastructures that have emerged in response to this phenomenon. The fourth section explores the relationship between digital nomadism and housing, emphasizing the rise of a medium-term rental market and various housing solutions designed for digital nomads, while highlighting concerns about the potential gentrifying effects of these new markets. Section 5 examines the socio-economic infrastructural changes resulting from the growing presence of digital nomadism in urban areas. This includes the positive effects on local economies, such as potential synergies with local innovation ecosystems as well as their influence in local economic and labour restructuring. In the concluding part, I outline an agenda for future geographic research.

2 | Defining Digital Nomadism: Between Work-Life, Leisure and Lifestyle Mobility Perspectives

The focus of this first research cluster has been on the identity formation and lifestyle choices of digital nomads (Luise 2022). Only more recently have debates been gradually expanding in new directions, including research exploring digital nomads' drivers, socio-economic profiles and mobility patterns (Holleran 2022; Holleran and Notting 2023). This research stream is arguably the one that first started to gain scholarly interest. As such, it accounts for a higher number of contributions found, primarily, in sociology and leisure journals as well as publications at the intersection between information, technology and tourism.[1] Essentially, contributions to the conceptualization of digital nomadism can be separated into those that focus on work-life transformations, those that are centred on leisure and travel, and those that see these two as more organically entangled, using for instance the lifestyle mobility lens (e.g., Hannonen 2020).

The first group of scholarship has examined digital nomadism within the context of evolving work paradigms, including the development of digital work, shifts in working cultures, workplace diversification, the trend toward work flexibilization due to advancements in information and communication technologies (Liegl 2014; Müller 2016; Aroles, Granter and de Vaujany 2020; Hannonen 2020). According to this body of research, digital nomads are defined as individuals who are no longer tied to a traditional workplace and have the flexibility to decide when and where they work. With a laptop and a reliable internet connection, they can perform their tasks from virtually any location (Müller 2016; Aroles, Granter and de Vaujany 2020; Hannonen 2020, 2022).

It is the engagement in international travel and mobility that turns remote work into a leisure phenomenon, which is the focus of a second body of work. From this perspective, digital nomads are teleworkers who opt to work from various locations while maintaining a continuous lifestyle of work and leisure (e.g., Putra and Agirachman 2016; Reichenberger 2018; Thompson 2019). The inclination to travel becomes an integral aspect of the digital nomad lifestyle (Makimoto and Manners 1997) and digital nomads leverage their ability to work remotely with a laptop to explore different parts of the world (Thompson 2019). However, Wang et al. (2018) argue that digital nomadism represents not only a novel way of living but also a distinct approach to conducting and organizing work. Reichenberger (2018) expands this view even further by arguing that digital nomads incorporate leisure elements, such as enjoyment and autonomy, into their work environments, ultimately perceiving their work as a form of leisure.

The third stream of scholarship underscores the significance of both work and travel components within the digital nomad lifestyle (Cook 2020a, 2023; Hannonen 2020; Mancinelli 2020). These two elements, inherent in digital nomadism, are evident in how the phenomenon is understood and positioned between work-related and lifestyle-related mobility patterns, bridging digital, gig, remote work, and travel (Nash et al. 2018), as well as intersecting with various types of work, mobility patterns, and motivations (Cohen, Duncan and Thulemark 2015; Reichenberger 2018; Cook 2020a; Hannonen, Aguiar and Lehto 2023). As society increasingly becomes mobile and interactions become more fluid, the traditional separation of contexts, work- and leisure-oriented activities ceases to stand (Sørensen 2002). Digital nomads are the specimen of these widespread societal changes (Ross 2004). With the concept of 'workcation', for example, Woldoff and Litchfield (2021) describe the circumstances in which individuals travel to a vacation destination to work (Voll, Gauger and Pfnür 2023). While some scholars see this as part of digital nomadism (Cook 2023; Reichenberger 2018), others suggest that workcations constitute a subcategory of digital nomadism, practiced mostly during the pandemic (Hannonen, Aguiar and Lehto 2023).

Substantial work has been done in tracing a profile of digital nomads especially in relation to work- and leisure-related drivers. However, how digital nomadism represents a 'new' phenomenon, or rather, what features of novelty set it apart from other forms of mobility is still underexplored. Currently, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of what constitutes a digital nomad, as demonstrated by the various interpretations presented in the literature above. Arguably, a greater engagement with the literature on lifestyle migration (e.g., Hannonen 2020) would greatly help unravel the complex entanglements behind the digital nomad *persona*. In this sense, O'Reilly and Benson (2016, 2) suggest that '*lifestyle migration is not intended to identify,*

demarcate and define a particular group of migrants, but rather to provide an analytical framework for understanding some forms of migration and how these feature within identity-making, and moral considerations over how to live'. Thus, focussing on lifestyle migration places greater emphasis on processes and motivations rather than on specific social and economic characteristics of a migrant group. This latter approach has characterized the scholarship on digital nomadism so far, with some viewing digital nomads as a privileged group (McElroy 2020), and others pointing out the precarious work conditions associated with their lifestyle (Nash et al. 2018; Thompson 2019). These polarized perspectives may oversimplify the complex realities of digital nomadism. The lifestyle migration framework offers a more nuanced approach by deepening our understanding of the diverse factors shaping the drivers of digital nomadism, moving beyond rigid socio-economic categorizations. This is particularly important as the pandemic, as Cook (2023) observes, broadened the digital nomad demographic to include families and more established professionals, rendering previous socio-economic models outdated. Some attempts in unpacking the analysis of the drivers behind digital nomadism are already present in the literature. Hannonen (2023), for instance, provides a more nuanced view by identifying subjective factors such as personal motivations, alongside objective external forces like legal frameworks and infrastructure. This duality allows for a deeper understanding of digital nomads' experiences, though it risks underplaying the evolving societal and economic contexts. Dreher and Triandafyllidou's (2023) three-dimensional framework, integrating spatial, temporal, and professional factors, offers an alternative lens, accounting for these complexities. Finally, as motivations, work-life balance, and global mobility shift, the label 'digital nomad' itself may require redefinition, prompting further engagement with questions about what sets digital nomads apart from other 'multiple mobilities' (Sheller and Urry 2006), which have been more extensively researched since the establishment of the 'mobility turn'. In this context, the lifestyle migration literature provides a foundational framework to relate digital nomadism to other types of mobilities.

3 | Digital Nomadism, (Platform) Migration and Taxation: State, Intermediaries and Regulatory Systems

The second research cluster focuses on extending the analysis of digital nomadism to two different—yet interconnected—aspects. Firstly, the rise of state-specific migration and taxation regulatory systems tailored to digital nomads (Cook 2022; Sánchez-Vergara, Orel and Capdevila 2023; Dreher and Triandafyllidou 2023). Secondly, the frictions that arise despite these policies and programs (Kannisto 2016; Thompson 2019; Cook 2022) and how states and digital nomads themselves become '*border artists*' (Mancinelli and Germann Molz 2023). Part of this emerging scholarship draws from mobility and migration studies.

In relation to the first stream, Dreher and Triandafyllidou (2023) argue that there will be, in the years to come, significant implications for the way nation states understand and shape policies and migration regulatory systems to cope with—or capitalize on—the growing digital nomadism trend. In this regard, various digital nomad visas (Bruns and Lee 2023) have been emerging worldwide, aiming to attract skilled, mobile professionals[2] (Hooper and Benton 2022). Bednorz's (2024) systematic review of the grey literature reveals significant diversity among visas. The author organizes these according to the proactiveness of policymakers, identifying two main approaches: legitimizing and strategic. In the former case, digital nomad visas are introduced without a clear policy focus. While these visas recognise remote workers as a unique category of visitors and offer a legal framework for their stay, there is little effort to promote the program, target particular segments of digital nomads, or streamline the visa application process. In the second approach, '*digital nomad visas are implemented to reinforce another—existing or emerging—policy priority, including in the tourism, labour market, entrepreneurship, or immigration policy areas*' (Bednorz 2024, 7). This classification, as the author argues, should not be taken as set in stone, as visas may be shaped with multiple approaches and thus show mixed characteristics.

Research in the second stream points out how, despite the increasing number of programs and policies tailored to digital nomadism, there are still frictions between digital nomads and nation state-based frameworks. This brings up the paradox of 'constrained freedom' as a distinguished feature of nomadic lifestyles (Kannisto 2016; Thompson 2019; Cook 2022), where digital nomads' expectations and needs are not met by state-created frameworks. This is most apparent in the work of Mancinelli and Germann Molz (2023). Their research shows how '*nomads leverage state-imposed constraints into creative forms of "border artistry" that allow them to achieve their lifestyle goals in the shadow of the state'* (Ibid., p. 1). They further suggest that '*states are also border artists*' (Ibid., p. 11) as demonstrated by the selective implementation of visa programs. Their findings indicate that mobility regimes function not only to regulate who can or cannot move, enter, or remain in a place but also operate as a form of *governmobility* (Bærenholdt 2013), incentivizing mobile individuals to self-discipline according to desired traits like self-sufficiency, consumer citizenship, and depoliticized mobility. Consequently, mobility regimes represent the intersection between digital nomads' personal tactics to maintain mobility and states' institutional efforts to formalize and commercialize their legal status. Similarly, Bednorz (2024) argues that these policies highlight the political agenda of governments that aim to enhance local consumption by attracting affluent and high-spending digital nomads, who can function as long-term tourists or wealthy remote workers. These state efforts also extend to newly created taxation programs for foreign incomes.[3]

Current scholarship has shown how digital nomads find themselves navigating—and leveraging—an ever-changing number of schemes, programs and legal and taxation frameworks, which are carefully crafted by states that employ '*entrepreneurial and utility-maximizing policies [..] to attract a high-quality niche of consumers*' (Mancinelli and Germann Molz 2023, 3). In exploring how digital nomads navigate this rather new regulatory landscape and grey areas, further work should engage with the concept of 'platform migration'[4] (Collins 2021) and with the fiscal geography literature (Tapp and Kay 2019). The former, according to Collins (ibid., p.1) '*reconfigures the spatialities and temporalities of migration, highlighting the diverse and distributed actors, networks and institutions generating, directing and constraining movement in the world*'. This lens helps extend the focus beyond the state(s),

including other intermediaries that aid and support nomads in moving through these changing regulatory, taxation and welfare landscapes.[5] At present, the role of these actors remains largely under researched. Scholarship in fiscal geography (Tapp and Kay 2019), instead, offers a framework for critically analysing two interrelated aspects of digital nomad taxation. Firstly, it provides insights into the rationale and strategies employed by digital nomads to avoid and evade taxation. As a significant portion of digital nomads work as a freelancer, independent contractor, or business owner,[6] they may resort to tactics that do not differ from larger enterprises, as for instance the leveraging of tax shelters and tax havens. The significance of the tax system in wealth accumulation can lead nomads to rely on professionals (hence, intermediaries) who help them plan their strategies to maximize tax benefits through fiscal loopholes while on the move. Secondly, fiscal geography scholarship clarifies how governments address the taxation of digital nomads, revealing the complexities and inconsistencies in fiscal policies. In this regard, Bednorz (2024) highlights that, despite the benefits digital nomads derive from host government services, the rules governing their fiscal obligations often lack clarity (Holleran 2022; Tyutyuryukov and Guseva 2021; Wang et al. 2018). By focussing on '*the specific ways that states—at all scales—are actively shaping these processes through tax and other budgetary systems*' (Tapp and Kay 2019, 1) fiscal geography offers a nuanced analysis of the evolving landscape of digital nomad taxation, particularly in the context of newly established programs. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how policy frameworks adapt to the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities presented by a growing digital nomad population.

4 | Digital Nomadism and Housing: Emerging Real Estate Asset Classes, Platforms and (Transnational) Gentrification

This third section shows how scholars have explored the transformative impact of digital nomadism on the housing market. The contributions are grouped into two main areas. The first cluster of research focuses on the influence of temporary populations and digital nomads on the rental sector (Wachsmuth and Buglioni 2024; Llaneza Hesse, Raya Vilchéz and Rodón 2023; Cocola-Gant and Malet Calvo 2023), second homes (Colomb and Gallent 2022), and 'alternative' accommodation types (Casier 2023; Pacheco and Azevedo 2023; Toivanen 2023).[7] The second cluster examines how these emerging markets affect housing availability for local populations, driving dynamics of gentrification and displacement (McElroy 2020). Most of the contributions in this section come from Urban Studies (Brollo and Celata 2023; Cocola-Gant and Malet Calvo 2023; Hayes and Zaban 2020; Alexandri and Janoschka 2020), Housing Studies (Casier 2023) and Planning Studies (Gallent, Stirling and Hamiduddin 2023; Colomb and Gallent 2022).

The first stream of scholarship has focused on how digital nomads, as well as other temporary populations (Brollo and Celata 2023), are increasingly seeking rentals that defy clear categorization as either short-term or long-term, instead occupying a middle ground between these traditional categories. During and after the pandemic,[8] entrepreneurs, investors, and businesses, both large and small, swiftly seized upon this emerging demand: from individual landlords converting properties into short- and medium-term rentals (MTRs) to established digital platforms like Airbnb expanding their focus to integrate medium-term rentals (Clark and Newcomer 2020; Airdna 2020; Toivanen 2023). Additionally, a plethora of new dedicated medium-term rental platforms such as Flatio, Spotahome, Uniplaces, HousingAnywhere, HomeAway (now VRBO), have emerged, alongside co-living options (e.g., Casier 2023) and other hospitality services that expanded their reach to capitalise on this growing market. Scholarly research has primarily focused on the distinct features of platform-mediated medium-term rentals compared to short-term rentals (STRs). Current studies on MTRs include works by Wachsmuth and Buglioni (2024), Llaneza Hesse, Raya Vilchéz and Rodón (2023), and Cocola-Gant and Malet Calvo (2023). Wachsmuth and Buglioni (2024) analysed the rise of MTRs in Canadian cities as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the collapse of STR markets. Their study highlighted the regulatory grey area that MTRs occupy, positioned between standard residential leases and short-term accommodations. They examined the emergence of MTRs in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, including a case study on how Ontario's Landlord and Tenant Board addressed non-standard tenancies. They concluded by advocating for regulating accommodations based on type of stay rather than length of stay as a key planning strategy to help municipalities manage MTRs. Llaneza Hesse, Raya Vilchéz and Rodón (2023) focused on the STR market in Barcelona before and after the pandemic, identifying a significant shift toward MTRs over this period. Their research found that MTRs were more resilient to the decline in travel demand than traditional STRs, a trend driven largely by the rise of digital nomads. Cocola-Gant and Malet Calvo (2023) explored how platforms like Uniplaces in Lisbon have transformed the supply of student housing into accommodations catering to various mobile populations—including digital nomads—seeking short-to medium-term stays. In light of these new mobilities, platforms function as mediators between supply and demand, amplifying the outreach of the former and expanding the options available to the latter (Sadowski 2020), further increasing the interest in switching to shorter accommodation offers. Lastly, Colomb and Gallent (2022) argue that these growing nomadic movements may also increase the demand for second homes (Gallent, Stirling and Hamiduddin 2023), reducing the housing stock available to long-term residents.

Related to this last point, the second cluster of scholarship argues that, as these markets emerge, it is essential to assess whether the properties moved to MTRs—or alternative housing markets destined to digital nomads—were previously part of the long-term housing stock (Gallent, Stirling and Hamiduddin 2023). Colomb and Gallent (2022) contend that when the availability of these accommodations involves a conversion from full-time residential use, this intensifies pressures on rental and sale prices, further worsening the scarcity of homes for long-term lets. In this regard, some scholars caution about the possibility of (transnational) gentrification and displacement. McElroy's (2020) research on the arrival of digital nomads in Cluj, Romania, outlines a dynamic of double dispossession. This concept captures the appropriation of the Roma identity by digital nomads as a sort of technocapitalist fantasy of flaneurism, as well as the eviction of Roma

communities to accommodate the influx of Western digital nomads and technology firms. Other scholars (e.g., Alexandri and Janoschka 2020; Hayes and Zaban 2020; Sigler and Wachsmuth 2020) argue that the rise in transnational lifestyle mobility contributes to the globalization of rent gaps. They argue that this enables lower-income areas to become accessible to higher-income demand from the upper echelons of the global division of labour (Hayes and Zaban 2020), weakening tenant protections (Cocola-Gant and Malet Calvo 2023) and exposing residents to processes of transnational gentrification (Hayes and Zaban 2020).

There are several avenues that could prove fruitful for future research. Firstly, as digital nomads heavily depend on platform-mediated MTRs to support their mobility and temporary stays, medium-term rentals serve as a critical infrastructure for digital nomadism. As this mobility trend expands, the significance of this market will likely grow. This underscores the importance of evaluating whether MTRs fall outside existing housing regulation frameworks, as highlighted by Wachsmuth and Buglioni (2024), raising pressing questions about how states will adapt to these evolving markets. Secondly, as digital platforms increasingly mediate these markets, state-platform dynamics and the regulatory challenges of governing these spaces require deeper scrutiny. Legal frameworks, especially within the EU, as noted by Colomb and Moreira de Souza (2021), are likely to shift to address issues of platform accountability and limits of regulatory authority. Thirdly, a pressing question is whether MTRs overlap with STRs or operate within distinct housing stocks. This distinction has major implications for urban spatial distribution and the potential diversion of long-term housing stock to temporary uses. Such shifts could exacerbate gentrification and displacement dynamics, with digital nomadism emerging as a possible contributor to these processes. In this regard, key questions requiring further scrutiny include: to what extent do digital nomads contribute to dynamics of gentrification and displacement? What are the specific mechanisms driving this process? Can digital nomadism lead researchers to reformulate existing ideas about gentrification? currently, only a few studies have addressed these issues. Finally, a key area for future research is the ownership and investment patterns driving emerging real estate asset classes designed for digital nomads. Investigating this involves examining local and global entrepreneurial strategies, financial investments[9] (Aalbers 2019, 2020) and assetization processes (Birch and Ward 2024) linked to digital nomadism in the housing and rental markets.

5 | Digital Nomadism and Socio-Economic Infrastructural Changes: Supply, Infrastructures and Local Innovation Ecosystems

In this last section, I use the term 'socio-economic infrastructural changes' to gather under one umbrella term the research investigating the transformative relationship between the arrival of digital nomads and local infrastructures, services and innovation ecosystems. This body of work can be divided into two distinct areas. The first area examines the potential positive spillovers that digital nomads—as a new 'creative class'—generate in local economies and innovation ecosystems. Studies in this vein explore how new 'urban marketing strategies' (Sequera 2024) may be directed to attract digital nomads as they serve as a catalyst for boosting local 'innovation hubs' (Haking 2018), contributing to economic growth and entrepreneurial activity. These contributions primarily align with scholarship in Economic Geography (e.g., Saxenian 2006; Florida 2014; Haking 2018) and Urban Economics (e.g., Moretti 2004; Glaeser 2011). The second area focuses on changes to the supply side of digital nomadism itself (Hannonen, Aguiar and Lehto 2023). This includes services, infrastructures, and events designed for the growing digital nomad population, which are gradually forming a 'Digital Nomad Infrastructure' (Toivanen 2023). Examples include newly built or repurposed co-working spaces (Richardson 2017; Orel 2019; Suckley and Orel 2024), an emerging coffee shop culture (Buhr 2023; Woldoff and Litchfield 2021), and other services that facilitate digital nomads' mobility and temporary stays. Research in this area draws from fields like Urban Studies (e.g., Avdikos, Papageorgiou, and Pettas 2024), Leisure Studies (Orel 2019), and Tourism Management (e.g., Hannonen, Aguiar, and Lehto 2023).

Starting from the first cluster, Haking (2018) suggests that the presence of digital nomads in 'innovation hubs' can generate beneficial spillover effects for local populations and economies. From this standpoint, digital nomads are seen as vectors of innovation and local economic flourishing. However, while they can be categorised as high-skilled migrants,[10] their interaction, if any, with local innovation ecosystems remains underexplored. Particularly, it is uncertain whether digital nomads could be conceptualised as the 'Argonauts 3.0'[11] (Saxenian 2006), or if their temporary presence in a location results in minimal or no contribution to local innovation. Some literature in economic geography has explored the relationship between cities and innovation, as well as the positive spillovers generated by high-skilled migrants at large. Authors such as Enrico Moretti (2004), Edward Glaeser (2011) and Florida (2014), among others, offer grounded perspectives for investigating these questions. All these authors, in different ways, show the role of cities in promoting themselves as attractive hubs for international "talents" (Rosenberg and Brent 2020) and how they aim to attract creative workers to boost local economies. They underscore the relevance of an international hyper-mobile class of creative workers, and how these sort their location based on competition amongst different cities. Thus, this scholarship offers a perspective on why these mobile classes are welcomed, what cities do to attract them and how they sort their destinations. In line with this, Sequera (2024) contends that digital nomadism has emerged as a pivotal element in neoliberal urban marketing strategies.

Turning to the second cluster, other literature has explored how digital nomadism is now targeted as a new consumer segment and, as such, a variety of services, infrastructures, and events specifically tailored to this phenomenon is emerging. Toivanen refers to this as 'Digital Nomad Infrastructure' (Toivanen 2023).[12] The focus thus shifts to how digital nomads can be a vector of local labour restructuring as well as the target group of interest for new services, infrastructures, and commodification practices. Hannonen, Aguiar, and Lehto (2023), for instance, show how various stakeholders, in Gran Canaria, have implemented diverse accommodative strategies tailored to the specific requirements of digital nomads, encompassing lifestyle and recreational amenities, remote work facilities, digital services, and social provisions. By applying stakeholder theory, the study highlights how

the interaction between local communities and digital nomads leads to the emergence of what they refer to as '*new locals*'. One growing infrastructure is that of coworking spaces (Richardson 2017; Orel 2019; Suckley and Orel 2024). In recent years, several international coworking brands have surfaced, including WeWork, Impact Hub, Regus, Second Home, Workhaus, Spaces, Your Alley, Urban Station and some hybrid brands which mix living, social and working areas (such as The Social Hub). These chains have quickly become a supporting infrastructure for digital nomads on the move, not only to find a place to work, but as places for socialisation and community-building (Orel et al. 2022). Besides their social and working purpose, Avdikos, Papageorgiou and Pettas (2024) show how coworking spaces operate '*as mediators and facilitators of multilevel private investment and financialisation processes*' (Ibid. p.1), thus highlighting the relevance of global capital in the development of these spaces. Another infrastructure that supports digital nomads' lifestyle and work routine is that of coffee shops (Buhr 2023; Woldoff and Litchfield 2021) either as new-built or as '*redesigned private spaces for remote work*' (Toivanen 2023). Cafes have been shown to be an economically accessible alternative for nomads who cannot afford the lease of an office (or even a desk), while maintaining the feeling of belonging to a community (Lee et al. 2019).

These streams of research are still in their early stages, although there has been an increasing number of contributions in recent years. One major area of focus for future studies is how the temporary presence of digital nomads contributes to local innovation, economic growth, and their involvement with entrepreneurial and innovation hubs. These interactions may generate beneficial spillover effects, potentially comparable to those of other high-skilled migrants. Against this backdrop, it will be crucial to understand the role of digital nomads in urban competition, as cities increasingly seek to attract international talent (Sequera 2024) and nomads represent '*the new creative class in the marketplace of cities*' (Ibid., p.9). Another area for future research should examine the development of services, infrastructure, and events specifically designed for digital nomads, and how these have the potential to reshape local labour markets. These changes are closely connected to strategies that commodify the presence and activities of digital nomads, turning their lifestyle into an economic opportunity for local communities, eventually leading to the emergence of new stakeholders, as the work of Hannonen, Aguiar, and Lehto (2023) demonstrated. As these 'new' infrastructures and services emerge, limited research has explored the interplay among different stakeholders and financial actors involved in the initiation, development, and ownership of this digital nomad-related infrastructure. The expansion of global coworking brands like WeWork, Impact Hub and the Social Hub serves as an example of the influence of global capital (Avdikos, Papageorgiou, and Pettas 2024) in these emerging circuits.

6 | Towards a (Geographic) Research Agenda of Digital Nomadism

In this paper, I aimed to delineate recent research that is shaping discussions on the emerging geographies of digital nomadism. The primary objective was to offer a starting point for exploring the diverse thematic areas surrounding this relatively new subject, highlighting the structural aspects of digital nomadism rather than focussing exclusively on the individuals who engage with this lifestyle. In this concluding section, I propose a geographic research agenda to connect and advance scholarship on digital nomadism within the broader discipline of geography.

There is still room to unpack the overly homogenized—and sometimes polarized—image of the digital nomad identity, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which has expanded the demographic profile of digital nomads, highlighting the need to capture the evolving composition and characteristics of these individuals. These changes remain underexplored, except for a few contributions (e.g., Holleran 2022). To address these gaps, future research should focus on diversifying the understanding of digital nomadism by examining the experiences, motivations, and challenges faced by different subgroups within the community, including families, corporate professionals, and traditional office workers. I argue that a greater engagement with the literature on lifestyle migration would help insert digital nomadism in a wider understanding of migratory processes while untangling the intricate array of factors influencing this specific type of mobility. As this literature highlights the more 'structural' aspects of digital nomadism, the concept of 'digital nomad' may need to be redefined, as it increasingly overlaps with other forms of 'multiple mobilities' (Sheller and Urry 2006).

With the emergence of tailor-made visas and taxation regimes, future research should examine further how states craft and adapt their policies and programs to attract skilled nomad professionals as well as understanding the frictions that arise as digital nomads navigate these frameworks. I argue that engaging with the literature on 'platform migration' (Collins 2021) and 'fiscal geography' (Tapp and Kay 2019) would help pursue these lines of research. While the platform migration lens would allow to include actors—beyond governmental entities—that facilitate and assist nomads in navigating regulatory, taxation, and welfare environments, a dialogue with the fiscal geography literature would help examine how nomads strategically manage their tax obligations in light of an emerging landscape of specialised taxation regimes and tax havens. From a theoretical perspective, engaging with these literatures highlights the intricate and evolving web of actors, networks, materials, and ideas that connect places and enable digital nomadism. It raises important questions about power relations, agency, the control and commodification of (lifestyle) migration, extending the focus beyond state-run border regimes. Ultimately, it shifts attention to how digital nomads' capacity to move is shaped by specific pathways, channels, and contingencies (Collins 2021).

The impact of digital nomads on housing markets, particularly through the rental sector (Wachsmuth and Buglioni 2024; Llaneza Hesse, Raya Vilchéz and Rodón 2023; Cocola-Gant and Malet Calvo 2023), second residences (Colomb and Gallent 2022), and alternative accommodation options (Casier 2023; Pacheco and Azevedo 2023), remains underexplored. A first critical area for future research is understanding the ownership and investment patterns within the emerging real estate asset classes that target digital nomads as users. This would advance theoretical debates in financial geography (e.g Aalbers 2019, 2020) and asset geography (Birch and

Ward 2024) by exploring speculative and extractive practices that question the roles of the state, local entrepreneurship, and global corporate investment. Second, there is a need for comprehensive (comparative) analysis of the regulatory responses to the rise in medium-term rentals, which have been at the centre of recent studies (Wachsmuth and Buglioni 2024; Llaneza Hesse, Raya Vilchéz and Rodón 2023). As these rentals accommodate the needs of digital nomads, they may fall outside traditional short-term rental frameworks, challenging states to adapt their legal and regulatory structures. Third, and relatedly, it is crucial to explore to what extent housing stock for medium-term rentals overlaps with short-term rentals, and if this 'new' offer replaces short-term rentals or coexists with it in varying geographic and market distributions. In this context, as platforms extend the reach of suppliers and boost interest in temporary accommodations, scholars should investigate whether long-term housing stock is being diverted to temporary uses, as this has implications for gentrification and displacement dynamics. Questions remain about the role of digital nomadism in these processes and the mechanisms through which it operates. Future research in this area may lead to the expansion (or revaluation) of existing gentrification theories (Hayes and Zaban 2020).

Finally, future research should focus on what I called the 'socio-economic infrastructural changes' brought by digital nomadism. On the one hand, this includes investigating how the temporary presence of digital nomads influences local innovation and economic growth, comparing these effects with those generated by other high-skilled migrants (see for instance Florida 2014; Glaeser 2011; Saxenian 2006; Moretti 2004). From a theoretical perspective, integrating digital nomadism into broader debates in economic geography and urban economics would enrich the analysis of local spillovers and the growth of innovation ecosystems. On the other hand, researchers should explore how digital nomads become a vector of local labour restructuring as well as the target group of interest for new services and infrastructures. These studies would offer valuable insights into the transformation of local economies, shedding light on the market and spatial reconfigurations of labour. Moreover, as this emerging infrastructure catered to digital nomads is blossoming in many cities across the world, scholars should focus on the various stakeholders and financial actors, across different scales, involved in its development and ownership.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Endnotes

[1] The *World Leisure Journal*, *Information, Technology & Tourism* and *Tourism Geographies* have hosted a significant number of publications in this field.

[2] For a comprehensive document on the digital nomad visa programs, I suggest consulting the 'Digital Nomad Visa Whitepaper' by Bruns and Lee (2023).

[3] The non-habitual residence (NHR) program in Portugal (currently under scrutiny) for instance envisions reduced tax rates on Portuguese-source income and exemption on most foreign-source income for 10 years.

[4] Although the term is not used by Collins in relation to digital nomadism, it proves to be useful in linking this relatively new migration phenomenon with more consolidated literature. This lens helps underlining how migration industries and infrastructures serve as platforms that facilitate (lifestyle) migratory patterns.

[5] These intermediaries include accountants, immigration and tax lawyers, relocation agencies, and similar professionals.

[6] 55,4% according to the 'Digital Nomad Report' produced by Flatio in 2023.

[7] While some scholars mention digital nomads explicitly, others use terms like 'high-skilled' migrants or 'temporary populations'.

[8] Although Airbnb policies on MTRs, for instance, emerged during the pandemic in response to the decline in tourism in cities (AirDNA 2020), the short-term and medium-term rental market predates the pandemic.

[9] See Casier (2023) for an example of financialization of the co-living market in Brussels, Belgium

[10] According to the 'Digital Nomad Report' produced by Flatio in 2023, 55.8% of Digital Nomads is in the IT & Tech, Media, advertising, PR & marketing and Entrepreneurship & business sectors.

[11] 'The New Argonauts' is a term coined by AnnaLee Saxenian in her book titled 'The New Argonauts: Regional Advantage in a Global Economy,' published in 2006. Saxenian uses this term to describe a new wave of highly skilled and entrepreneurial migrants who engage in transnational activities, particularly in the technology and innovation sectors. Saxenian's concept highlights how these migrants contribute to the circulation of ideas, capital, and innovation between their home countries and their adopted countries, thereby fostering regional economic development and competitive advantage. Potentially, digital nomads could be interpreted as the 'new' New Argonauts, or as I refer to in the text, the Argonauts 3.0.

[12] The conceptualisation by Toivanen (2023) is more comprehensive and includes visas, taxation schemes and accommodation (e.g., Airbnb, Co-living). These have been clustered in chapter three and four of this paper. Although they could all be grouped as a whole 'Nomadic Industry', I decided to split into different sub-themes to facilitate the entry of different geography scholars and different streams of geographic research in the debates.

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