

## Intersectionalities of Immigrant and Refugee Entrepreneurship and Digital Nomads

Nick Dreher, Toronto Metropolitan University

### Abstract

As pandemic lockdowns forced many traditional office workers to work from home, a subset of these workers left their countries of employment altogether to join a growing movement of location independent transnational digital workers. These digital nomads have captured the imagination of mainstream and social media, which have promulgated images of laptop laden millennials from the Global North working within sight of a beach in Bali one month and from an Airbnb in a hip Buenos Aires neighborhood the next. Despite the media attention, academic scholarship on this topic is limited. What does exist appears primarily in the business and management literature, especially journals focused on information technology (IT) and tourism, as well as the sociological subfield of leisure studies. To date, scholars of migration have barely engaged with the topic, despite the subliterate on lifestyle migration (Benson and O'Reilly 2009) providing a valuable theoretical antecedent to discussions of digital nomadism.

This paper offers a critical overview of what is known about digital nomadism so far and argues that migration scholars should seriously consider this topic in the years ahead. Theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches from migration scholarship could help to better understand what digital nomadism means for the future of work and the social contract between citizen and nation-state. There are also important implications for the nomadlands—the destinations where these remote workers temporarily reside. The recent appearance of over 30 digital nomad visas is one early sign of destination countries considering a policy response.

### Biography

**Nick Dreher** is a PhD student in the Policy Studies program at TMU. He is also a researcher with CERC Migration and the Urban Sanctuary, Migrant Solidarity, and Hospitality in Global Perspective partnership. His research focuses on social inclusion, belonging and agency of precarious migrants and refugees in cities. Other research interests include transnational and multi-level governance, qualitative methods, and arts-based research. Prior to his PhD, he worked in non-profit settings in a variety of roles—program coordination, teaching, and

advocacy, at community organizations supporting migrants and refugees in South Africa, Uganda, and several cities in the United States.