

Full Length Article

Digital nomadism, gender and racial power relations

Patricia Aida Linao^a, Bente Heimtun^b, Nigel Morgan^{c,d,e,*}^a UiT The Arctic University of Norway, UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, Follumsvei 31, 9509 Alta, Norway^b UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Norway^c University of Surrey, UK^d University of South Wales, UK^e Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 June 2023

Received in revised form 28 March 2024

Accepted 9 April 2024

Available online 23 April 2024

Associate editor: Scott Cohen

Keywords:

Asian

Internalized racism

Freedom

Sexualization

Mobility

Post-colonial feminism

ABSTRACT

This study examines the interplay of race and gender in shaping the journeys of Asian female digital nomads who navigate the realms of travel and work simultaneously, through the lens of post-colonial feminism. Through our qualitative exploration, we contend that prevailing discourses constrain understandings of Asian women's lived experiences. While our respondents' narratives align with existing knowledge, our original contribution lies in our nuanced examination of the intersecting power dynamics of gender and race. These women's accounts highlight the pervasive influence of internalized racism, sexualized and racialized hegemonic norms, and the differential treatment of Westerners within digital nomadism. These revelations challenge idealized portrayals of digital nomadism, revealing the racial and gender-based discrimination that these Asian women confront on their journeys.

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Introduction

Digital nomadism has emerged as a hybrid form of tourism, work, and migration (Zerva, Huete, & Segovia-Pérez, 2023) whereby individuals embrace a location-independent, technology-enabled lifestyle, enabling them to combine work and travel (Thompson, 2018). It has been associated with white, male, millennial, and privileged individuals (Thompson, 2021) as it allows for “working less to live more” (Atanasova, Bardhi, Eckhardt, & Mimoun, 2022, p.32). Technological advancements in internet connectivity and communications, together with the COVID-19 pandemic, have driven the growth in digital nomads, which some commentators predict could reach a billion by 2035 (Arkwright, 2022). Thus, more destinations and communities will have to promote themselves to, and cater for this market (Hannonen, Quintana, & Lehto, 2023), although many digital nomads consider themselves “world-citizens” or “enlightened travelers” not tourists (Thompson, 2021, p.3).

There is a growing literature on digital nomads' constructions and experiences of “home” (de Loryn, 2022), motivations and work practices (Hall, Sigala, Rentschler, & Boyle, 2019), and engagement with the neoliberal order (Mancinelli, 2020). Much of this foregrounds entrepreneurship, consumer lifestyle, and capitalism (e.g. Atanasova et al., 2022). Moreover, many empirical studies are skewed towards the western ideology of individualism (Schlagwein, 2018), resulting in conceptions of lifestyle mobilities that overlook the full diversity of the global digital nomad community (Aydogdu, 2016). Drawing on post-colonial feminist perspectives,

* Corresponding author at: University of Surrey, UK.

E-mail addresses: pli019@uit.no (P.A. Linao), bente.heimtun@uit.no (B. Heimtun), n.j.morgan@surrey.ac.uk nigel.morgan@southwales.ac.uk (N. Morgan).

our study critiques these western-oriented discourses, which frame digital nomadism, and explores its gendered and racial dimensions. Examining digital nomadism through a post-colonial feminist lens provides a nuanced and holistic understanding of the social structures and power dynamics that underpin this latest development in the neoliberal economy (Mancinelli, 2020). We seek to add to and challenge conventional understandings of digital nomadism, since in a globalised and hybrid world, East/West binaries are neither possible nor fruitful (Zhang & Tripathi, 2023).

The major contribution of our study is to explore the experiences of seven young, well-educated female Asian/Asian diaspora digital nomads, together with the reflections of the Asian-born first author and former digital nomad, in order to unpack how gender and race shape their lived experiences of travel, leisure, and work. By exploring female Asian perspectives, we add to research that is critical of seeing digital nomadism through a Western-centric lens, which privileges discourses of freedom and mobility and underplays white, male hegemony and privilege (Aydogdu, 2016; Thompson, 2021). Our findings align with several themes already identified in the literature on digital nomadism. What we add that is new to this literature is our focus on racial and gendered power relations, through an intersectional approach. Moreover, we explore the notion that individuals may favour those from perceived higher-status groups over their own, something not widely discussed in the digital nomad literature. The experiences of these women suggest that sexualized and racialised hegemonic practices, internalized racism and the preferential treatment of Western nomads by locals in Asia are important issues deserving consideration in the context of digital nomadism. The experiences of these Asian women reveal the racial and gender-based discrimination they face, even within the nomad community. By spotlighting these issues, we attempt an intersectional understanding of this hybrid form of tourism and reveal how often-romanticized portrayals of digital nomadism can obscure the totality of experiences.

Digital nomadism, mobility and gender

Digital nomadism

Digital nomadism is a consequence of the new nomadic age (Makimoto & Manners, 1997), facilitated by the mobile telephone introduced to the marketplace in 1995. Digitalization has enabled people to leave traditional work environments to pursue travel opportunities and self-development while maintaining their work responsibilities (Hermann & Paris, 2020; Müller, 2016). Thus, digital nomads can be described as “half-tourists” (Almeida & Belezas, 2022), a privileged elite who can afford to travel (Aroles, Granter, & de Vaujany, 2020), and professionals who are work-location-independent. Hannonen (2020) argues that this digital nomadism lifestyle is best located within a mobility framework. The mobilities turn is a complex interplay between movement and neoliberal social imaginaries, which provides a metaphorical yet deep understanding of societies, beyond merely regarding them as being in motion or in flux (Salazar, Elliot, & Norum, 2017). This approach sees digital nomadism as both a mobile lifestyle and mobile work, and not just one or the other, so that the digital nomad is “a rapidly emerging class of highly mobile professionals, whose work is location independent. Thus, they work while traveling on a (semi)permanent basis and vice versa, forming a new mobile lifestyle” (Hannonen, 2020, p.12).

Digital nomadism is rooted in a romanticization of mobility and transformation, and is seen as a symbolic representation of Bauman's (2013) “liquid society”, since being “on the move” appeals to sedentary societies (Müller, 2016; Reichenberger, 2018). Thus, we can see digital nomadism not merely as a work-location-independent lifestyle, but as one that makes us question whether the concepts of home and mobility are blurred or intrinsically intertwined. Digital nomadism's clouding of work/leisure and home/away boundaries challenges the dominant conceptualisation of the materialities and the physicalities of the home since, as they move through different locations, digital nomads bring their “home” with them (de Loryn, 2022), reframing home and migration as interwoven, not separate (Ahmed, Castada, Fortier, & Sheller, 2020).

Neoliberalism and mobilities, with their stress on freedom, self-sufficiency, and individualization in shaping practices and patterns, are materialised through the phenomenon of digital nomadism, which can be characterized as an opportunistic adaptation “to the logic of the dominant neoliberal order, with its emphasis on flexibility and entrepreneurialism” (Mancinelli, 2020, p.434). The work-location-independent life of the digital nomad is often described as privileged since “holders of powerful passports” from the Global North seek to maximize monetary and personal interests (Toivanen, 2023, p.76) through geo-arbitrage (McElroy, 2020). Further, their privileged lifestyle suggests a culture of exclusivity and elitism where being a digital nomad requires certain levels of financial stability, advanced education, and/or greater access to technology, which can perpetuate social inequalities (Aroles et al., 2020; Thompson, 2018). Using their salary advantage to live comfortably elsewhere, privileged white digital nomads often fail to take responsibility for their actions or understand how their lifestyle impacts local communities (Thompson, 2019a). Indeed, digital nomadism is often seen as an advantaged, heterosexual white, male-centred space (Cook, 2020), typified by the stereotypical “digital bromad” on the beach “next to his laptop and surfboard, and who stays in Thailand where his socio-economic status empowers him” (Thompson, 2019b, p.78).

However, as a metaphor of neoliberal values (Hay, 2000), digital nomadism does not exist in a vacuum (Mancinelli & Germann Molz, 2023) and is exposed to state or corporate bureaucracy (Cook, 2022). On one hand, their passports give these individuals the power to travel transnationally. On the other hand, state mobility regimes, such as visa programmes and immigration regulations, constrain their mobility. Thus, there is a paradox in “nomads moving both with and against the state” (Mancinelli & Germann Molz, 2023, p.2). This underscores the paradox between neoliberalism and mobilities. While neoliberalism promotes individual freedom, agency, and mobility, it creates constraints shaped by political, social, and cultural contexts (Cook, 2020; Hall & Lamont, 2013; Mancinelli, 2020). Thus, digital nomads do not exist in social spaces where individuals can move freely, but in spaces where they must negotiate complex relationships of meaning and power, that constrain mobility (Cresswell & Uteng, 2016). The neoliberal promise of freedom is illusory as, for employers, digital nomadism is cost-effective and reduces their responsibilities, while it places employees in a precarious position of “downward mobility on the road” (Hong, 2023; Thompson, 2019a, p.40).

Therefore, while digital nomadism is depicted as a utopia of travel, autonomy, and agency (Cook, 2020; Kuzheleva-Sagan & Nosova, 2016), such descriptions fail to acknowledge its challenges. This lifestyle can undermine community and relationship building and lead to loneliness (Thompson, 2019a, 2019c) and work-leisure imbalance (Cook, 2020). Digital nomads' mobility requires planning, structure, self-discipline, and a need to balance professional, personal, and spatial freedom. Moreover, this necessity to maintain self-discipline, time management, and work-life balance resembles the traditional work environments these individuals originally rejected (Cook, 2020; Reichenberger, 2018). The digital nomad lifestyle also offers differing challenges and experiences depending on one's race and gender. White digital nomads can be suspicious of those of colour (Hong, 2023) and there is an "unspoken norm of whiteness underlying the nomadic lifestyle" (Thompson, 2019a, p.33), even manifesting in internalized racism amongst non-white remote workers in the form of the pressure to conform to Western standards of success and professionalism, and the internalisation of stereotypes about their own cultural backgrounds.

Internalized racism is a complex issue stemming from the intersections of multiple systems of domination, including historical colonialism, globalisation, and cultural hegemony (Pyke, 2010). It can lead to the internalisation of negative stereotypes and biases against Asian cultures and identities and a sense that Western ideals, values, and appearances are superior to Asian ones. Such internalized racism reinforces systemic inequalities and power dynamics that prioritise Western influence and marginalise local voices. This can be observed in various forms, including the preference for Western beauty standards or the valorization of Western education and language (Pyke, 2010). However, few studies investigate the racial dimensions of the digital nomadic lifestyle, and none explicitly examine female Asian digital nomads, our focus here. Defining Asian race, gender and class identities is not a task to be taken lightly, as these intersectional dimensions are influenced by diverse Asian cultures. Not only is it complex, but requires a level of sensitivity and respect for the diverse experiences and perspectives of Asian women.

Mobility of Asian female digital nomads

"Asian" is an identity rooted in Greek literature and associated in western literature with the mysterious Eastern Other (Yang & Mura, 2016). While Asian women traditionally led a life of domesticity in Confucian and Muslim societies (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2017; Yang & Mura, 2016), affluent and well-educated Asian women's lives have been transformed by industrial capitalism, changes in family structures, the rise of individualistic lifestyles, educational opportunities, employment, financial independence, and urban migration (Khoo, Bruce, Fawcett, & Smith, 2019; Yang et al., 2017; Yang, Yang, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019). Yet, these women still face stigma and limited opportunities due to gender norms and cultural power dynamics. Despite the divergent nature of Asian countries, one cornerstone of East, South, and Southeast Asia is their focus on family obligations (Li, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2024). Such obligations have transformed filial piety into an exchange of care, obligation, support, appreciation, and affection between adult children and their ageing parents (Croll, 2006). In the Asian diaspora in North America, women have inherited cultural norms and are often commodified as hyperfeminine, sexualized, exotic, and attainable by white men (Pyke & Johnson, 2003), although the feminist and civil rights movements inspired them to focus on education, politics, health, and work, and to expand their political perspectives (Chow, 1992).

To contextualise how female Asian digital nomads navigate sociocultural, personal, practical, and spatial benefits and constraints, we turn to research on Asian female tourists (Seow & Brown, 2018). Both tourism and digital nomadism, as gendered and racial practices, expose Asian women to risks, which are the outcome of unequal power relations in tourism and leisure places (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018). Many digital nomads travel alone and solo travel is magnified for Asian women due to their gender, race, ethnicity, and culture (Yang et al., 2018). In particular, they recount occurrences of being sexualized based on their gender and race, and experiencing fears, doubts, and vulnerabilities (Yang et al., 2019). Despite such asymmetric power structures, they remain a key driver of an Asian cultural and social shift, which has resulted in greater independent travel, education, and career-motivated migration amongst women seeking personal growth and agency (Kim, 2012; Teo & Leong, 2006; Yang et al., 2017). Indeed, resistance and empowerment are key benefits of solo travel for Asian women, and although these experiences can be challenging, they can foster agency, happiness, creativity, and emancipation (Hamid, Ali, Azhar, & Khan, 2021; Seow & Brown, 2018). This is not dissimilar to the freedom and self-discovery, that attract digital nomads to a lifestyle that allows them to prioritise travel experiences and personal growth (D'Andrea, 2007; Kannisto, 2017; Mancinelli, 2020).

For some Asian women, becoming a digital nomad, just like solo travel, can be a route to personal transformation, agency, and empowerment (Yang et al., 2017). In some regard, cosmopolitan Asian women's travel experiences could be seen as an enactment of post-feminism. Post-feminism refers to "a contemporary cultural sensibility proclaiming that women are 'now empowered,' and celebrating and encouraging their consequent 'freedom' to return to normatively feminine pursuits and to disavow feminism as no longer needed or desirable" (Dosekun, 2015, p.960). Post-feminism's strong relationship with neoliberalism and globalisation perpetuates racial, cultural, and ethnic blindness, further marginalising women who experience inequality differently based on the intersection of their identities (Wilkes, 2015). In addition, much research on the interconnections of post-feminism, neoliberalism, and mobilities focuses on expressions of white femininity (Wilkes, 2015), and is limited in its exploration of non-western women's perspectives and how they engage with various lifestyles and mobilities (Dosekun, 2015). As a result, there remains a significant lacuna in our understandings of how Asian women navigate the ambivalent and relational nature of digital nomadism (Zerva et al., 2023).

We are inspired by postcolonial feminism to understand the intricacies of Asian women's lived experiences as digital nomads. Postcolonial feminism critiques Western feminism for neglecting, homogenising, stereotyping, misunderstanding, and misrepresenting subaltern women and highlights the gender and sexual dimensions of postcolonial processes and the racialized, neocolonial dimensions of Northern-based gender identities (Jeffrey & Rumens, 2020). Moreover, it acknowledges how gender power relations are both historically and contemporaneously situated, and shaped by colonialism, globalisation, and neoliberalism (Wijesinghe, Mura, & Tavakoli, 2020). For example, imperialism sexualized the feminised Orient to serve Western political and

economic interests (McClintock, 1995). Thus, it regards gender theory as crucial to understanding the dynamics of imperialism, seeing the West's obsession with the feminised Orient as a male fantasy that reinforces imperial power relations, whereby sexuality is used as a metaphor for power (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017).

Methodology and methods

Study approach

Postcolonial theory offers an understanding of how colonialism shaped the historical representation of women as “other”, and how these representations were perpetuated by colonial powers. It can provide an analysis of colonialism's gendered effect on the culture and structure of society (Aitchison, 2013). Intersectionality is embedded in postcolonial feminism's ways of knowing (Carbin & Edenheim, 2013). It is a concept, that analyses women's lived experiences on multiple categorical axes, challenges the universality of these lived experiences (Crenshaw, 1989), and recognises the importance of different perspectives and voices. The integration of multiple social categories allows for the inclusion of previously occluded voices in tourism and mobilities studies. By giving voice and agency to some of those “othered”, we show that female Asian digital nomads, whilst still impacted by the Western sexualization of the feminised Orient, and power relations imbued by hetero/sexism, racism, and misogyny, are more than subordinated women.

Data collection

The study participants were recruited through snowball sampling (Noy, 2008) on Instagram and Facebook. Such platforms have emerged as a powerful medium for promoting work-travel imaginaries. In this research, hashtags were used to target specific digital nomads. The tags “travel”, “digital nomads”, and “Asian women” were used to identify women on Instagram who were then messaged directly. The lead author joined a Facebook group for Asian women digital nomads, where she posted about her research topic and received positive feedback from members. This resulted in four online and three telephone interviews, conducted during November and December 2021. Each interview lasted 60 to 80 min and was transcribed verbatim, following institutional data storage and security guidelines and ethics procedures. All were conducted in English, except one with a woman of Filipino descent, who spoke a mix of Visayan vernacular and English. The interviews probed: the women's past and present experiences as digital nomads; their negative and positive experiences; and their reflections on being a digital nomad. This choice of data collection method enabled us to amplify these women's voices and led to a nuanced understanding of their narratives.

Participant profiles

Qualitative researchers often address the question of ‘how many interviews?’ Answers vary by epistemological perspective, research context and question. In our study, we used a small and purposeful sample, since “in-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich” (Patton, 2015, p.470). We sought to explore the affective, relational, and lived experiences (McNay, 2004) of our participants. Our findings are case-specific and constructed through the rich and detailed conversations between the interviewer and the participants. We stopped at seven interviews as we sensed that new data was diminishing to a point where we could say saturation had been reached (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The last interview did not add substantially to our information. Table 1 provides anonymized participant profiles and their pseudonyms. To obtain a fuller understanding of the subject matter, we sought the perspectives of young, well-educated Asian women who were born and raised in Southeast and East Asia (four) and in North America (three); all are 29 to 34 years old, five are single, two have partners, and their professions include quality engineers, a designer, a technical writer, and a marketing consultant.

Data analysis

We identified, analysed, and interpreted different patterns of meaning in the qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). This approach generated codes and themes, that connected to our research question through the use of systematic procedures, in this case the six phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). After conducting a theoretical thematic

Table 1
Participants' demographic profiles.

Pseudonym	Age, status	Country of Origin/ethnicity	Current residence	Occupation	Time as digital nomad
Kai	29, Single	Philippines	Philippines	Technical writer/QA Engineer	3 years
Eui	32, Single	Canada/Chinese	Canada	Currently on sabbatical	6 months
Ishana	30, Single/ with a partner	USA/Taiwanese	Morocco	Technical writer	3 years
Zhu	26, Single	Singapore	Singapore	Head of Community	2 years
Seiko	34, Single	Vietnam	Malaysia	Graphic designer	4 years
Sukhi	32, Single/ with a partner	USA/ Chinese	Argentina	Freelance Software Engineer	3 years
Akemi	29, Single	Taiwan	Taiwan	Marketing Consultant	3 years

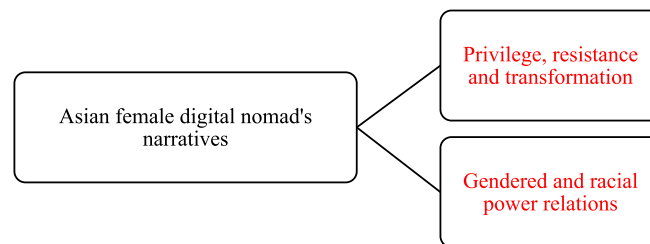


Fig. 1. Key themes.

analysis, two key themes were identified: privilege, resistance and transformation; gendered and racial power relations (Fig. 1). These themes were reflected in various ways, such as negotiating resisting constraints from the perspective of Asian women, discussing the transformative potential of living as a digital nomad, and reflecting on the power dynamics related to racial and male privilege in these women's work and leisure time.

Positionality and reflections

The first author is a younger Filipino woman, not from a privileged economic background, who has witnessed the challenges of travelling alone as a female digital nomad of colour. For her, becoming a digital nomad was an empowering experience, that presented opportunities to break down stereotypes and develop ambition. Her goal in conducting this study was to give voice to the lived experiences of Asian women like herself. It also gave her unique access to participants and enabled her to reflect on these experiences from her own position, which expanded her understanding of both dominant worldviews and women's subjugated perspectives. She realized that she could not adopt a distanced position in analysing her participants' experiences (Lykke, 2010), which led her to question her situatedness in the research process. Her experiences reflected those of the participants, and she recognised both her advantages and her biases in interpreting the data and acknowledged that being an Asian woman influenced her perception of the participants' experiences (Deutsch, 2004).

This study was a co-created process, shaped by the first author's and the participants' experiences related to gender, race, and ethnicity (Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, & Collins, 2005) and her co-authors' positionalities. One is a white female professor, and the other is a white male professor, both from the Global North. Both approached the study from a position of white allyship, defined as "a continuous, reflexive practice of proactively interrogating whiteness from an intersectionality framework, leveraging one's position of power and privilege, and ... engaging in prosocial behaviors..." (Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019, p.319). As anti-racist whites, both professors engage in mentorship and allyship to support and amplify the contributions of marginalised groups and colleagues, while acknowledging that to suggest that only certain groups can act as allies is to understand allyship in colonial terms (Almassi, 2022). They therefore positioned themselves as mentors and as researchers working alongside the first author in coalition on their shared project. Such reflexive practice amongst the three authors created a supportive environment centered on mutual respect, characterized by collaborative decision-making and open dialogue. This fostered a culture of reciprocal learning and growth.

Asian women digital nomads' experiences

Privilege, resistance and transformation

The Asian women in our study made the decision to embrace the digital nomad lifestyle as a result of their desire for autonomy. This choice brought with it a sense of privilege, transformation, and resistance. These women, coming from diverse backgrounds and cultures, aimed to redefine their lives beyond traditional family, societal, and workplace norms and carve out their own paths. For examples, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, Zhu was determined to seize the moment. She left Singapore to explore the opportunities, experiences, and people she would encounter as a digital nomad in Croatia. Her decision to become a nomad was driven by her desire to take control of her life and break free from 'cabin fever.' It was not just about seizing the day [carpe diem], but also an act of resistance against the status quo:

I think the easiest thing to reconcile with this is that you have choices, whether you want to stay or go, that's a choice and for me ... having that ability to decide what is best for me, what is better for me at this juncture in life. One thing I love doing as a digital nomad, is I try to collect definitions of love, living, home and what does it mean to be yourself. Hence, the decision to depart.

Seiko vividly reminisced about her yearning for adventure before she departed from her small Vietnamese town, where she felt confined and stifled. Venturing out into the world as a digital nomad became her escape from the constraints of her surroundings. She fondly recalled a profound conversation with a friend, pondering the life she now leads as a digital nomad - a financially independent, self-reliant single woman pursuing her own aspirations. Viewing her existence as an Asian female digital nomad,

Seiko recognised it as a hard-earned privilege, one that was made possible by the perseverance of the women who came before her. These trailblazers paved the way for the freedoms and opportunities that Seiko now treasures in her nomadic lifestyle:

Our ancestors fought for women's rights, and now we have the freedom to be ourselves, go where we want, and do what we want ... It's not just about me anymore; it's about how women can live fulfilling lives by breaking away from old scripts and cultures that take so long to change. We are doing things differently, and that's something to be proud of.

Seiko, a woman with a steadfast determination to carve her own unique journey, elaborated on how being a digital nomad afforded her the opportunity to do just that. She expressed that through her extensive travels and diverse work experiences, she encountered inspirational individuals who played a pivotal role in shaping her into the independent and assertive individual she is today:

I did find myself, but it's not like what other people think, like going to a very nice place and then you find yourself. I gradually created myself, and everywhere I go. Through every experience I have, I'm creating myself. So, myself now is a creation of my own, because I choose to go out and I choose to challenge myself and I chose to have my beliefs challenged and I changed what I used to be, and I think that's very powerful. I find that there is meaning in finding myself.

Kai, from the Philippines, described her journey to become a digital nomad as one of prioritising happiness over the materialistic pressures of society: "Choosing happiness over anything without feeling guilty... Living in a culture of capitalism, consumerism, [and] material things, it doesn't have to be material things that make you happy ... it is about taking YOLO [you only live once] responsibility". Kai's reflections make it clear that, while financial stability remained important, her willingness to embrace an inherently unstable work/lifestyle was not just a departure from convention but was also a courageous and economically astute decision.

For most of these women, being a digital nomad and travelling constantly allowed them to become comfortable with the uncomfortable. For Zhu, being and becoming a digital nomad was about embracing discomfort and disruption of routines. She explained that, within this discomfort, she was able to be intentional with her time, which lessened her regrets:

The biggest truth is when you are going solo when you are doing something that disrupts your routine, it's uncomfortable. It requests more effort because everything is designed for comfort and convenience... And you can have the opportunity to be a different version of yourself ... If you are solo traveling, you have so much more of that ability to be intentional with your time and how you understand it.

Privilege and personal transformations were equally apparent in these women's stories. They talked of how their nomadic lifestyle gave them autonomy to pursue their own choices and enabled them to be more open-minded, confident, tolerant, carefree, adaptable, independent, and self-aware. For Ishana, a Taiwanese-American, who identified more as a traveller than a digital nomad, her nomadic lifestyle gave her the courage and means to untangle her complex and difficult relationship with her mother, to seek intellectual and academic growth, and to challenge herself with extreme sports. For her, the nomadic digital lifestyle was a means to an end, a way to make "money to travel" and pursue her passions. While embracing the digital nomad lifestyle, Ishana found profound joy in forming friendships with other women on her travels. Accustomed to mostly male companions, she found the addition of female relationships particularly rewarding. "I found that forming friendships with local [Nepali] women wasn't always straightforward. While they were visible in the community, there was a certain distance to bridge before a friendship could take root." She fondly recalls the bond with a Nepali woman, which included meeting her family and learning embroidery - experiences that offered her a distinct kind of enjoyment and perspective. As a woman of Asian descent, Ishana recognised the privilege of being able to enter and appreciate women's spaces within different cultures. These interactions gave her enriching cultural exchanges and meaningful connections, a privilege in and of itself.

Other women talked of how becoming a digital nomad brought personal development through self-reflection. For Chinese-American Sukhi, digital nomadism made her reprioritise. "...[C]ertain things, I thought were important are less important to me and other things that... I took for granted are more important to me". Similarly, Akemi, a Taiwanese-born digital nomad, gained wisdom and awareness of the value of how she spends her time and what she chooses to focus on in her life. She reflects, "After travelling solo numerous times and being a digital nomad for, I suppose, three to four years, you truly learn to discern between what you want and what you actually need." Chinese-Canadian Eui recalled how digital nomadism made her world simultaneously bigger and smaller. She reflected on how it made her the person she is today - stronger, confident, and true to herself. For Eui, having the privilege to travel and work helped her gain insights into her own identity:

Connecting more deeply with yourself is like a tree that grows branches outward and then also roots inward.... I find that travel allows for both. It's seeing more broadly and ...appreciating even more, the full spectrum of humanity and the world and of nature. At the same time if you're traveling on your own, even more so the ability to get to know yourself more. Like, what are the choices, why am I going to these places, why am I talking to these people, what am I asking them, what am I looking for and how is that reflecting who I am?

These women's narratives represent their rejection of traditional roles and their paths towards becoming independent Asian women. This path, however, was not without constraints. Although Seiko's parents had accepted her nomadic lifestyle, they still wanted her to conform to traditional social norms. They were concerned that she was still single at 34 and wanted her to return

home, settle down with a husband, have children, and secure a conventional job with a steady income and pension. Ishana, who likewise eschewed traditional Asian family culture, also reflected on societal and familial pressures, related to marriage, family, and work. After becoming a digital nomad, she kept in touch with her family but distanced herself from filial piety despite missing belonging to her family. She made it clear that she was selfish with her relationships, that she protected what she called the “smaller” freedoms in her life and that she was selective about who she spent time with.

Boiling it down to the basics, it's about realizing that no one owes you anything, so you shouldn't behave as if they do. At the same time, you are under no obligation to owe them anything either ... it could be as simple as deciding to hang out in bar with friends or something bigger as family matters ... how we manage our personal boundaries, especially when faced with the expectations and demands of partners, family, and friends. The idea is to not lose oneself while fulfilling obligations to others and to ensure that one's own life and choices remain a priority.

These Asian women consistently resisted pressure to conform to the traditional life expected of them. In many Asian cultures, there is significant pressure—both external and internal—for individuals to adhere to cultural norms, such as fulfilling family obligations, upholding certain values, and prioritising the collective well-being over individual desires. Choosing a different path can be seen as creating a fissure in the established pattern of collective familial expectations (Li et al., 2024). Ishana's resistance was rooted in her commitment to prioritise her personal desires and choices. Her deep reflections on her digital lifestyle indicated that her preference for travel and experiencing new things was akin to carrying her ‘home’ with her:

Being a digital nomad doesn't necessarily mean you are uprooted; sometimes it's a conscious choice to unroot oneself. When you make this choice, the concept of 'home' shifts. It's no longer about your place of origin; instead, home becomes a reflection of who you are and where you find yourself now.

The Asian women in this study fully embraced their digital nomad lifestyles. They sought autonomy and resisted traditional societal expectations. Their nomadic journeys fostered personal transformation, leading to increased open-mindedness, confidence, and self-awareness. Despite societal pressures to conform, they prioritised personal happiness and growth over materialistic values and collective norms. Their lifestyle choices represented a broader cultural resistance. As we will see in the next section, while these women chose to pursue a lifestyle infused with privilege, resistance and transformation, they had to negotiate racial and gender power relations.

Racial and gender power relations

The women in the study discussed numerous occasions when they felt marginalised as they confronted racist, gendered, and sexist power relations. They experienced sexual and racial harassment, which exposed deeply rooted white privilege and racial inequality. Seiko spoke of the disrespect and prejudice shown to her by a male western digital nomad she was dating:

He started making a lot of offensive jokes, about me being Asian... so [he] started to think it's funny to just tell how he paid for sex... playing into the stereotype, being with an Asian woman, she is a gold digger, or ...a hooker... I'm like not an individual for them. I'm just an Asian woman and they feel it's fun to make up those things... the stereotype that I'm submissive, with good skin, staying young, flexible and that kind of stuff... this guy started to think it's funny to just tell how he paid for sex.

It took Seiko a long time to recover from this racist sexualization, while Zhu commented that, as an Asian female digital nomad, she was “sticking out like a sore thumb”, and that in interactions with men she was not seen as an individual. Zhu attributed this to her male-dominated profession. She was frustrated that, despite feeling privileged to work in the male-dominated tech start-up sector, she was aware that men held all the seniority and financial power. She described the exhausting and demeaning necessity of constantly justifying her presence in certain spaces and meetings, a situation that frequently required her to explain who she was and what she was doing. In this context, digital nomadism can be seen as a gendered space where the abilities and professional contributions of women are often scrutinised through the lens of gender and racial biases.

To deflect unwanted male attention in public spaces and invitations to drinks and parties, the women employed a range of strategies. Kai wore a fake wedding ring and invented travel companions. Akemi refused offers of drinks when she felt uncomfortable about a man. Seiko screamed when a man hugged her as she was walking home from a dinner party. The women developed counter-strategies when confronted by sexual harassment and racism in public spaces. Akemi developed female friendships as a way of looking out for herself. Zhu, Eui, and Ishana all tried to counter male stereotypes of the fragile Asian woman through their behaviour and dress. As part of her strategy, Zhu chose not to wear makeup and dressed down to avoid male attention, while Eui opted for comfortable clothing for a similar reason: “I'm just not that attractive when I'm travelling”. Ishana adopted a biker fashion style. The opposite of the stereotypical, invisible Asian woman that needs male support, she presents as strong and independent, someone at home in wild “male landscapes” (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). Ishana recalled how she used their own language to change the narrative when local men were trying to get her attention in the streets:

They usually greet me and try to talk to me and imply that they are interested, and I immediately respond in basic Arabic like greeting and phrases, hello how are you, how is your family, etc. Usually, those men who catcall, it's a sport to them. It kind of shocks them because you have broken their narrative.... and you have taken control of it.

The women encountered much overt and covert racism. Sukhi remembered being yelled at “from across the street... [people shouting] konichiwa [Japanese] or NiHao [Chinese]”. Ishana talked of biking in Copenhagen and being shouted at to “go back to China” or being told “Denmark is only for the Danish.” Kai reflected upon the advantageous position that digital nomads from western nations enjoyed in contrast to Asian digital nomads working in Europe. “Monetary value for a female and for an Asian in general to visit Europe is very low, compared to [a] European visiting Asian countries; that alone is inequality.” She addressed white privilege and reflected on how authorities treat Western and Asian nomads:

If you're an Asian, your time is limited to be a digital nomad in Europe, unlike EU nomads in Thailand. Moreover, they can sing away, sell posters or free hugs and they can have money and locals become amazed by it. If it's us, I think we will get deported, if we offer free hugs, I think we will be attacked or something.

Seiko observed that some Western nomads regarded their success as a sign of their superior social status, a perspective she found disheartening. She reflected on the impact of digital nomads on local communities: “They see it as proof that they are better than the locals who work for a few dollars per day... Yet, at the same time, these nomads contribute to the local economy through the tourism industry.” Her perspective underscores the multifaceted impacts of digital nomads on local communities. Seiko's comments stemmed from her experiences of racism and prejudice during her travels throughout Asia. Faced by racism while working as a digital nomad in her home country, she recalled encountering prejudices, stereotypes, and a lack of respect towards her country and its women. These incidents largely occurred when she was with Western digital nomads, and, as a result, she decided to socialise with locals:

A lot of places that I go to where they [western digital nomads] tend to hang out and if I get into the group, it's nice but gradually I kind of feel a little bit of racism. It's very subtle but it's also kind of not feeling like belonging with those digital nomad groups... when they find out that I am from Vietnam, they tend to hold onto prejudices instead of being open to learning about my country. I always try to exchange information about Vietnam and be an ambassador for my country because it is often portrayed negatively in the Western media due to the war. Unfortunately, some people have fixed and negative views about Asian countries, especially southern Asia.

While working as a digital nomad on the Amalfi Coast (Italy), Kai recounted an incident involving another Filipina and a Westerner, who looked at her with disdain. Kai described this as ‘crab mentality’: a behaviour amongst Filipinos of treating others' achievements with envy and disdain and denigrating other Filipinos' successes. In Bali, Seiko experienced what she perceived as prejudice based on negative reactions from locals and food service workers: “I feel prejudice in my face... I feel like they comment, they give me a look or something” because she was associating with Westerners. Seiko regarded this as internalized racism, and she described how the locals treated white foreigners more favourably than other Asians. Ishana, from the USA, had not deeply considered her Asian roots until she became a digital nomad and saw the preferential treatment Westerners received from locals in hotels and restaurants, which bordered on subservience. She recalled: “The hospitality industry treats western tourists... in a way that almost comes across as servitude.” This revelation sharpened her consciousness of her Asian identity and cultural distinctions.

These examples speak to broader themes of prejudice and discrimination. They illustrate how societal hierarchies and cultural contexts can influence attitudes and behaviors, contributing to complex and nuanced racial and gender dynamics. Overall, these Asian women digital nomads faced a range of racist and sexist challenges that underscored white privilege and racial inequalities. They encountered overt and internalized racism, and systemic biases that favour Westerners, forcing them to navigate identity, belonging, and privilege when attempting to carve out spaces of resistance and transformation within their digital nomadic lifestyles.

Discussion and conclusion

Our participants' stories reveal how their lived experiences as Asian female digital nomads are bound by a web of complex socio-cultural factors related to privilege, resistance, and transformation, and gendered and racialised discrimination in a neoliberal world. Most of the women were employed full-time or as freelancers to fund their travels and lifestyles. Their narratives reveal common motivations to become a digital nomad, namely: a desire to escape; to develop personally; to break free from stifling work and home environments; and to explore different cultures. They shared how their professional and personal autonomy made them feel empowered and in control over their lives, and how their interactions with others allowed them to develop personally and realise their priorities in life. It emerges that their professional, personal, and spatial autonomy is a result of freedom, self-development, and transformation, which confirms previous work on digital nomads (e.g., Hall et al., 2019; Hensellek & Puchala, 2021; Reichenberger, 2018).

When seen through a post-feminist lens, our respondents seem to personify its values of personal growth and freedom as they chose to lead a privileged life that resists traditional norms and embraces self-transformation (Dosekun, 2015). Much as discussed in the literature on Asian solo female travelers (Seow & Brown, 2018; Yang et al., 2018), they describe their experiences as empowering and relish their autonomy, seeing their travel encounters as a search for identity and agency. Viewing digital nomads from a neoliberal post-feminist angle promotes a culture of privilege and exclusivity, as it necessitates a certain level of financial security, advanced education, and/or greater access to technology (Aroles et al., 2020; Thompson, 2018). Moreover, this lifestyle can also provide a sense of comfort and familiarity akin to being at home. In the context of digital nomadism, “home” transcends the dichotomy between a fixed location and travel; it is instead a fluid concept of comfort, involving a series of constant rooting and uprooting that is woven into one's being. This redefines the traditional notion of home, moving away from a static physical space to one that is dynamic and integrated within the individual (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Seen through a feminist post-colonial lens, however, the freedom and agency of this lifestyle is bound by western male hegemony (Thompson, 2019a). These Asian female digital nomads embrace empowerment and transformation with ambivalence and relationality, and while they actively challenge them, their lives are circumscribed by socio-cultural, personal, practical, and spatial constraints (Mancinelli, 2020). Thus, their testimonies suggest that Asian female digital nomads do not exist in social spaces or structures where they can move freely, but rather in ones where they must negotiate complex relationships of meaning and power, which constrain mobility (Cresswell & Uteng, 2016). Our argument is therefore that these Asian female digital nomads' experiences juxtapose neoliberal post-feminism's notions of individual empowerment and agency with postcolonial feminism's thinking on global, socio-cultural power imbalances. Thus, we underscore the duality of post-feminism in our study of Asian women as digital nomads, exploring the paradoxes of their lifestyle. While the term 'post-feminism' is highly debatable, the gender and racial challenges faced by women in our research suggest that the goals of feminism have not yet been fully realized. Their search for personal and intellectual growth through travel and work means they have to confront gendered and racialised discrimination. Our study demonstrates this and adds a sense of realism to heavily romanticized characterizations of a lifestyle of wandering through picturesque places to connect with new people (Thompson, 2019a).

The Asian women digital nomads' lived experiences reveal that gender and race entwined to amplify the effects of each and create a new expression of constraint. This can be seen throughout the women's testimonies, and include instances of disrespect from service workers, local people, and western men, all subscribing to the idea that, as Asian women, they are willing to have sex with foreign western men and/or were sex workers, as discussed by Pyke and Johnson (2003). Our study also echoes the findings of Seow and Brown (2018) on Asian female solo travelers' experiences, Yang's (2017) work on gendered and cultural risk in travel, and the power of the male gaze on female solo travelers (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008). Sexualization and covert and overt sexual male advances greatly impacts women's travel experiences, and our participants discuss how they had been harassed in social and public spaces such as bars or streets. Still, the women in our study describe how they attempt to break and change heterosexist narratives through language or practice; for instance, many go to clubs or bars alone – an activity usually associated with men – although they are acutely aware of their surroundings and take steps to protect themselves. Such findings endorse previous work on the constraints on women's personal and spatial tourism freedoms (Reichenberger, 2018; Wilson & Little, 2005).

The concept of digital nomadism was originally founded on the perspectives and lifestyles of heterosexual white males, stereotypically termed the "digital bromad", leading to an unspoken norm of whiteness in this community (Thompson, 2019a). These Asian women discuss how whiteness is celebrated, while people of colour are marginalised. They even encounter local social disapproval when travelling with western companions in an expression of internalized racism (Pyke, 2010). Internalized racism as experienced by our female Asian digital nomads intersects with issues of identity, privilege, and representation. Despite the freedom and flexibility that digital nomadism offers, Asian digital nomads often grapple with internalized beliefs of inferiority and self-doubt arising from the prevailing Anglocentric norms and biases in remote working and the travel industry (Aydogdu, 2016; Thompson, 2021). This can manifest in a pressure to conform to Western standards of success and professionalism, and the internalisation of stereotypes about their own cultural backgrounds (Pyke, 2010). Female Asian digital nomads may also face challenges in networking, accessing opportunities, and building relationships within a predominantly white and Western-centric community. Addressing internalized racism in the context of Asian digital nomadism requires a conscious effort to challenge stereotypes, amplify diverse voices, and create inclusive spaces that validate and empower individuals of all cultural backgrounds to thrive and succeed in the digital nomad lifestyle. Such discussion of racial discrimination is absent in the digital nomad literature, and is a much less discussed topic in tourism research compared to sexual discrimination and harassment (Yang et al., 2018); as a result our findings expand racially blind scholarship on digital nomads.

Conclusion

In this study, we have examined how gender and race influence the travel experiences of well-educated young Asian women working as digital nomads. Using a post-colonial feminist perspective, we have sought to add to and challenge conventional understandings of digital nomadism, especially those neoliberal discourses that often frame digital nomadism. We have argued that such perspectives do not take account of how race, gender, and culture intersect to shape the experiences of female Asian digital nomads. Instead, we have foregrounded the concept of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) with its focus on the different dimensions of inequality and emphasised the embedded power relations that give rise to oppression and control in Asian women's nomadic experiences. We have also shown the heterogeneity of these experiences and how their constraints were a product of social and cultural constructs.

We have also demonstrated that, while digital nomadism can represent freedom, privilege, and individualism and create spaces of resistance and transformation for Asian women, it also exposes racial and gendered power relations. As much as freedom shapes their experiences, they are unable to escape the asymmetric power relations of the neoliberal order (Mancinelli, 2020). Unlike previous gender- and racially blind studies of digital nomads, ours suggests that emphasis on the intersection of digital nomadism and neoliberalism promotes an idealized notion of freedom and agency. Viewed through a feminist postcolonial lens, previous studies of digital nomadism are revealed as grounded in a Western, male-dominated approach, which needs counterbalancing with the perspectives of women of colour. By recognising and addressing the various dimensions of inequality that impact different groups of digital nomads, we can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive space for all.

Our study highlights the importance of recognising the diversity of women's experiences within the context of digital nomadism. A lack of intersectionality has limited previous conceptualizations of digital nomadism, which have failed to acknowledge the varied experiences of this lifestyle. Our study suggests that Asian women working as digital nomads face significant social and cultural challenges, particularly sexualization, fetishization, and racism, leading to ambivalence and relationality towards their empowerment and transformation. As with all studies, ours has limitations. It is case-specific and includes only the experiences of seven women with

different Asian cultural backgrounds. Future studies should expand on our findings to include a wider range of nationalities, ages, socio-demographic groups, and locations. There is also potential for exploring how single Asian women's sexuality affects their digital nomadic experiences, as well as the challenges of establishing romantic relationships while constantly travelling. These and other issues offer researchers fertile ground as this type of travel continues to expand, fueled by accelerating technological innovation and the evolving nature of work.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Patricia Aida Linao: Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing. **Bente Heimtun:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Project administration, Conceptualization, Methodology. **Nigel Morgan:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

References

- Ahmed, S., Castada, C., Fortier, A. -M., & Sheller, M. (2020). *Uprootings/regroundings: Questions of home and migration*. Routledge.
- Aitchison, C. C. (2013). Gender and leisure: Social and cultural perspectives. *Routledge*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203378748>.
- Almassi, B. (2022). Relationally responsive expert trustworthiness. *Social Epistemology*, 36(5), 576–585. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2022.2103475>.
- Almeida, J., & Belezas, F. (2022). The rise of half-tourists and their impact on the tourism strategies of peripheral territories. In J. Leitão, V. Ratten, & V. Braga (Eds.), *Tourism entrepreneurship in Portugal and Spain* (pp. 181–191). Cham: Tourism, Hospitality & Event Management. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89232-6_9.
- Arkwright, P. (2022). One billion digital nomads by 2035. *HR Magazine*, April 27. <https://hrmagazine.com/hk/hr-lifestyle-archives/one-billion-digital-nomads-by-2035/>.
- Aroles, J., Granter, E., & de Vaujany, F. X. (2020). 'Becoming mainstream': The professionalisation and corporatisation of digital nomadism. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 35(1), 114–129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12158>.
- Atanasova, A., Bardhi, F., Eckhardt, G. M., & Mimoun, L. (2022). Digital nomadism as temporal privilege. *The Routledge handbook of digital consumption* (pp. 22–34). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003317524>.
- Ateljjevic, I., Harris, C., Wilson, E., & Collins, F. L. (2005). Getting 'entangled': Reflexivity and the 'critical turn' in tourism studies. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 30(2), 9–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2005.11081469>.
- Aydogdu, F. (2016). Frame of new nomad. <http://neonomadproject.com/nomadology-read.html>.
- Bandyopadhyay, R., & Patil, V. (2017). 'The white woman's burden'—the racialized, gendered politics of volunteer tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 19(4), 644–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2017.1298150>.
- Bauman, Z. (2013). *Liquid modernity*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>.
- Carbin, M., & Edenheim, S. (2013). The intersectional turn in feminist theory: A dream of a common language? *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 20(3), 233–248. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506813484723>.
- Chow, E. N. -L. (1992). The feminist movement: Where are all the Asian American women? *US-Japan Women's Journal. English Supplement*, 2, 96–111.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2014). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 297–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613>.
- Cook, D. (2020). The freedom trap: Digital nomads and the use of disciplining practices to manage work/leisure boundaries. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22(3), 355–390. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-020-00172-4>.
- Cook, D. (2022). Breaking the contract: Digital nomads and the state. *Critique of Anthropology*, 42(3), 304–323. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275x221120172>.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. In K. T. Bartlett, & R. Kennedy (Eds.), *University of Chicago legal forum* (pp. 139–167). Routledge.
- Cresswell, T., & Uteng, T. P. (2016). Gendered mobilities: Towards an holistic understanding. In T. Cresswell, & T. P. Uteng (Eds.), *Gendered mobilities* (pp. 15–26). Routledge.
- Croll, E. J. (2006). The intergenerational contract in the changing Asian family. *Oxford Development Studies*, 34(4), 473–491. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600810601045833>.
- D'Andrea, A. (2007). *Global nomads: Techno and new age as transnational countercultures in Ibiza and Goa*. Routledge.
- de Loryn, B. (2022). Not necessarily a place: How mobile transnational online workers (digital nomads) construct and experience 'home'. *Global Networks*, 22(1), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12333>.
- Deutsch, N. L. (2004). Positionality and the pen: Reflections on the process of becoming a feminist researcher and writer. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(6), 885–902. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800404265723>.
- Dosekun, S. (2015). For western girls only? *Feminist Media Studies*, 15(6), 960–975. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2015.1062991>.
- Erskine, S. E., & Bilimoria, D. (2019). White allyship of afro-diasporic women in the workplace: A transformative strategy for organizational change. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 26(3), 319–338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051819848>.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>.
- Hall, G., Sigala, M., Rentschler, R., & Boyle, S. (2019). Motivations, mobility and work practices: The conceptual realities of digital nomads. In J. Pesonen, & J. Neidhardt (Eds.), *Information and communication technologies in tourism 2019* (pp. 437–449). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05940-8_34.
- Hall, P. A., & Lamont, M. (2013). *Social resilience in the neoliberal era*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hamid, S., Ali, R., Azhar, M., & Khan, S. (2021). Solo travel and well-being amongst women: An exploratory study. *Indonesian Journal of Tourism and Leisure*, 2(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.36256/ijtl.v2i1.125>.
- Hannonen, O. (2020). In search of a digital nomad: Defining the phenomenon. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22(3), 335–353. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-020-00177-z>.
- Hannonen, O., Quintana, T. A., & Lehto, X. Y. (2023). A supplier side view of digital nomadism: The case of destination gran Canaria. *Tourism Management*, 97, Article 104744. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104744>.
- Hay, J. (2000). Unaided virtues: The (neo-) liberalization of the domestic sphere. *Television and New Media*, 1(1), 53–73.

- Hensellek, S., & Puchala, N. (2021). The emergence of the digital nomad: A review and analysis of the opportunities and risks of digital nomadism. *The Flexible Workplace*, 195–214. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62167-4_11.
- Hermann, I., & Paris, C. M. (2020). Digital nomadism: The nexus of remote working and travel mobility. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22(3), 329–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-020-00188-w>.
- Hong, R. (2023). Road warriors to digital nomads: Portable computers, habitats, and remote work. *Cultural Studies*, 37(3), 508–535. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2021.1992462>.
- Jeffrey, H., & Rumens, N. (2020). Tunisian tourism, gender and the contribution of postcolonial feminism. In M. Novelli, E. Adu-Ampong, & M. A. Ribeiro (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of tourism in Africa* (pp. 143–153). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351022545>.
- Jordan, F., & Aitchison, C. C. (2008). Tourism and the sexualisation of the gaze: Solo female tourists' experiences of gendered power, surveillance and embodiment. *Leisure Studies*, 27(3), 329–349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360802125080>.
- Kannisto, P. (2017). *Global nomads and extreme mobilities*. Routledge.
- Khoo, S.-E., Bruce, J., Fawcett, J. T., & Smith, P. C. (2019). Women in Asian cities: Policies, public services, and research. *Women in the cities of Asia* (pp. 397–406). Routledge.
- Kim, Y. (2012). Female individualization? Transnational mobility and media consumption of Asian women. In Y. Kim (Ed.), *Women and the media in Asia the precarious self* (pp. 31–52). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137024626_2.
- Kuzheleva-Sagan, I., & Nosova, S. (2016). Culture of digital nomads: Ontological, anthropological, and semiotic aspects. In K. Bankov (Ed.), *New semiotics. Between tradition and innovation* (pp. 131–140). IASS Publications & NBU Publishing House. <https://doi.org/10.24308/iass-2014-011>.
- Li, T. E., Morgan, N., & Pritchard, A. (2024). Tourism, ageing bodies and Chinese femininity. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 105, 1–14.
- Lykke, N. (2010). *Feminist studies: A guide to intersectional theory, methodology and writing*. Routledge.
- Makimoto, T., & Manners, D. (1997). Digital nomad. Wiley. https://books.google.no/books?id=s_PoAAAIAAJ.
- Mancinelli, F. (2020). Digital nomads: Freedom, responsibility and the neoliberal order. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22(3), 417–437. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40558-020-00174-2>.
- Mancinelli, F., & Germann Molz, J. (2023). Moving with and against the state: Digital nomads and frictional mobility regimes. *Mobilities*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2023.2209825>.
- McClintock, A. M. (1995). *Imperial leather: Race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest*. Routledge.
- McElroy, E. (2020). Digital nomads in siliconising Cluj: Material and allegorical double dispossession. *Urban Studies*, 57(15), 3078–3094. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098019847448>.
- McNay, L. (2004). Agency and experience: Gender as a lived relation. *The Sociological Review*, 52(2_suppl), 175–190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2005.005>.
- Müller, A. (2016). The digital nomad: Buzzword or research category? *Transnational Social Review*, 6(3), 344–348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21931674.2016.1229930>.
- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305>.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (4th ed.). Newbury Park: Sage.
- Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. J. (2000). Constructing tourism landscapes—gender, sexuality and space. *Tourism Geographies*, 2(2), 115–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616680050027851>.
- Pyke, K. D. (2010). What is internalized racial oppression and why don't we study it? *Acknowledging racism's hidden injuries. Sociological perspectives*, 53(4), 551–572. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2010.53.4.551>.
- Pyke, K. D., & Johnson, D. L. (2003). Asian American women and racialized femininities: “Doing” gender across cultural worlds. *Gender & Society*, 17(1), 33–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08912432022238>.
- Reichenberger, I. (2018). Digital nomads: A quest for holistic freedom in work and leisure. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 21(3), 364–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2017.1358098>.
- Salazar, N. B., Elliot, A., & Norum, R. (2017). Studying mobilities: Theoretical notes and methodological queries. In A. Elliot, R. Norum, & N. B. Salazar (Eds.), *Methodologies of mobility: Ethnography and experiment* (pp. 1–24). Berghahn Books. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvw04gfd>.
- Schlagwein, D. (2018). The history of digital nomadism. *6th international workshop on the changing nature of work (cnow) 2018, San Francisco, USA The-History-of-Digital-Nomadism.pdf* (researchgate.net).
- Seow, D., & Brown, L. (2018). The solo female Asian tourist. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(10), 1187–1206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2017.1423283>.
- Teo, P., & Leong, S. (2006). A postcolonial analysis of backpacking. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(1), 109–131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2005.05.001>.
- Thompson, B. Y. (2018). Digital nomads: Employment in the online gig economy. *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*, 1, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.12893/gjcp.2018.1.11>.
- Thompson, B. Y. (2019a). The digital nomad lifestyle: (remote) work/leisure balance, privilege, and constructed community. *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*, 2(1), 27–42. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41978-018-00030-y>.
- Thompson, B. Y. (2019b). ‘I get my lovin’ on the run’: Digital nomads, constant travel, and nurturing romantic relationships. In C. J. Nash, & A. Gorman-Murray (Eds.), *The geographies of digital sexuality* (pp. 69–90). Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-6876-9_5.
- Thompson, B. Y. (2021). Digital nomads living on the margins: Remote-working laptop entrepreneurs in the gig economy. *Emerald Publishing Limited.* <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80071-545-520211013>.
- Toivanen, M. (2023). Countercultural lifestyle no more?: Digital nomadism and the commodification of neo-nomadic mobilities. *Mobility Humanities*, 2(2), 70–89. <https://doi.org/10.23090/MH.2023.07.2.2.070>.
- Wijesinghe, S. N., Mura, P., & Tavakoli, R. (2020). A postcolonial feminist analysis of official tourism representations of Sri Lanka on Instagram. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 36, Article 100756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100756>.
- Wilkes, K. (2015). Colluding with neo-liberalism: Post-feminist subjectivities, whiteness and expressions of entitlement. *Feminist Review*, 110(1), 18–33.
- Wilson, E., & Little, D. E. (2005). A “relative escape”? The impact of constraints on women who travel solo. *Tourism Review International*, 9(2), 155–175. <https://doi.org/10.3727/154427205774791672>.
- Yang, E. C. L. (2017). Risk perception of Asian solo female travelers: An autoethnographic approach. In C. Khoo-Lattimore, & E. Wilson (Eds.), *Women and travel: Historical and contemporary perspectives* (pp. 139–157). Apple Academic Press.
- Yang, E. C. L., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Arcodia, C. (2017). A narrative review of Asian female travellers: Looking into the future through the past. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 20(10), 1008–1027. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2016.1208741>.
- Yang, E. C. L., Khoo-Lattimore, C., & Arcodia, C. (2018). Power and empowerment: How Asian solo female travellers perceive and negotiate risks. *Tourism Management*, 68, 32–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.02.017>.
- Yang, E. C. L., & Mura, P. (2016). Asian gendered identities in tourism. In C. Khoo-Lattimore, & P. Mura (Eds.), *Asian genders in tourism* (pp. 6–22). Channel View Publications. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845415808>.
- Yang, E. C. L., Yang, M. J. H., & Khoo-Lattimore, C. (2019). The meanings of solo travel for Asian women. *Tourism Review*, 74(5), 1047–1057. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-10-2018-0150>.
- Zerva, K., Huete, R., & Segovia-Pérez, M. (2023). Digital nomad tourism: The experience of living at the destination. In A. L. Negrusa, & M. M. Coroş (Eds.), *Businesses for sustainable development* (pp. 15–26). Cham. Digital Nomad Tourism: The Experience of Living at the Destination | SpringerLink.
- Zhang, Y., & Tripathi, A. (2023). (other) backpackers and affective Europe. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2228975>.

Patricia Aida Linao is studying her second Masters at the UiT The Arctic University of Norway. She researches tourism, gender, marginalized identities, and sexuality. **Bente Heimtun** is Professor at the UiT The Arctic University of Norway. She researches the many facets of single women's tourist experiences and Arctic tourism. **Nigel Morgan** researches tourism, hospitality, and social inclusion, and place marketing and development.