# A closer look at the digital nomad lifestyle

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**Original paper:**

Thompson, B. Y. (2018). The Digital Nomad Lifestyle: (Remote) Work/Leisure Balance, Privilege, and Constructed Community. *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*, *2*(1–2), 27–42. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41978-018-00030-y

https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s41978-018-00030-y.pdf

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Tilburg University, Department of Communication and Cognition

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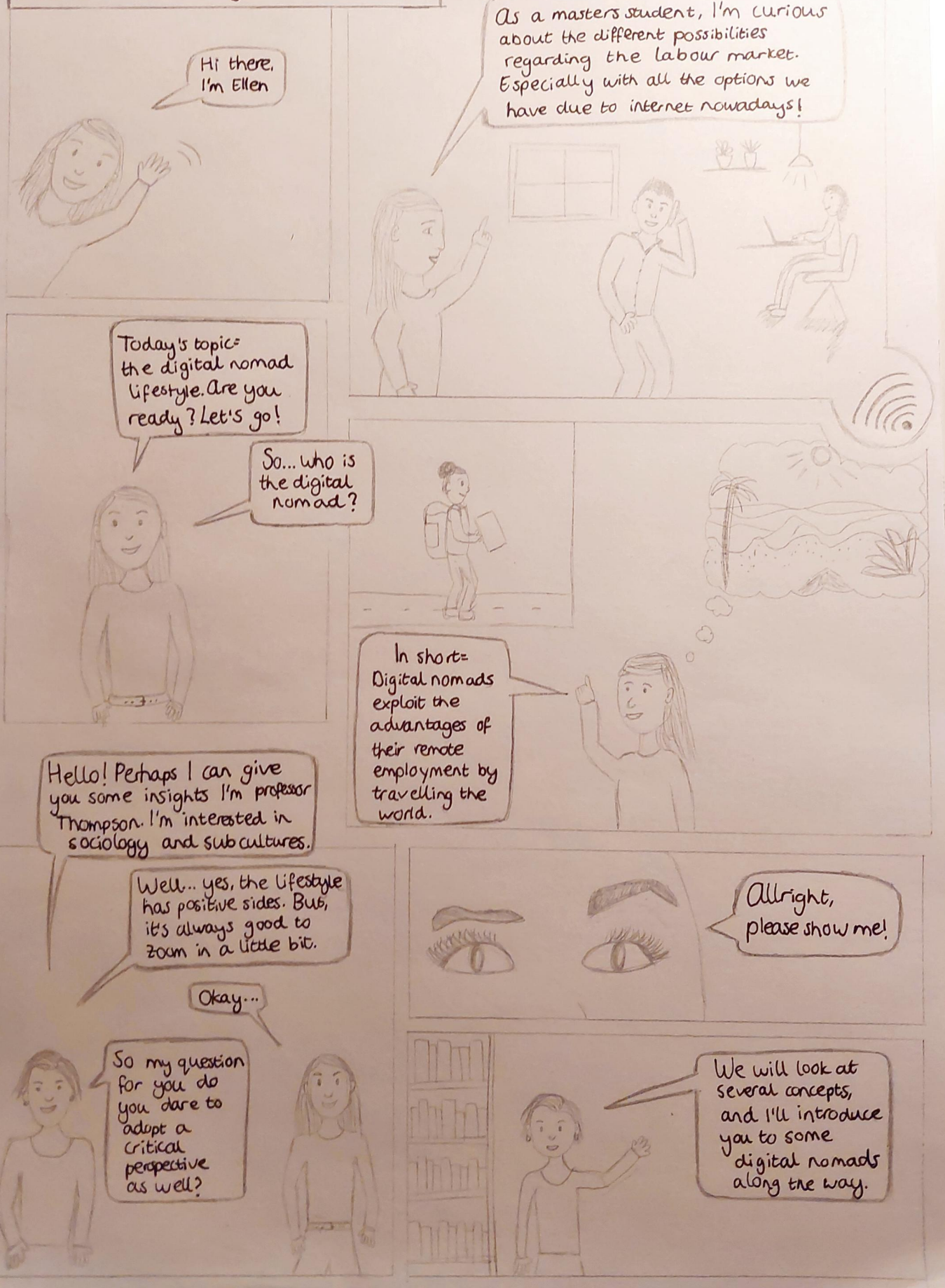
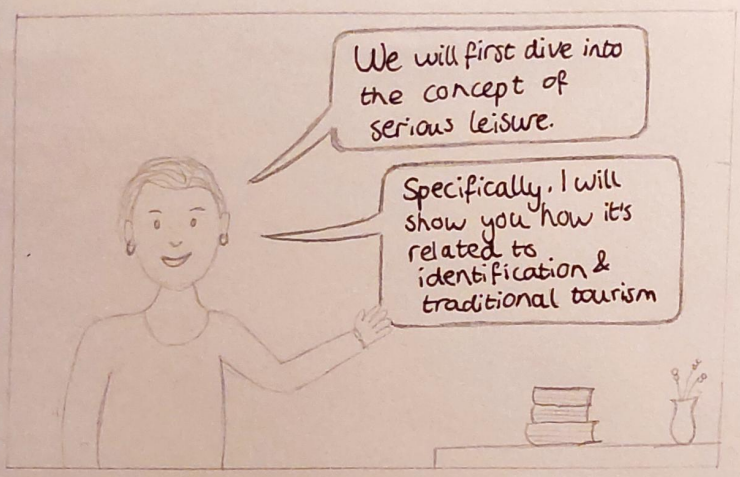
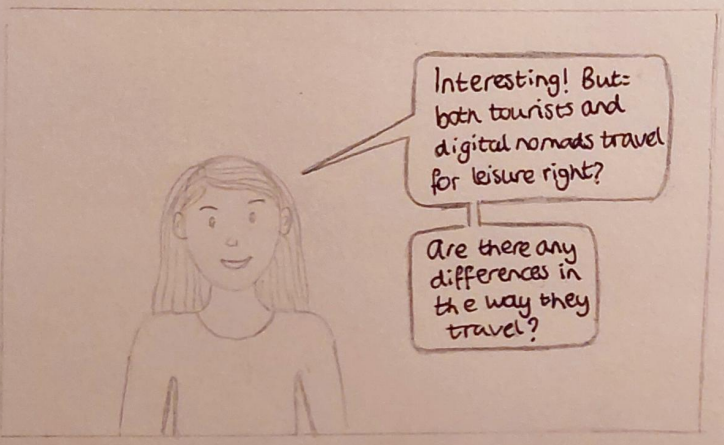
# A closer look at the digital nomad lifestyle



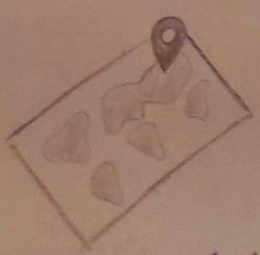


Digital nomads define themselves based more on their specific leisure interests, rather than focus on an identity based on their specific type of remote work that supports their lifestyle (Blackshaw, 2018).



Examining the habits of digital nomads, there is little distinction between digital nomads and traditional tourists or expats

Choice of location



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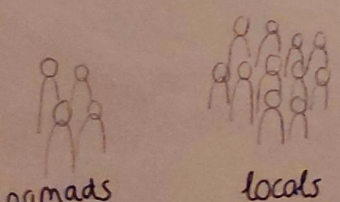
Segregated from local population

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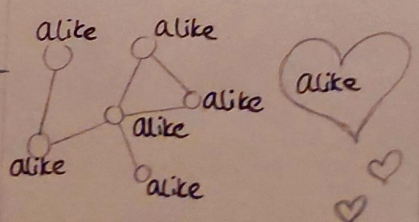
Network + dating in similar demographics

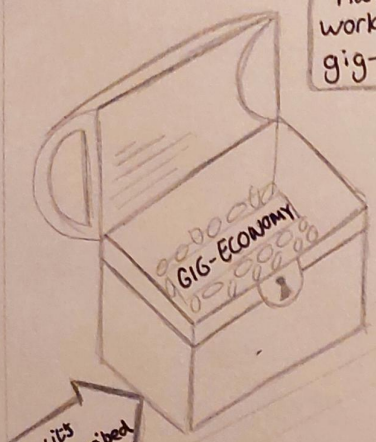



= Little difference!

# ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Next chapter!

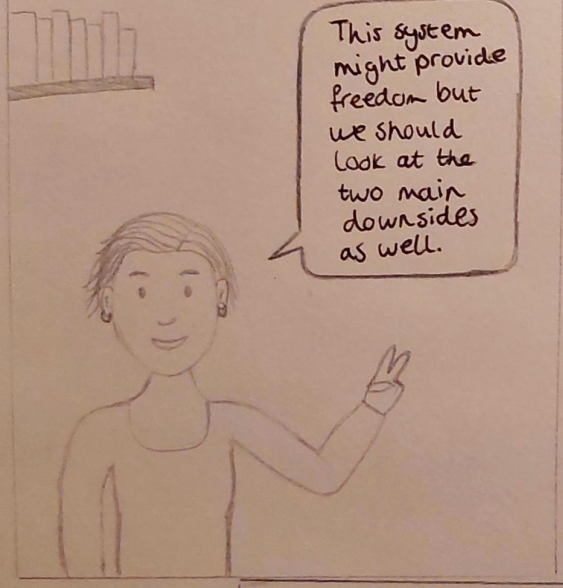
Many nomads work in the gig-economy




How it's often described

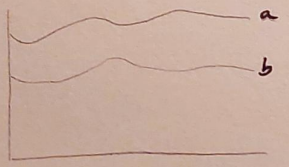
$ € €

Online platforms connect freelancers to employers in a just-in-time economy, providing one-time work.



This system might provide freedom but we should look at the two main downsides as well.

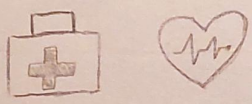
① The system encourages freelancers to work below the market rate or even for free (De Stefano, 2016)




a = market rate
b = gig-economy freelancers

> more gigs
> more ratings

② Freelancers must cover their own benefits

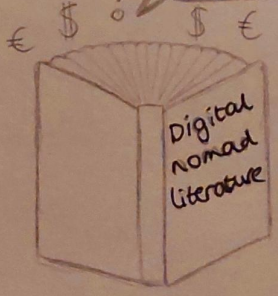


→ 67+ €€€

→ Operational costs

Remote work employment

"Great income potential"




VS

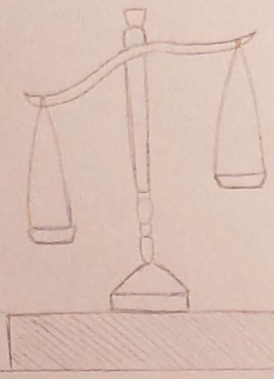
REALITY *

It's a world of precarious employment without benefits

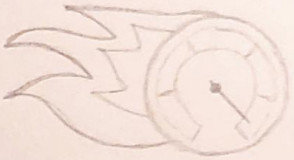
The majority of the people professor Thompson interviewed*

The next topic we should talk about is priviledge & inequality.

There are 4 things I would like to adress.

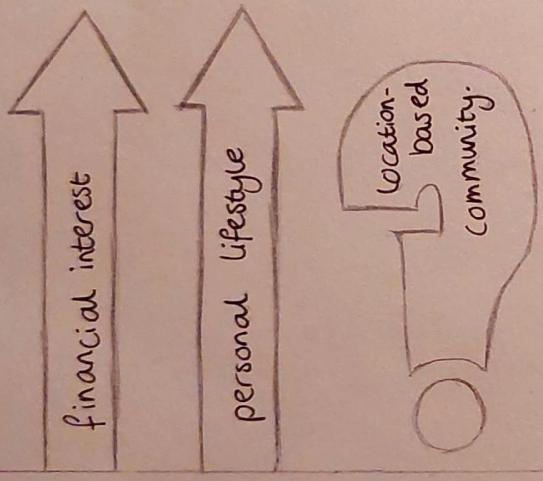


①

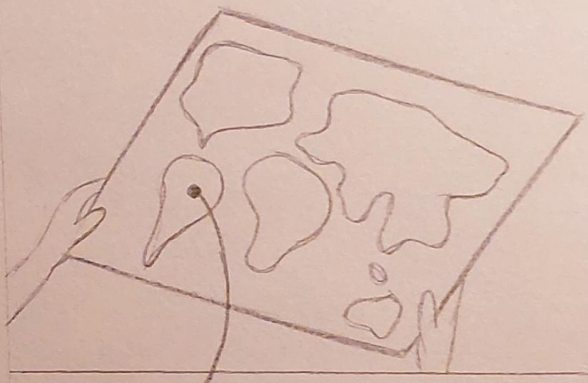


The digital nomad fully embraces the dominant capitalist logic of speeding up the desire for ever-new products and services (Aydogdu 2016)

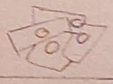
② It's a culture of hyper-individuality. Many nomads seek out ways to maximize their lives, over considerations to contributing to a location-based community.




③



Digital nomads select locations in which their demographic privileges are maximized. For example = their own currency. (Alexander, 2005).



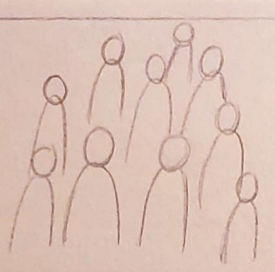
④ Digital nomads often ignore the importance of real connection with destinations and their people (Aydogdu, 2018)

I spoke to Alexandra about this issue.

alexandra

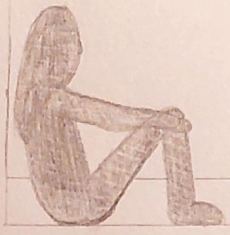
That's something I really need to work on. I don't engage much with locals.

It's difficult to bridge the gap between nomads and locals.



Let's zoom in on the community that digital nomads create!

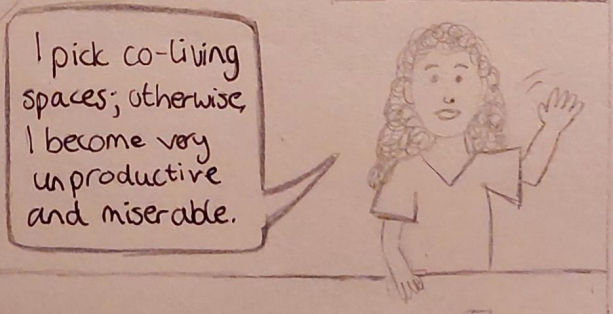
Digital nomads often cope with feelings of isolation and loneliness.

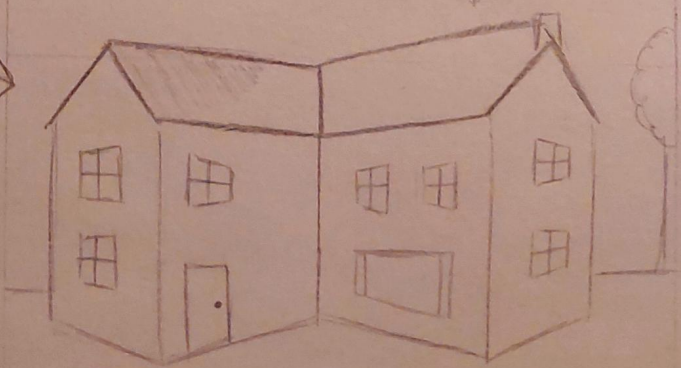


Most digital nomads haven't learned the languages or customs of their host countries.

Therefore, they seek out other digital nomads via online platforms.

They overwhelmingly seek a community that matches their own demographic background and lifestyle selection.





Digital nomads come together in several ways to reinforce their community (Gandini, 2015).

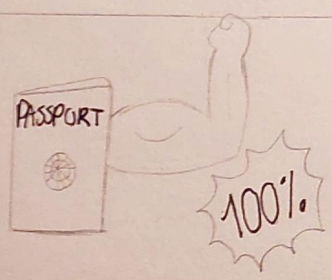
Interesting! Thanks for this explanation professor Thompson!

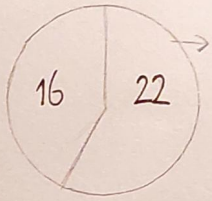
You're welcome! To finish, I will tell you a bit more about the people I've interviewed.

I spoke to 38 digital nomads. I met them at digital nomad events.

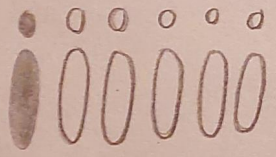
Some knowledge that might be useful:

A passports strength is measured by how many visa-free countries one can enter.

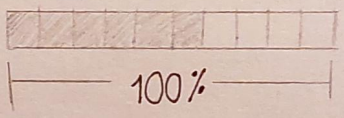



$\frac{6}{38}$ held a religious identity.



BA Degree




| | |
|---|---|
| racially white | $\frac{28}{38}$ |
| African descent | $\frac{5}{38}$ |
| Asian | $\frac{2}{38}$ |
| Mixed race Asian & white | $\frac{3}{38}$ |

Today we learned more about the digital nomad lifestyle, and we saw a critical side that is often overlooked in entrepreneurial literature.

I've definetely learned a lot today. I hope you did as well!

Although there are plenty digital nomads that don't attend these conferences, this gives an insight in the demographics of digital nomads.

THE END