

The main goal of the project and the rationale behind the decision to undertake this particular research topic

The main goal of the project is to explore changes and interrelationships between tourist mobility, tourist experience, as well as tourism planning and development, and the increasing prevalence of remote work and the advancement of information and communication technology in the 21st century.

The practice of combining work with travel is not a novel phenomenon. Examples of this phenomenon include business tourism, conference and congress trips, and work and travel programmes. However, the research planned within the project will concentrate on the combination of work with travel with the use of laptops and smartphones, given the possibility of remote work outside the place of permanent residence. This has been made possible by the advancement of information and communication technology and the proliferation of remote work during the course of the global pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It can be argued that a new type of tourist has emerged in the tourism market, simultaneously with a new type of worker in the labour market who exploits the concept of workation (work + vacation) or becomes a digital nomad. It is therefore important to adopt a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to this new form of tourism and work. The project is based on the assumption that research will be conducted on both the demand side, which includes tourists, workers, consumers, and the supply side, which encompasses tourism entrepreneurs, tourism organisations, territorial governments, and those responsible for tourism planning and development, as well as promotion.

Research methods

The project will employ research methods drawn from the social sciences, which are also utilised in the fields of socio-economic and tourism geography. The analyses will be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data. In order to ascertain the most appropriate plans and actions in terms of offers for workationers and digital nomads, the following sources will be subjected to analysis: regional development strategies of provinces (voivodeships) and tourism development strategies of provinces (voivodeships), and diagnoses and action plans of the Polish Tourism Organisation; and, using content analysis, press materials (including opinion weeklies, lifestyle monthly magazines), travel search engines and social media. The project will provide detailed information on the attitudes, experiences, and opinions of individuals engaged in combining work with travel through the use of online survey, in-depth interviews, and autoethnography, and field observation. Two distinct groups of interviewees will be selected for participation in the interview process. The first group of respondents will be individuals who, as part of their remote work arrangements, take advantage of workation or are digital nomads, in a similar manner to that which will be surveyed in advance. The second group will consist of individuals representing entities involved in tourism planning and development, as well as in promotion of tourism. This will include regional Destination Management Organisations, tourism associations, and municipal authorities. It will also include those running businesses in tourism who rent accommodation facilities. The interviews will facilitate comprehension of the diverse perspectives on the subject matter from both the demand and supply sides, as well as the advantages and challenges associated with workation and digital nomadism. The research among individuals who create demand for combining work with travel aims to gain insight into their tourist experience, their sense of place attachment, and any plans to relocate permanently. Additionally, the research will focus on the perspective of the supply side and its capacity for change, as well as on sustainable tourism and resilience tourism planning and development through the lens of workation and digital nomadism. This will be complemented by field observation in localities where workation and digital nomadism are available, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The research will be conducted in Poland.

Key expected outcomes

The research project will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of socio-economic and tourism geography. The findings will facilitate a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the positions held by both parties. The research topic of the project aligns with contemporary studies on tourist experience and tourism development in the context of socio-economic change. This project encompasses an investigation into the impact of information and communication technology, digital transformation, and the proliferation of remote work on tourist experiences. A comprehensive examination of the findings will facilitate the identification of strategies for sustainable tourism development and resilience, considering shifts in demand driven by workation and digital nomadism. This is especially crucial in regions and destinations where seasonal fluctuations in tourism have a significant impact on local communities and economies.