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Aktywność turystyczno-rekreacyjna seniorów na przykładzie metropolii Poznań

Tourist and Recreational Activity of Seniors on the Example
of the Poznań Metropolis*

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja preferencji i potrzeb w zakresie aktywności turystyczno-rekreacyjnej seniorów – mieszkańców Metropolii Poznań. W artykule przyjęto, iż seniorami określamy osoby w wieku 50+, podobnie jak w publikacjach Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego oraz dokumentach rządowych¹. Jest to grupa niejednorodna, są w niej zarówno osoby aktywne zawodowo, jak i emeryci, renciści czy osoby bezrobotne o różnym wykształceniu i różnym stanie zdrowia.

Artykuł ma charakter badawczy i dotyczy uwarunkowań przestrzennych, społeczno-ekonomicznych oraz demograficznych wybranych form aktywności seniorów w czasie wolnym. Do weryfikacji hipotez wykorzystana została metoda sondażu bezpośredniego, zastosowano technikę wywiadu z kwestionariuszem. Podmiotem badań było 538 seniorów (w wieku 50+) – mieszkańców Metropolii Poznań. Wyniki badań w dużym stopniu potwierdziły przyjęte hipotezy. Stwierdzono, iż dominującą potrzebą, warunkującą aktywność turystyczno-rekreacyjną jest poszukiwanie ciszy, spokoju i wypoczynku, rekreacja ruchowa, chęć poznania przyrody i kultury. Nie potwierdziła się w pełni teza, iż jedną z dominujących potrzeb podjęcia aktywności turystyczno-rekreacyjnej jest chęć poprawy zdrowia. Praktyczną implikacją artykułu jest wskazanie obszarów preferowanych przez mieszkańców do celów turystyczno-rekreacyjnych. Seniorzy wiedzą, gdzie można wypoczywać, jednak są to te najbardziej po-

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¹ Na przykład: Program Solidarność Pokoleń. Działania dla zwiększenia aktywności zawodowej osób w wieku 50+, Założenia Długofalowej Polityki Senioralnej w Polsce na lata 2014–2020, <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/> (dostęp z dnia 18.05.2017).

pularne i znane miejsca metropolii, jak Dolina Warty i okolice Jeziora Maltańskiego, choć chętnie również spędzają czas wolny blisko domu, w parkach miejskich, które są dobrze przygotowane do odpoczynku osób starszych.

W wyniku weryfikacji tezy zakładającej, iż seniorzy dysponują większą ilością czasu wolnego, który przeznaczają na aktywny wypoczynek turystyczno-rekreacyjny, ustalono, że ilość czasu wolnego wzrasta wprost proporcjonalnie do wieku i przybiera znaczącą wartość (powyżej dwóch dni tygodniowo) dopiero wśród badanych w wieku 65+. Nie przełożyło się to na czas trwania wyjazdów seniorów w celach turystyczno-rekreacyjnych, ponieważ z dłuższych wyjazdów (2 dni z noclegiem i więcej) relatywnie częściej korzystały osoby w wieku do 65 lat.

Słowa kluczowe: metropolia Poznań, aktywność turystyczno-rekreacyjna, osoby 50+

Summary. The aim of paper was to identify preferences and needs connected to tourist-recreational activity of senior citizens of the Poznań Metropolis. The main thesis assumes that the essential determinants of this activity are the needs of: health enhancement, intellectual, emotional and aesthetical experiences and acquiring knowledge about nature and culture. The paper reports the results of a research concerning spatial, social, economic and demographic conditioning of selected forms of seniors leisure activity. Hypotheses were evaluated using the method of direct survey with the technique of an interview with a questionnaire on a group of 538 seniors (aged 50 or more) inhabiting the Poznań Metropolis. The results of research rather confirmed tested hypotheses. As the most important was indicated the following: for finding peace, quiet and rest, for physical recreation.

The leisure time amount is rising in direct proportion to age of respondents and reach the significant value exclusively in group of people at the age of 65. The thesis about the need of health enhancement as the main reason for the tourist-recreational activity was not entirely confirmed.

Keywords: Poznań Metropolis, tourist and recreational activity, persons aged 50 or more

“Some are always old, others always young
it’s a matter of character and not the calendar...”

Jan Sztaudynger

Introduction

All of us will be seniors one day that is why our awareness of the nature of the ageing process increases. The issue of old age started to be presented in a new context in the literature of the 1990s. Nowadays, this issue is perceived as one of the most important, thus, researchers of many fields started to study it. Increasing number of seniors poses various challenges for

economic and social policies as well as for propagators of tourism and recreations in urban areas.

Who can be called a senior? Understanding of the old age differs depending on a society, world region, culture, times, and context. Defining the terms «old age» and «ageing» is not easy. Their meanings and natures are slightly different and they can be considered in many different aspects: qualitative and statistical, quantitative and dynamic (Rosset, 1959), individually (as a biological phenomenon, a stage of human life cycle), or as a phenomenon concerning certain population (Błądowski, 2012). It is difficult to clearly define the threshold of being a senior due to increasing life expectancy and different paces of ageing. Reaching the retirement age is conventionally considered the beginning of the old age. According to World Health Organization old age starts at 60 years of age, in the USA at 65, and in some studies at 70 or 55 (Piekarska, Piekarski, 2017). However, this division is not fixed. According to social groups of seniors (aged 50 or more), a senior is a person who knows life well but still wants to learn more (<http://mrs.poznan.pl/czytelnia-wirtualna/>). Drawing a line between a mature and elderly person requires consideration of economic, cultural, social, and health aspects (Górna 2015).

In this paper we assumed, similarly to publications of the Central Statistical Office of Poland and Polish governmental documents², that a senior is a person aged 50 or more. Seniors comprise a heterogeneous group including employees, retirees, pensioners, and unemployed persons of different education and health status.

Some published reports and elaborations stress the importance of the process of ageing of the entire population³. The Institute of Public Affairs lists the major issues that need to be taken into consideration in the process of preparing oneself for being a senior: lifestyle (including ways of spending free time), health, rehabilitation, employment, and elderly care (Szukalski, 2009). Recent years brought growing awareness concerning taking care of health and physical and intellectual condition. Entering the old age changes person's life situation and requires modification of some lifestyle elements.

² Examples: Solidarity Across Generations Programme. Actions for increasing participation of people over 50 in labour market; Guidelines for Long-Term Senior Policy in Poland for 2014–2020, <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/> (accessed on 18.05.2017).

³ Preparation for the old age (Szukalski, 2009), Europe until 2050 (Karpieński, 2007), Poland facing the ageing society (Karpieński, 2008), Geographical approach to population ageing... (Kociszewski, 2016), Tourism among elderly in Poland – social and demographic conditioning (Grzelak-Kostulska, Hołowiecka, 2012).

This issue mainly concerns work, social interactions, health issues, hierarchy of needs, new patterns of consumption and different customs (Koprowiak, Nowak, 2007).

Number of elderly persons is increasing with increasing life expectancy while the level of persons' disability decreases at the same time (Lutz, Scherbow, 2003). This trend led to creation of the idea of successful ageing and active ageing⁴ concentrating on seniors interested in their surroundings, and physically and mentally active (Rowe, Kahn, 1998). The essence of the active ageing theory is the fact that age does not affect individual's way of experiencing the world (Stelcer, 2013). Activity at any age is an important psychological and social need and elderly persons who continue active lifestyle maintain positive social interactions of different forms. Such interactions increase their life satisfaction (Halicki, 2006).

The goal of this paper was to identify actual preferences and needs behind tourist and recreational activity of senior citizens of the Poznań Metropolis. Meeting this goal required fulfilling several individual tasks:

- theoretical and empirical; this task consisted of identification of respondents and analysis of structure, properties, and selected factors conditioning tourist and recreational activity of the inhabitants of the Poznań Metropolis,
- cognitive; this task included identification of tourist and recreational areas and complexes where the elderly spend their time the most willingly,
- application; this task enabled determination of actions that could increase tourist and recreational activity of seniors in the Poznań Metropolis⁵.

The following hypotheses were assumed:

- basic determinants of seniors' free time activity are needs for health improvement, intellectual, emotional and aesthetic experiences, and learning about nature and culture,
- the Poznań Metropolis has areas well adjusted for tourist and recreational activity of seniors,

⁴ The term of successful ageing is based on the following criteria: low level of disability, high level of independent physical and mental functioning, active participation and interest in life (Rowe, Kahn, 1998), while WHO identifies the idea of active ageing with the necessity of maintaining optimal quality of life through: good health, independence and productivity, and professional and social activity (Walker, 2006).

⁵ Due to limited volume of this paper it will be discussed in details in a separate paper.

- seniors have more free time which they spend on active tourism and recreation.

The research was conducted on a group of Metropolis inhabitants aged 50 or more, while determinants of their tourist and recreational activity was the research subject.

The method of direct survey with the technique of an interview with a questionnaire was used to evaluate the hypotheses. Collected material was quantitatively and qualitatively verified and processed using statistical software SPSS. The results were presented in graphs and described in writing.

Spatial range included area of all the twenty two communes of the Poznań Metropolis. We also included tourist and recreational areas and complexes determined during works on the Concept for Directions of Spatial Development of the Poznań Metropolis (Kaczmarek, 2015) that play or are designed to play tourist and recreational role (Kaczmarek, 2015). Area of the Poznań Metropolis is not a uniform system concerning its administration and settlement as well as spatial and functional structure. It includes several physico-geographical units what results in diversified terrain configuration. A characteristic element of the landscape is radial arrangement of river valleys: Warta with its main tributaries, and lakes located in subglacial channels. Natural attractiveness is additionally increased by forest ecosystems of the Wielkopolski National Park and landscape parks (Puszcza Zielonka, Promno, Rogaliński), nature reserves, NATURA 2000 areas, and protection forests (Mizgajski, Zwierzchowska, 2015).

The research was conducted in 2015–2016. First, pilot research was conducted on a randomly chosen sample of almost 60 persons in order to evaluate the research tools. Then, actual research was conducted on a sample of 1600 inhabitants of the Metropolis.

Description of the sample

From March to September 2016, empirical research was conducted on a sample of 1600 inhabitants of 22 communes of the Poznań Metropolis undertaking recreational and tourist activity. Seniors aged 50 or more comprised 34% of the total surveyed population (538 persons).

Women comprised a little over a half of the respondents (55%). The biggest groups were fifty-year-olds (44%) and 60–64-year-olds (20%). The majority of respondents were people with vocational (55%), secondary (25%), and higher education (16%). Three quarters of the respondents lived

in cities and towns of the Poznań Metropolis (88%). Most of respondents lived with their spouses (80%). Most of them preferred spending their free time with their close ones, family (66%) and friends (15%), and every eighth person preferred spending time alone.

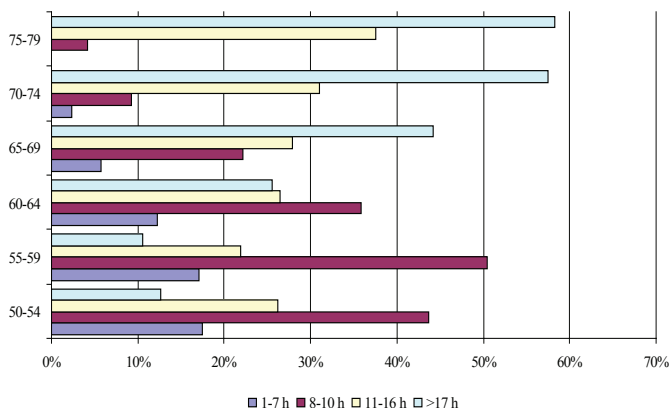
The respondents determined their current financial situation as good or average (46% and 44%, respectively). The majority was still working (54%), either in private (30%) or public sector (15%), or leading their own businesses (9%). Almost half of them already retired or was on a disability pension (42%).

Every fifth respondent had disability degree certificate stating mainly mild or moderate disability, including disrupted function of motor organs (9%) and hearing (8%) or sight (almost 4%) impairment.

Analysis of tourist and recreational activity of seniors on the example of the Poznań Metropolis

It is thought that elderly have a lot of free time. Seniors indicated free time in the amount of 8–19 hours, 2–3 days, or 4 days and more per week (each category indicated by one third of the respondents). The amount of free time increases with age, especially over 65, which is natural as many people retire at his age. Persons between 50 and 65 years old have 8–10 h of free time per week (figure 1).

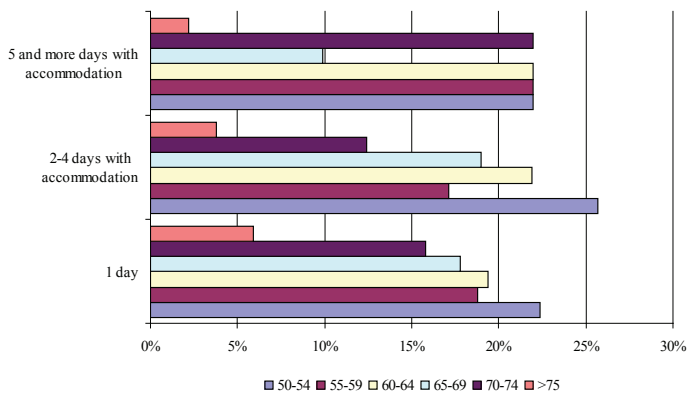
Figure 1. Amount of free time per week in 2015 declared by senior citizens of the Poznań Metropolis.



Source: own research

One-day tourist and recreational activity predominated (57%) among elderly, regardless of the age group. The oldest ones, over 80 years old, went only on short tourist and recreational trips. Almost every fifth respondent declared going on a 2–4-day-trip, and every sixth – on a longer trip, at least once a year. Weekend trips are the most popular among fifty-year-olds and sixty-year-olds (43% and 41%, respectively) (figure 2). The results of the research indicated that almost every surveyed senior of the Poznań Metropolis engaged in tourist and recreational activity in the closest proximity (94%).

Figure 2. Duration of 2015 trips of respondents, senior citizens of the Poznań Metropolis.



Source: own research

The main need of persons aged 50 or more was the desire for finding peace, quiet and rest (90% of indications) and for finding places allowing to get to know, to get in touch, with nature or culture (36%). This need increases with age. Physical outdoor recreation was important for 30% of the respondents. Motivation of almost every fifth person to engage in activity was also the need for: visiting relatives and friends, improving health, and emotional and aesthetic experiences (figure 3).

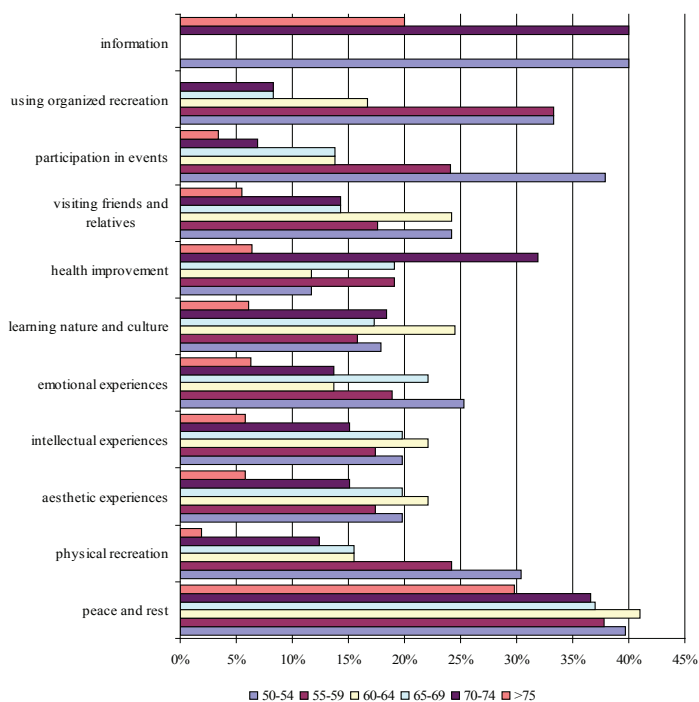
Keeping good physical condition for the longest possible time significantly influences the quality of life (fitness, self-dependence and independence) of every age group. Physical recreation was significantly more important for fifty-year-olds (54% of indications). Unfortunately, this need's place in the hierarchy of needs significantly dropped with age (to only almost 14%

among of 75-year-olds). In addition, many authors reported a problem of passive model of spending time predominating in Polish society and low level of physical activity and care for health (2009).

The need for get-togethers was important for only every fifth person in the age of 50–54 and 60–64 and declined with age. Interactions and social contacts were significantly more important for women (64% of indications). According to this research elderly people usually, one may say traditionally, spend their free time with family or at family's or close ones' places (Koprowiak, Nowak 2007).

Another need behind undertaking tourist and recreational activity is the need for health improvement. However, only persons aged 70–74 (32%) and women (63%) indicated it relatively more frequently. The observed interest in health improvement was sinusoidal, creating an impression of a flash in the pan starting at the point of crossing the symbolic age of 50, 60 years old and disappearing quite quickly (figure 3).

Figure 3. Needs according to respondents' age.

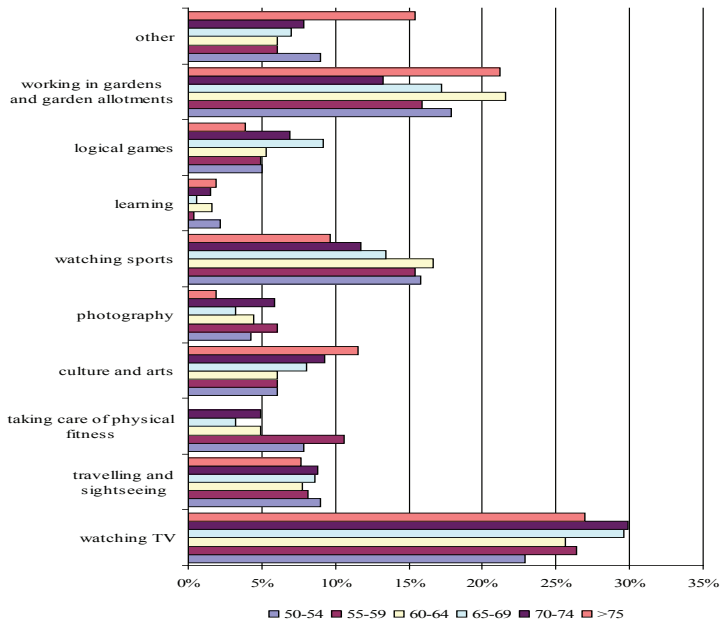


Source: own research

Seniors rarely indicated the need for participation in events available in the Metropolis (5% of indications). Women more often (62%) participated in such events. What was the reason for that? Was the offer of little interest to them or was it not reaching them?

Interests and hobbies keep seniors in good physical and mental health, prevent their marginalization, and give them satisfaction and possibility of meeting new people.

Figure 4. Interests according to respondents' age.



Source: own research

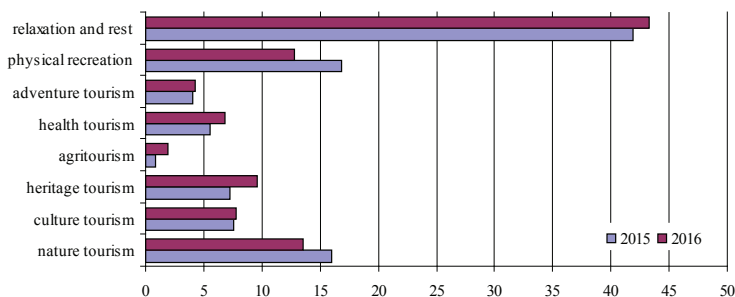
Unfortunately, seniors indicated watching television (60%) and sport programmes and events (33%) as their main interest relatively more often. The respondents willingly spent their time outdoors working in their gardens or garden allotments (40%). Relatively few persons aged 50 or more were interested in sightseeing and travelling (19%), and culture and arts (16%). Even less respondents (14%) indicated physical activity as a hobby. Persons aged 50 or more indicated also other interests, for instance, puzzle

games and crosswords (14%), photography (11%), learning (3%), and reading books, needlework, cooking, cinema, and theatre (17% combined).

Seniors, regardless of the age, spent quite a lot of time in front of TV, although they were less willing to watch sport events as their age increased. Working in gardens and garden allotments was an activity the most often indicated by people in the age of 60–64 and 70–74 (22% each) (figure 4).

Different types of tourism and recreation undertaken by seniors in the area of the Metropolis are in agreement with the presented interests and needs. These are principally relaxation and rest, nature tourism, and different types of physical recreation. Other forms of tourism were indicated significantly less often, however, slightly higher interest in heritage and health tourism was noticed in 2016.

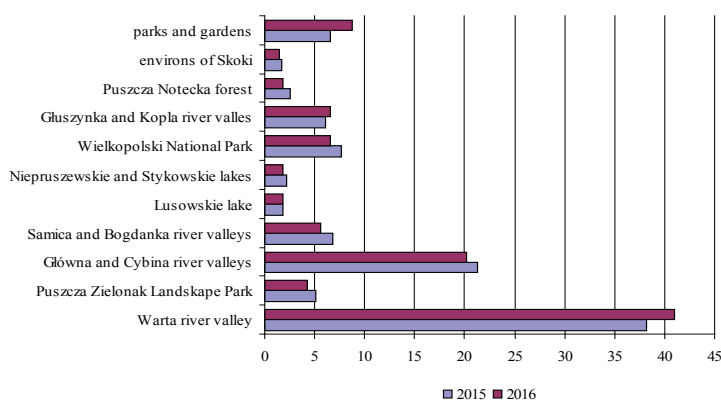
Figure 5. Forms of tourism and recreation in which seniors engage in the area of the Poznań Metropolis in 2015 and 2016.



Source: own research

Surveyed seniors preferably recreated in areas already recognised as the most attractive parts of the Poznań Metropolis. These were: Warta river valley (almost half of the respondents), river valleys of Główna and Cybina (every fifth person). Seniors visited areas located by rivers Głuszynka, Kopa, and Bogdanka significantly less often. They also took advantage of the beauty of city parks and gardens within the city of Poznań (figure 6).

Figure 6. Tourist and recreational areas visited by respondents in 2015 and 2016.



Source: own research

Summary

This analysis presents partial results of the research conducted in 2015–2016. Persons aged 50 or more were interested in participation in tourism and recreation in the area of the Poznań Metropolis and active outdoor recreation despite the group being very diverse according to age, level of education, economic status, and amount of free time.

Surveyed respondents identified their needs concerning tourism and recreation very specifically. The following needs were the most important: looking for peace, quiet and rest, physical recreation, and desire to learn about nature and culture. Hypothesis that one of predominating needs behind tourist and recreational activity is the desire to improve health was not entirely confirmed.

Seniors knew where it was possible to rest, however, they were choosing the most popular and known areas of the Metropolis, such as Warta river valley and surroundings of the Maltańskie lake, although, they also liked spending their free time close to their homes, in city parks that are well adjusted to elderly recreation.

Hypothesis assuming that seniors have more free time which they spend on active tourism and recreation was not entirely confirmed as well. It was found that the amount of free time increases proportionally to respondents age and is high (over two days per week) only among respondents over

65 years old. This did not translate into duration of seniors' tourist and recreational trips as relatively more persons aged less than 65 took longer trips (2 days and more with accommodation).

The Poznań Metropolis undertakes many initiatives for senior citizens. The Team for Policies for Senior Citizens, appointed by the President of Poznań, has been working for over six months. Its job is to create a document describing all the already completed and planned until 2030 projects for seniors. In addition, the city of Poznań and communes of the Metropolis have Senior Citizens Councils. These Councils concluded an agreement aiming at strengthening seniors position in local communities. Similar aim was posed by the Centre for Senior Citizens Initiatives annually organising integration events under the name "Senioralni". Since December 2016, it has been also organising meetings of the Poznań Forum of Seniors' Clubs.

These and other similar initiatives of the City Hall and other local governments as well as non-governmental organisations, associations, and clubs support the development of tourist and recreational activity of seniors of the Poznań Metropolis. Further research on these activities will allow to determine how well new initiatives of different organisational units of the Poznań Metropolis translated into increase of senior activity in this region.

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