

**THE ANALYSIS OF THE TOURIST MOVEMENT  
AND TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS OF DARŁOWO RESORT  
IN TOURIST OPINION**

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**Abstract**

The aim of this article was the analysis of the tourist movement and its attractiveness in opinion of the tourists staying in the resort during the holidays of 2009. Basing on the results of the questionnaire survey made in July 2009 on the beach the analysis of selected elements of tourist movement was made and the evaluation of its surface as the tourist destination for the holiday tourism.

**Key words:** tourist attractiveness, tourist movement, destination, Darłowo, tourist resort

**INTRODUCTION**

The seaside regions are the most visited tourist destinations. According to data of Institute of Tourism about 50% of Polish travels in country were realized in the seaside resorts. According to WTO in the world the coastline resorts are the most popular destinations between others tourist localities.

The Baltic Coast is the main region of holiday tourism in Poland. In spite of economical changes in Poland seaside resorts has been staying the main region of tourist holiday in last years. Tourists serve as a very important source of income for small seaside resorts. It is a result of the strong position of typical holiday 3 s tourism (sea, sun, sand). In the Polish seaside zone there are more than 60 coastline resorts. Most of them are located in the western part of the Baltic coastline, the middle coast is rarely visited in comparison to western and eastern part. The most often visited resorts in the middle Baltic Coast are Kołobrzeg, Ustka and Łeba.

## TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS OF DARŁOWO

Darłowo is situated in the eastern part of zachodniopomorskie region, in the powiat of Sławno. From the point of geographical location Darłowo is situated in the macroregion of the name Pobrzeże Południowobałtyckie and in the mezoregion named Pobrzeże Koszalińskie. The attractiveness of Darłowo results from its location and its values of typical holiday resort. According to statistic data of Polish Institute of Tourism, Darłowo is visited by about 200 000 tourists every year. Values of Darłowo cause that this town is visited by tourists only during the summer holiday season.

Darłowo is known as coastal resort but there are many other very interesting attractions. One can find some very interesting historical sights and monuments in the town from the Polish list of historical monuments.

To the most attractive and famous belong:

- medieval urban structure with the town hall and other streets,
- gothic castle of Pommeranian princes from the 14<sup>th</sup> century,
- gothic church from the 14<sup>th</sup> century with very interesting elements of its inside especially with tombs of Pommeranian prince Eryk and princess Jadwiga,
- the baroque town hall,
- the Big Gate – unique town gate of the medieval battlements in town from the 14<sup>th</sup> century,
- other fragments of medieval battlements from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century,
- the hexagonal St. Gertrude chapel, one of the few examples of the Scandinavian gothic in the Pommerania region.

Apart from these objects there are some other historical buildings and medieval watermill.

Besides it, from a dozen or so years Darłowo is known in the region as new tourism religious centre thanks to worship of Glory Mary of Fatima which is connected with the St Mary's church.

Darłowo is interesting and well known in Pommerania region for the water park "Jan", because of the salted sea water used in the swimming pools. Other interesting attractions in Darłowo are monumental lighthouse, drawbridge and small seaport. Besides it, surroundings of Darłowo are known for the wind power station with the highest mast in Europe (118 m). The important elements of tourist attractiveness are events. Every year a lot of tourists go to Darłowo to see traditional rally of military vehicles – the greatest event of this type in Europe.

Most of the tourists associate Darłowo with Polish coastline resorts – its tourism is characterized by seasonality, what is a result of climatic conditions. For determining the length of bathing season the criterion of water temperature is used. Every day with the temperature of water above 15°C is included in the length of bathing season. According to Lijewski et al. (2007) the length of bathing season in the middle part of Pobrzeże Koszalińskie is 70 days.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of this article was the analysis of selected elements of tourist movement in Darłowo and analysis of main determinants of its tourist attractiveness in opinion of people staying at the resort during holiday. For this purpose the analysis of tourist perception of Darłowo was made taking into consideration the travellers opinion about locality as tourist resort. The analysis was made on the base of the questionnaire interviews with tourists staying in Darłowo in July 2009. The interview was made on the beach and seaside promenade. There were 539 persons that took part in the research. The precise representative research in the beach is very difficult because of the dynamics of the tourist and recreationist movement on the beach. Therefore the respondents were accidentally selected for the investigation, all of them were adults. For easier selection of respondents and elimination of Darłowo inhabitants the investigation was provided on a labor day.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Darłowo is isolated from other Polish coastline resorts and from big cities of middle part of Pobreże Koszalińskie. Besides it, the locality is worse communicated in comparison with other seaside resorts (Kołobrzeg, Ustka, Łeba). For this reason it is much more seldom visited by tourists than other seaside resorts of the Baltic Coast.

Such situation caused the majority of tourists arrived to Darłowo for the first time. About 40% (201 persons) of the whole researched population (539 respondents) visited the village for the first time, for 26% (136 persons) it was the second visit and 24% have been in Darłowo in the past not less than three times and only 5% have been in the resort over ten times (Fig. 1).

It may be caused by worse accessibility of Darłowo in comparison with other resorts. Difficult access to the village concerns the public transport (bus and train). For this reason the most of tourists come to the resort by their own car (81%), using

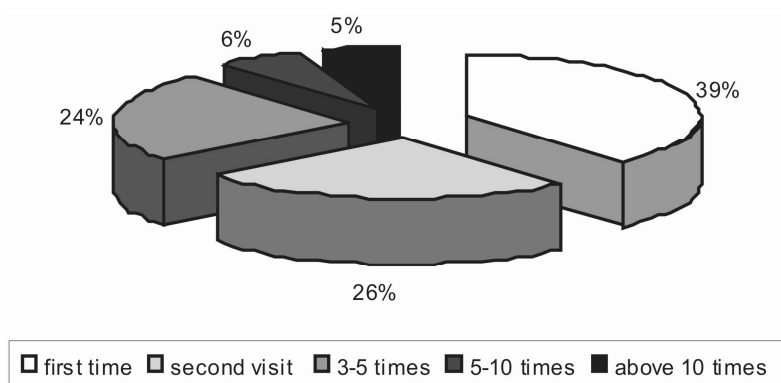


Fig. 1. Number of stays in Darłowo up to date

Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

main national road n° 37 running to Darłowo and regional ways n° 203 and 205, and only 10% by bus (Fig. 2).

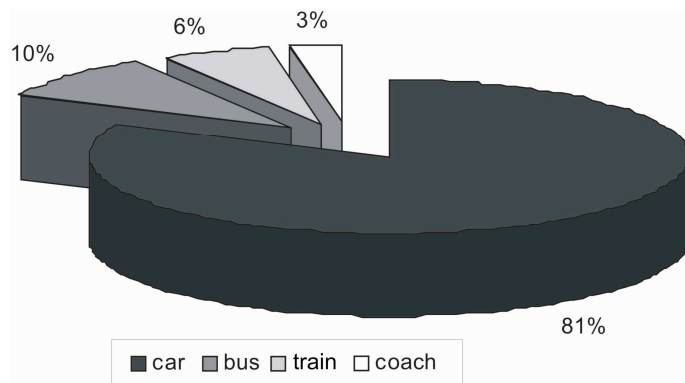


Fig. 2. The ways of transport used by examined group in their travel to Darłowo  
Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

The travels by train were incidental way of transport used what is caused by small number of train connections, especially direct ones.

Darłowo being a typical seaside resort (without spectacular tourist attractions) is above all meant for long stay holiday tourism. The examined tourists were asked about planned length of their stay in Darłowo. The most of them declared a stay for 4-7 days (40% of whole researched population), 31% declared a stay for 8-14 days, and 21% for over two weeks (Fig. 3).

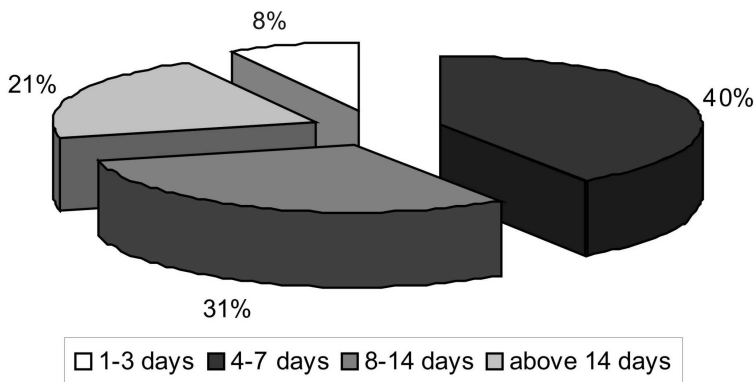


Fig. 3. The planned length of stay in Darłowo in examined group  
Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

As Polish tend to use travel agencies mainly when going abroad, the majority of tourists participating in the survey arrived to Darłowo individually. 72% stated declared they organized their excursions to Darłowo themselves, 25% declared their travels were organized by their families and friends. Only 3% of all travels were organized by travel agencies (Fig. 4).

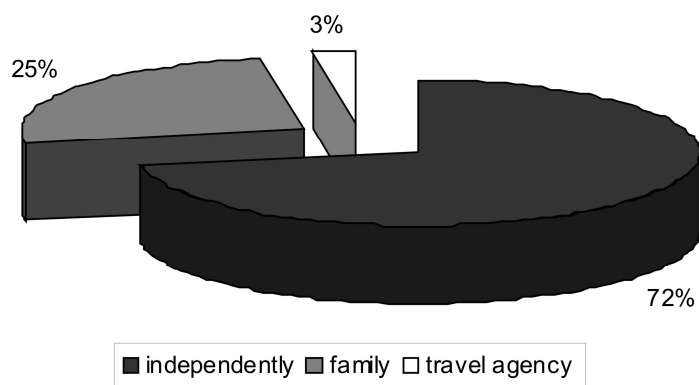


Fig. 4. Forms of organizing tourist trips to Darłowo

Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

Darłowo is a typical seaside resort destined for long stay holiday tourism. In 2009 there were in the locality 32 objects of accommodation with 4593 places (Turystyka 2010). The dominance of holiday tourism in the town causes the majority of objects and places of accommodation were seasonal. Only 8 from 32 objects of accommodation were yearlong objects. Besides it, only 763 (16.7%) from 4593 places of accommodation were all year round places of accommodation. The most of them – 3110 were included in the holiday centre. There were 480 accommodation places in hotels. Additional 510 places were in the holiday camp, 387 in the camp and in the tourist cottage so in the seasonal objects. The data clearly indicates the seasonal character of accommodation infrastructure in Darłowo. It is worth to notice that the poviat of Sławno where Darłowo is situated had in the same year the smallest amount of objects and places of tourist accommodation in comparison with other poviats of

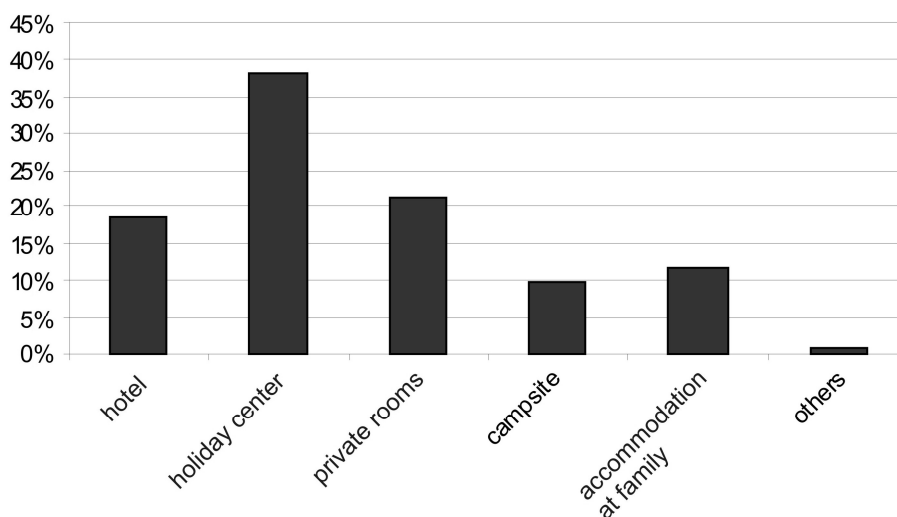


Fig. 5. Forms of accommodation used by examined group of tourists during stay in Darłowo

Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

zachodniopomorskie region. The analysis of accommodation forms used by examined respondents during their stay in Darłowo shows that they used the most often the holiday center (38% of all examined tourists – Fig. 5).

Besides it, above 20% of respondents used the accommodation in private rooms and about 20% in the hotel. Other types of accommodation were used much more rarely. Although there are a lot of interesting sightseeing and other attractions in Darłowo and in its nearest surroundings, the town is above all known as typical seaside resort. The dominant type of its attractions determines the free time spending forms during stay. (Fig. 6). The main forms of free time spending in seaside resorts are connected with the recreation on the beach and the sea. It is confirmed by the results of other works (Parzych 2009a, b, Matczak 2005).

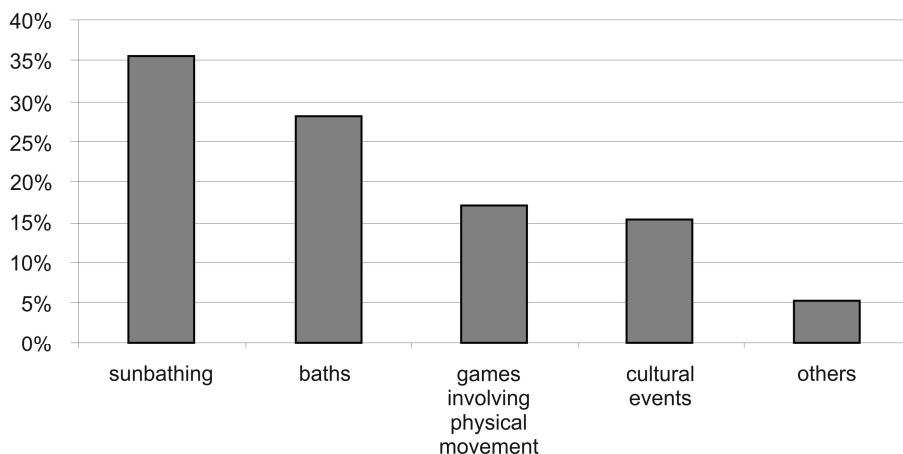


Fig. 6. Preferred forms of spending free time by examined tourists  
Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

In the examined population of tourists about 80% persons indicated different forms of recreation on the beach and the sea: sunbathing (35% of respondents), bath (27%), the games involving physical movement (17%), 15% of respondents declared participation in cultural and other events organized on the promenade and on the beach. Other forms of spending free time incidentally were indicated (5%).

Such answers confirm that Darłowo exists in tourists minds as typical seaside resort and additionally show character of main motives among the respondents coming to the resort.

For evaluation of tourist space perception examined tourists were asked about the main elements of tourist attractiveness of Darłowo. For this purpose they were asked to indicate five most attractive elements of Darłowo and its surroundings.

While answering tourists most often indicated concrete elements of culture and other attractions of tourist infrastructure and services. Generally they indicated 29 tourist attractions in Darłowo.

The water park “Jan” was the most often pointed out element of tourist attractiveness in Darłowo (115 answers – Fig. 7). Amongst other most often indicated attractions of resort were: castle (109 answers) and others monuments of architecture, es-

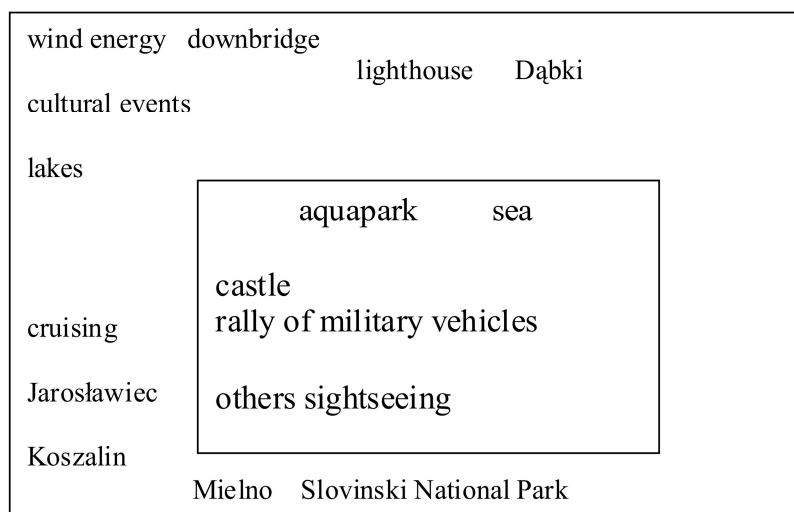


Fig. 7. Main elements of tourists attractiveness of Darłowo and its surroundings  
Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

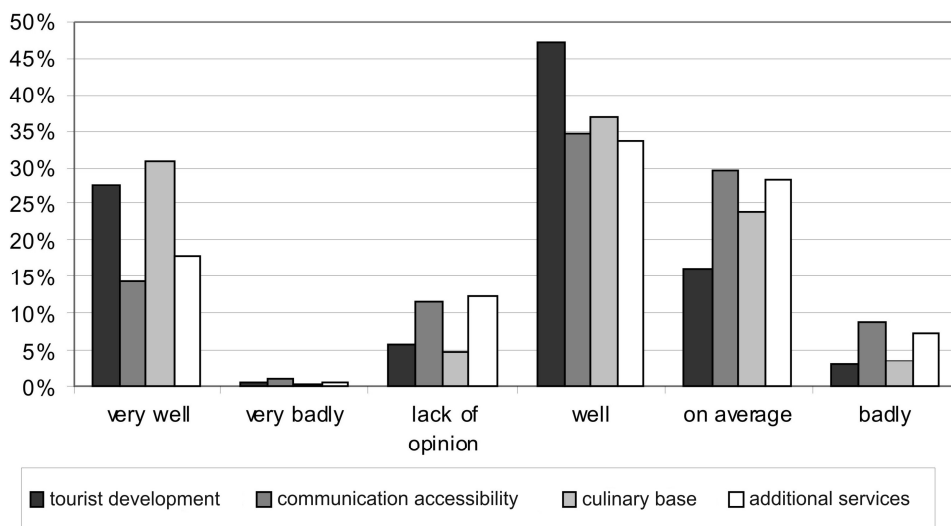


Fig. 8. The evaluation of elements of tourist development and others services of Darłowo as tourist resort

pecially Saint Gertrude chapel and Saint Mary's church. The important element often indicated by tourists was the sea (50 answers). Besides it, more and more respondents mentioned cultural event – Rally of Military Vehicles – 48 answers, wind energy stations – 38 answers, downbridge – 36 answers. The attractive localities and specific objects of surroundings were indicated more rarely. Somewhat higher amount of indications was connected with Slovinski National Park (21 answers). Some of respondents mentioned other localities of Darłowo nearest surroundings: Jarosławiec, Koszalin, Mielno, Sławno, Dąbki and lakes Kopań and Bukowo.

It is notable that in the opinion of many examined respondents Darłowo had not got any elements of tourist attractiveness (58 answers). Besides, 61 persons did not indicate any attractions of Darłowo and its surroundings.

The tourists were asked about evaluation of selected elements of tourism infrastructure in Darłowo. This evaluation included all elements of tourism development: accommodation base, communication accessibility, culinary base and widely comprehended additional services (Fig. 8).

Examined tourists judged the best the accommodation (above 70% judged very well or well). Besides it, the accommodation got least bad and worst opinions – 3% (Fig. 8).

Tourists well assessed culinary base of resort – about 65% respondents judged it well or very well.

Tourists rated the worst the communication accessibility. That element of tourist development got least well and very well opinions (only 50%). Moreover, the evaluation of communication accessibility got most of all bad and worst opinions amongst other elements of tourist development in Darłowo.

Such result confirms first observation concerning the isolation of Darłowo and its worse communication accessibility in comparison with other resorts of middle part of Baltic coastline.

For getting the fullest image of tourist perception of Darłowo respondents were asked to indicate the good points and faults of Darłowo as the tourist resort.

Examined tourists indicated 19 good points, some of them were connected with the seaside location, others were connected with the general aesthetic impression of resort's space, and there were some connected with selected elements of tourist development in Darłowo.

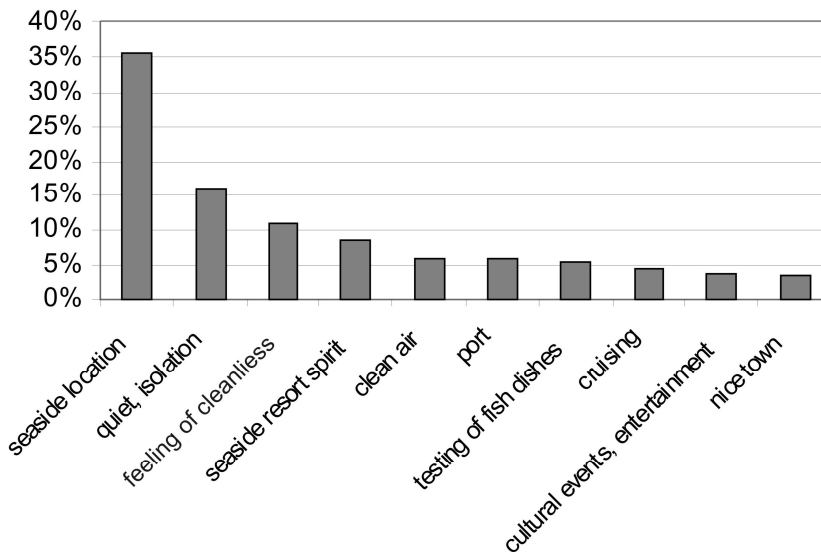


Fig. 9. The identification of main elements of tourist attractiveness of Darłowo made by people staying in the resort during holidays 2009

Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey



The most often indicated good point of Darłowo was the seaside location of the resort (36% of all answers – Fig. 9).

As next tourists pointed out quiet, peace and isolation from big cities and other crowded and noisy seaside resorts (16.2% of all answers – Fig. 9). Of such answers comes out a conclusion that some tourists have chosen Darłowo as the holiday destination because of smaller number of tourists in comparison to other seaside resorts. About 10% as the main good point of Darłowo as the tourist destination indicated the feeling of the cleanliness and safety, and for 8.7% respondents most important was the seaside resort spirit during the holiday. Moreover, tourists pointed out attractive offer of cultural events, tasting of fish dishes and cruising to Bornholm. From the other side in the opinion of 96 persons Darłowo had no good points as the holiday seaside resort.

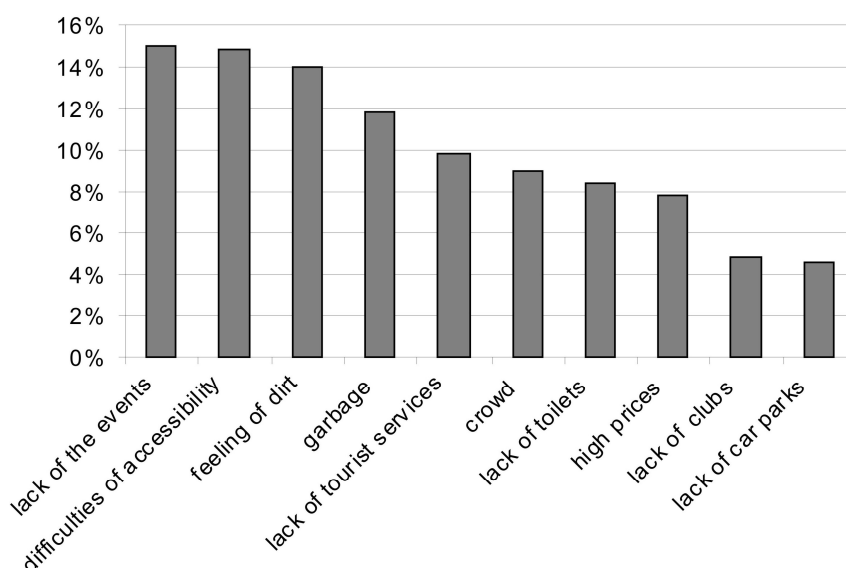


Fig. 10. The faults and lacks of Darłowo as the tourist resort in the tourist opinion  
Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

Tourists were asked about faults of Darłowo as holiday destination. Positive surprise was above 60% of all examined respondents mentioned Darłowo had not got any faults as the holiday resort. The others indicated 24 faults and lacks. The most often they indicated limited availability of selected services, limited communication accessibility – 14%, and limited offer of entertainment and cultural events for tourists during the holiday season – 15.1%. Amongst faults tourists more often indicated feeling of dirt, lack of waste baskets, lack of toilets and high prices of products and services (Fig. 10).

Basing on the results of the questionnaire surveys there were described the origin places of examined tourists staying in the resort during the holiday 2009 (Fig. 11). The most of them arrived to Darłowo from wielkopolskie region (over 20% of whole examined population). A lot of researched respondents came from the regions

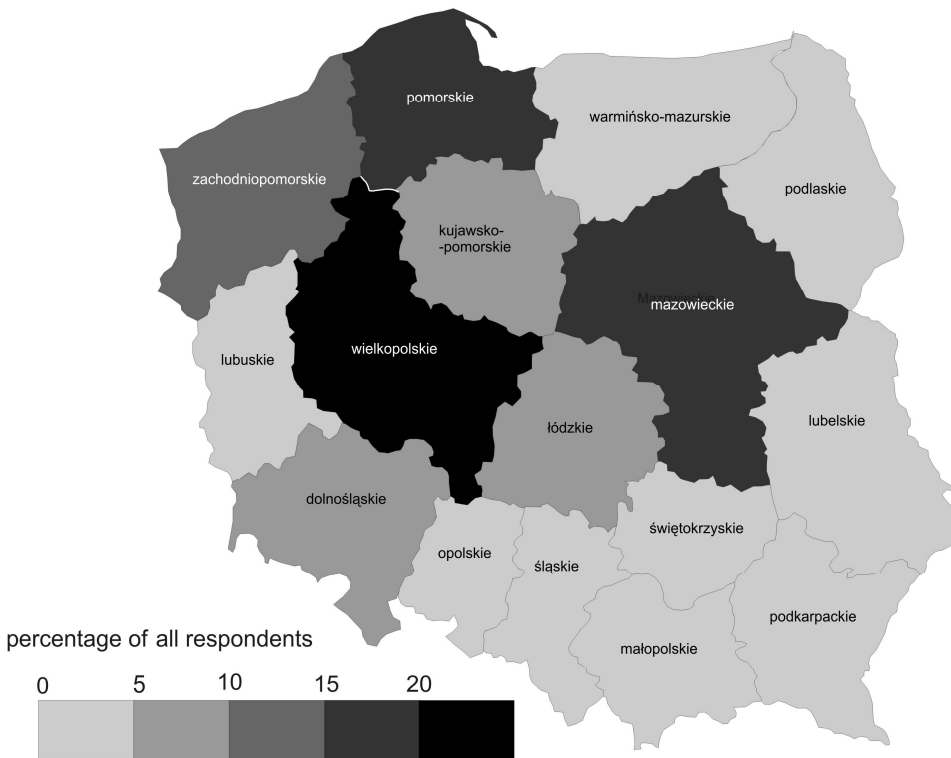


Fig. 11. The origin place of the examined group of tourists staying in Darłowo in 2009  
Source: own study based on the results of the questionnaire survey

of pomorskie and mazowieckie (15%). The surprising fact was a small number of tourists from zachodniopomorskie region. From the other side the small population of zachodniopomorskie region inhabitants may result from the isolation of Darłowo from the big cities of zachodniopomorskie region and poor accessibility of communication in comparison with others seaside resorts – Kołobrzeg, Łeba, Ustka.

The most of tourists in examined group came from big cities – Warsaw (53 persons – about 10% of whole examined group), Poznań (42 persons), Łódź (10), Słupsk (13), Gniezno (11), Piła (11) and from Wrocław (9 persons). Moreover, much more people in examined group were coming from the cities, less from the villages.

The map of the origin places of examined tourist staying in Darłowo in 2009 shows the majority of them came from the west part of Poland (with exception of mazowieckie region what is a result of large number of tourists from Warsaw).

The range of the spatial influence of Darłowo as the tourist resort was determined by the distance from Darłowo and size of city of tourists origin.

Darłowo is an important seaside resort located in the middle part of Baltic coast. The locality is mainly known as a holiday resort. There are a lot of tourist attractions in the locality, especially historical monuments and sights and well kept urban planning arrangement of the city. Besides it, water Park “Jan”, downbridge and international Rally of Military Vehicles rise the tourist attractiveness of the resort.

## CONCLUSIONS

Isolation of Darłowo from big cities and other crowded resorts and worse accessibility in comparison to other seaside villages cause that much less tourists visit Darłowo than other coastline Polish resorts. From the other side, Darłowo may be a proper alternative for tourists preferring peace and quiet and looking for the escape from the noisy and crowded typical seaside holiday resorts as Kołobrzeg, Ustka or Łeba.

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## ANALIZA RUCHU TURYSTYCZNEGO W DARŁOWIE ORAZ ATRAKCYJNOŚCI TURYSTYCZNEJ MIASTA W OPINII TURYSTÓW

### Streszczenie

W artykule dokonano charakterystyki wybranych elementów ruchu turystycznego w Darłowie oraz oceny percepcji przestrzeni turystycznej kurortu w opinii wybranej grupy wypoczywających w nim turystów. Analizę sporządzono na podstawie badań ankietowych przeprowadzonych na plaży w Darłowie w lipcu 2009 roku. Wykazały one, że Darłowo jest odwiedzane głównie przez turystów z największych miast w Polsce oraz turystów z województw sąsiadujących bezpośrednio z województwem pomorskim. Głównym elementem atrakcyjności Darłowa jako kurortu turystycznego jest jego położenie nadmorskie, a zwłaszcza izolacja od dużych miast oraz największych strumieni wakacyjnego ruchu turystycznego. Wśród wad Darłowa jako ośrodka recepcyjnego turyści najczęściej wskazują ograniczoną dostępność komunikacyjną oraz stosunkowo ubogą ofertę w zakresie dodatkowych rozrywek oraz imprez kulturalnych podczas sezonu.

