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Identification of overtourism in Poznań through the analysis of social conflicts

Abstract. The purpose of the article is twofold: to diagnose tourism-related conflicts occurring in Poznań by identifying their intensity and key parties, and to determine the capacity of the key stakeholders in the city's tourism system to mitigate these disputes. Because of its complex nature, overtourism in cities is a dangerous phenomenon, which is very hard to measure. Like other social conflicts, the intensity and development of overtourism can be measured by analysing tourism-related conflicts in the urban space, using tools offered by conflict management theories, especially Christopher Moore's Circle of Conflict model. Conflict issues identified by the author are associated with the uncontrolled consumption of the city's overall offering, which is manifested by the behaviour of city inhabitants, visitors from the metropolitan area, and tourists. The article contributes to the literature on overtourism by proposing an alternative method of identifying the scope and intensity of overtourism in the absence of objective measures and data. The author also proposes a method of evaluating key stakeholders' capacity for conflict management in Poznań.

Keywords: overtourism, social conflict, conflict analysis, circle of conflict, urban tourism, Poznań, Poland

JEL Codes: R58, Z32, Z38

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1. Introduction

Overtourism is a phenomenon affecting a growing number of top destinations; in the narrow sense, mostly with urban characteristics [Amore, Falk, Adie 2020; Dodds, Butler 2019a; Koens, Postma, Papp 2018; Żemła 2020]. Because of its complex nature, dynamic development and barely controllable effects, overtourism poses a dangerous challenge for those involved in destination management. The problem is also recognised in cities with a moderate intensity of tourist traffic, which have not yet experienced excessive tourist pressure but are interested in ways of assessing the potential threat or the real scope of overtourism. Poznań, an emerging urban destination in the European tourism market, catering to those interested in cultural tourism and to business travellers [Bródka, Zmyślony 2012], is one such destination.

A number of universal and feasible methods of dealing with overtourism have been proposed that involve various techniques of preventing or mitigating the problem [McKinsey, WTTC 2017; Peeters et al. 2018; World Tourism Organization 2018]. Nonetheless, since so much in this phenomenon depends on the local context, it is difficult to precisely identify its constituent elements and processes [Dodds, Butler 2019a; Koens, Postma, Papp 2018]. However, given that social impacts of overtourism have been discussed in the literature [Martín, Guaita Martínez, Salinas Fernández 2018; Milano, Novelli, Cheer 2019a; Novy 2019], with emphasis on tensions and conflicts related to the development of tourism, there is an alternative way of diagnosing the phenomenon. Many researchers dealing with the problem argue that protests and social conflicts are an integral constituent of overtourism [Dodds, Butler 2019b; Novy, Colomb 2019; Postma, Schmuecker 2017; Zmyślony, Kowalczyk-Anioł, Dembińska 2020]. Moreover, overtourism-related disputes expose problems within the local tourism system and shortcomings of urban tourism policies. They should be seen as warning sings signalling the need for corrections [Kowalczyk-Anioł, Włodarczyk 2017; Romero-Padilla et al. 2019].

Therefore, the aim of this article is twofold. First, it presents an attempt to recognise tourism-related conflicts occurring in Poznań, determine their intensity and identify key parties. Second, it provides an assessment of the capacity of key stakeholders in the city's tourism system to mitigate these conflicts. These objectives are phrased in the form of two research questions: (1) what conflicts related to the development of tourism have appeared in Poznań and what is their current stage; and (2) what is the capacity of the city's key actors to mitigate or resolve these conflicts. Christopher Moore's [2014] circle of conflict model provides the conceptual framework for the study because it is universal enough for analysing complex conflicts. According to Moore, such conflicts are usually caused by many

coinciding factors, only a few of which are actually related to the main problem. They must be identified before any appropriate methods and tools of intervention can be selected. The approach recognizes perspectives that conflict parties should become aware of in order to understand the issues and objectives of the conflict.

2. Literature review

According to Ko Koens, Albert Postma and Bernadett Papp [2018], overtourism is "an accumulation of different impacts and perceptions that relate both to tourist behaviour as well as actions by, and encounters with stakeholders as well as changes to the social, economic and physical environment" (p. 5). Overtourism leads "to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, which have enforced permanent changes to their lifestyles, access to amenities and general well-being" [Milano, Cheer, Novelli 2018]. Thus, it is the quality of the residents' life which is at stake in the overtourism struggle [Dodds, Butler 2019b; Postma, Schmuecker 2017]. As overtourism is a negative manifestation of the recent development of tourism in destinations, already existing conflicts and deficiencies could be the cause of this unsustainable form of development. Thus, urban tourism can be perceived as a conflict trigger or one of its context dimensions, given that frequent protests against tourism have deeper roots in broader urban change and social issues, i.e. "city rights, cost of living, housing affordability, the exclusion of precarious groups, and corporate developments damaging the fabric of local communities" [Milano, Cheer, Novelli 2019a; Novy 2019; Novy, Colomb 2019; Oklevik et al. 2019]. The residents' attitude often refers to objections or refusal to the further growth of tourism, manifested through social movements' activity [Blanco-Romero, Blázquez-Salom, Cànoves 2018; Martín, Guaita Martínez, Salinas Fernández 2018; Milano Cheer, Novelli 2019b].

Some researchers argue that overtourism is limited to few world-famous destinations and urban centres [Dodds, Butler 2019a; Koens, Postma, Papp 2018]. However, there is more evidence indicating that the phenomenon also affects less popular destinations, with less recognizable tourist brands, and its scope and intensity are always determined by the local context. Indeed, there are studies whose authors propose universal indicators of overtourism and techniques for limiting or preventing its development, ranging from the supranational to local level, some of which concern Polish cities [Amore, Falk, Adie 2020; Eckert et al. 2019; Fedyk et al. 2020; Koens, Postma 2018; McKinsey, WTTC 2017; Peeters et al. 2018; Pilarczyk 2019; Song, Kim, Park 2020; Szromek, Kruczek, Walas

2020; World Tourism Organization 2018; Zmyślony, Kowalczyk-Anioł 2019]. Proposed measures include residents' perceptions of encounters with visitors and their attitudes towards tourism development, changes in the cost of living and the local quality of life, number of visitors, the visitors' willingness to pay, seasonality of arrivals, nuisance behaviours of visitors, social media opinions and comments, transport intensity, increase in congestion, number and spatial distribution of tourist accommodation and short-term rentals, historic site prevalence, contribution of tourism to GDP, degradation of historical sites and environment. However, these measures refer to causes, development and effects of overtourism. Moreover, they require various and diffused data sources and primary research. Owing to financial and temporal constrains and limited sources available to destination managers, this approach is unfeasible in many cities. Besides, tourism destination researchers have not settled on one universal set of indicators.

Considering the above, given that social conflicts are both the most acute manifestation and the result of overtourism, the intensity of this phenomenon could be alternatively be measured using a tool developed in conflict management theories. As Gary T. Furlong [2010] notes, "managing conflict effectively is a simple two-step process that starts with how we assess the conflict we are facing, followed by what action (or inaction) we decide to take to address it". The circle of conflict, proposed by Moore [2014], is usually used to identify the structure of complex and multilevel disputes. The approach helps to recognise attitudes of conflict parties, relationships between them, shared and opposing values and the extent to which they can access and interpret information, while emphasising that revealed interests and structural conditions of conflicts are more important than the recognition of their actual merits. Also, the approach is also used to choose the entity with the highest capacity for managing the conflict and mitigating its causes.

3. Study Area and Method

Poznań is one of five major cities in Poland, with a population of over half a million living in the urban core and over 1 million in the metropolitan area [Statistics Poland 2020]. In 2018, 1.4 million overnight stays were recorded, with international tourists accounting for 27% of that figure [Statistics Poland 2020]. Five most frequently visited tourist attractions are located in the old town or in the city centre [Poznań Tourism Organisation 2018: 24]. The strategic management of tourism started in 1995 when the city's development strategy was formulated, including plans to build a balanced economy, open to investors, economic partners and tourists [Parysek, Mierzejewska 2006]. 2003 saw the establishment of

a public-private partnership called Poznań Local Tourism Organisation, which has become a crucial element of the local tourism system. However, since then, little has been done to assess the negative impacts of the development of tourism on other spheres of urban life. Initiatives in this area have been limited to academic studies [Kotus, Rzeszewski, Ewertowski 2015; Zmyślony 2011, 2012] or a general assessment of the quality of life in the city [Poznań City Hall 2013]. Consequently, still relatively little is known about the threat of overtourism and tourism-related issues in Poznań.

The study described in this article represents a qualitative approach, based on secondary and primary data sources. The local context of tourism development in the city was examined using information from grey and academic literature [cf. Bródka, Zmyślony 2012], electronic local press and informal interviews. Given the complexity of the subject, this stage was followed by a series of structured interviews to collect information enabling a more in-depth diagnosis [Yin 1994: 85].

Informants were selected purposefully on the basis of the researcher's detailed knowledge of the local government system and the state of tourism development in Poznań. In addition, informants were also selected using snowball sampling [Dragan, Isaic-Maniu 2013; Noy 2008] where first informants were asked to indicate other essential entities. This approach made it possible to identify informants representing seven key public, private and non-profit organisations that have an influence on the development of tourism in Poznań and are potentially parties to conflicts: the city council; the old town district council; the city administration; the city tourism organisation; tourism entrepreneurs representing local tourism associations; the social movement of local residents; the main publicly-funded cultural institution responsible for the offering and maintenance of the Old Market Square infrastructure [Pilarczyk 2019]. All the informants were ensured that their responses would be anonymised.

The interview questionnaire consisted of 14 questions. In order not to limit the scope of responses, most questions were open-ended. 8 questions also included a five-point Likert scale, a rating scale or a single-choice option. They were used to elicit opinions on the impact of tourism on the city's development and about problems and challenges arising from the development of tourism in Poznań. The other questions concerned the assessment of identified conflicts, i.e. their characteristics and intensity. This part of the interview was based on Moore's [2014] circle of conflict model. The causal factors of disputes were grouped into the following categories: values, relationships, data, structural matters, and interests [Moore 2014]. The self-assessment of predispositions referred to respondents' resources classified as autonomy (i.e. reliability as an impartial partner and the lack of authoritative or formal power), reputation (i.e. authority resulting from the knowledge of the causes and nature of the conflict; experience in tourism management; mediation and conflict management skills; staff quality), as well as organisational, financial, and time resources.

The survey was carried from May to June 2019 and included 9 interviews with 12 informants, lasting from 31 to 80 minutes. The descriptive and substantive content analysis was conducted to collate the results [Pilarczyk 2019]. Given the relatively low number of interviews, their design, and the complex nature of overtourism, the use of advanced methods of data analysis was deemed to be unjustified.

4. Results

Most informants said that tourism had had a positive impact on the development of Poznań, and there was still some untapped potential that could be exploited. Nevertheless, each interviewee was asked to indicate at least one issue or challenge concerning tourism. Nine problems and challenges arising from the development of tourism in Poznań were identified. Five of them were categorised as the most important for the entire city development (see Table 1): city nightlife; growth in short-time rentals; pollution of public spaces; the loss of local authenticity of the urban leisure offering; and anti-visitor policy of public cultural institutions.

Table 1. Problems and challenges related to the development of tourism in Poznań identified by the informants

No.	Problem/ Challenge	Number of indications (overall / as the most important problem)	Informants who mentioned a given problem/ challenge	Average assessment of the importance of the problem/challenge for the city's development (on a five-point scale)
1.	City nightlife	8/5	1. Poznań Tourism Organisation 2. The Old Town district council 3. Tourism entrepreneurs (2 informants) 4. The city council (3 informants) 5. The cultural institution	3.5
2.	Growth in short-time rental accommodation	5/1	1. Poznań Tourism Organisation 2. The Old Town district council 3. The city administration 4. The residents' social movement 5. The city council (1 informant)	3.6

Table 1. cont.

No.	Problem/ Challenge	Number of indications (overall / as the most important problem)	Informants who mentioned a given problem/ challenge	Average assessment of the importance of the problem/challenge for the city's development (on a five-point scale)
3.	Pollution of public spaces	4/3	1. The Old Town district council 2. Tourism entrepreneur 3. The residents' social movement 4. The cultural institution	4.5
4.	Transport infra-structure issues	4/0	1. Poznań Tourism Organisation 2. Tourism entrepreneur 3. The city council (1 informant) 4. The city guides association	2.625
5.	The loss of local authenticity of the urban leisure offering	2/1	1. The city administration 2. The cultural institution	4
6.	Anti-visitor policy of public cultural institutions	1/1	The city guides association	4
7.	Mass and low-budget tourism causing the crowding out of individual culture-oriented visitors	1/0	The city guides association	2
8.	Restricting tourists' entry to religious buildings	1/0	The city guides association	3

Source: own study.

Further analysis refers only to those issues considered to be the most important at least once (listed as 1-3 and 5-6). According to the informants, there were no conflicts directly caused by the excessive growth of tourism. According to the majority of the respondents, the conflicts were at an initial stage, which made it difficult to determine their scale and further development. Only three out of twelve informants claimed that the conflicts were in their manifest state. Asked to assess the relevance of various conflict features, the informants identified conflict length (4.1 on average), the complexity of the core conflict (3.66), and the number of parties involved (3.61) as the most significant. (see Table 2). They also

Table 2. The intensity of conflicts in Poznań

The complexity of the core conflict	Conflict length	Number of parties involved	The emotional level of the dispute	Parties' ability to resolve the dispute	Advanced negotiation procedures used by the parties	Inequality between the parties
3.66	4.10	3.61	3.05	2.69	2.03	2.88

Source: own study.

assessed that the negotiation procedures used in the dispute were not advanced (2.03) and that the inequality of the parties was not perceived as significant.

The conflicts identified by the interviewees were most often generated by party-goers and entrepreneurs (except the conflict related to the anti-visitor policy of public cultural institutions), located around the Old Market Square and the banks of the Warta River. The informants found it difficult to determine what percentage of night-time entertainment enthusiasts were tourists. According to them, this group included residents of the city and the Poznań metropolitan area. For them, tourists were only one category of people involved in these issues.

The nature and dynamics of the conflicts described as the most significant by at least one informant was mainly influenced by factors, such as different goals and expectations of the parties involved, different value systems, faulty communication (or lack of communication) among stakeholders, conflicting and competing interests, and intense emotions. Factors such as personal aspirations and particular interests of individual people, incorrect information on the subject of the conflict or varying degrees of access to this information were assessed to be of least importance. It can therefore be concluded that, according to the circle of conflict model [Moore, 2014], the conflicts were driven mainly by values and relationships.

The local government, the local community, as well as party-goers and local entrepreneurs generating this conflict, were identified as conflict parties. Nevertheless, given the identified sources of conflicts and the declared level of the key stakeholders' capacity to engage in managing and mitigating them (see Table 3), the most appropriate institution for this task was the city administration (i.e. the Poznań City Hall), with the Old Town district council and the city council as the best second-choice options. These three entities rated their conflict management capabilities regarding each of the five conflict sources most positively. Representatives of the Poznań Tourism Organisation also rated their capabilities relatively high, especially with reference to data conflicts. Self-assessment ratings given by representatives of local tourism entrepreneurs and the public cultural institution were the lowest.

Table 3. Informants' assessment of their own institution's conflict management capacity

Key stakeholders	Conflict management capacity concerning the following sources of conflict:					
	values	relation-ships	structural matters	data	interests	All catego-ries (mean value)
The public city administration (Poznań City Hall)	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.50	4.70
Poznań Tourism Or-ganisation	3.00	2.50	2.67	4.17	3.25	3.12
The city council	3.83	3.33	3.00	4.06	4.08	3.66
Local tourism entre-preneurs	1.75	1.50	1.50	1.42	2.13	1.67
The residents' social movement	3.50	2.00	3.00	1.50	2.25	2.45
The cultural institu-tion	2.00	1.50	1.33	2.33	1.75	1.78
The Old Town dis-trict council	4.00	3.50	3.67	4.50	3.50	3.83

Source: own study.

The informants also assessed resources of their own institution regarding conflict management (see Table 4). In this self-assessment, representatives of the city council, the city administration and the Old Town district council gave themselves the highest ratings, i.e. the average of over 3.5 on the scale from 1 to 5. By contrast, representatives of the residents' social movement, tourism entrepreneurs and the cultural institution assessed their resources much less positively, i.e. with an average below 3 on the 1-5 scale. Representatives of the Poznań Tourism Organisation and the Old Town district council had the most balanced assessment of their capabilities. In particular, they gave themselves high ratings on credibility and autonomy, while acknowledging their limited tangible resources. In this context, there is a certain pattern in the answers given by the majority of informants. With the exception of the residents' social movement and the cultural institution, representatives of the other entities valued their intangible resources (autonomy and credibility, knowledge-based reputation, staff qualifications and inter-organisational skills) higher than the tangible ones (i.e. time, financial and organisational constraints).

The informants were also asked to indicate one institution they regarded as best suited to act as a conflict manager in the identified disputes. The city admin-

Table 4. Informants' assessment of their own institution's resources relevant in conflict management

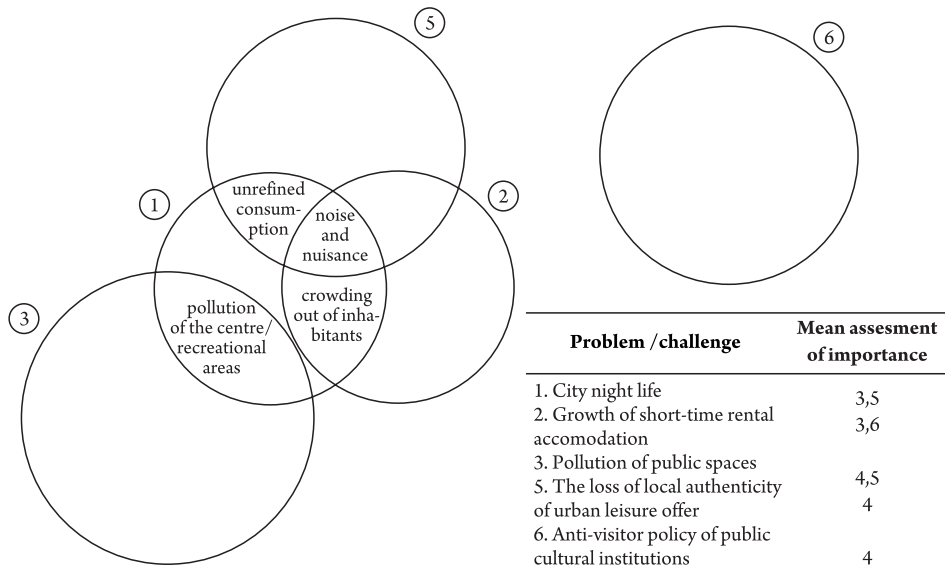| Key stakeholders	Categories of resources			
	Autonomy and credibility	Reputation	Tangible resources	All categories (mean value)
The public city administration (Poznań City Hall)	3.50	4.00	3.00	3.50
Poznań Tourism Organisation	4.00	3.67	2.50	3.39
The city council	3.67	4.22	3.08	3.66
Local tourism entrepreneurs	4.00	2.33	1.00	2.44
The residents' social movement	1.50	2.33	2.00	1.94
The cultural institution	2.00	3.67	2.25	2.64
The Old Town district council	3.50	3.67	2.50	3.22

Source: own study.

istration received the highest number of indications (4). Only two informants indicated the Poznań Tourism Organisation. Three respondents insisted on the involvement of external mediators as conflict managers.

5. Findings and discussion

Judging by informants' opinions about conflict-inducing effects of the development of tourism in Poznań, the identified issues were not due to overtourism. Nevertheless, they should be perceived from a wider perspective, i.e. as interrelated factors. City nightlife, the rise of short-term rental accommodation, and, finally, the pollution of public space and the loss of local authenticity of urban leisure offering are substantively convergent and constitute a broader issue (see Fig. 1). Therefore, we argue that these conflicts should be perceived as examples of uncontrolled consumption of the city's overall offering and are not related to the phenomenon of overtourism, as they were evident in the behaviour of city inhabitants, visitors from the metropolitan area and tourists.

Nevertheless, the uncontrolled consumption problem – perceived mainly by residents affected by constant noise and pollution appearing in their area – could also apply directly to the development of tourism. Moreover, on the basis of the literature [Dodds, Butler 2019a; Koens, Postma, Papp 2018], one can argue that almost all the above-mentioned issues could be regarded as drivers or constituents of the phenomenon. However, conflicts of this type are an inevitable effect

Problem /challenge	Mean assesment of importance
1. City night life	3,5
2. Growth of short-time rental accomodation	3,6
3. Pollution of public spaces	
5. The loss of local authenticity of urban leisure offer	4,5
	4
6. Anti-visitor policy of public cultural institutions	4

Note: The circle size represents the average significance of the problem/challenge.

Fig. 1. Relationships between identified tourism-related conflicts in Poznań

Source: own study.

of the development of the entertainment industry in cities, where local conditions (spatial, infrastructural, etc.) are conducive to the creation of entertainment enclaves, which are particularly attractive for young people.

Taking into account the factors that the respondents identified as having the biggest effect on the dynamics and nature of the conflicts, it was possible to determine their dimensions. According to the informants, the analysed disputes are mainly due to differences in objectives and expectations expressed by conflict parties, differences in their value systems and concepts of city development (especially regarding city nightlife, pollution of the public space and short-term rentals), lack or poor communication among the parties, conflicting or competing interests, and fuelled emotions (expressed mostly towards pollution of the urban space and short-term rentals). According to Moore's [2014] circle of conflict model, these factors should be viewed as related to values and relationships. The former are difficult to resolve as stakeholders perceive the essence of a conflict in a subjective way. In this case, values are associated with the social valuation of space, i.e. the space of local and national identity, which residents and guests compete for [Zmyślony, Kowalczyk-Anioł, Dembińska 2020]. The aspect of relationships refers to stakeholders' subjective perceptions of conflict issues. It is likely that some of them underestimated the extent of the threat of overtour-

ism. However, relationship conflicts could be resolved as there is some leeway for compromise, negotiations and collaborative actions [Moore 2014].

The study has some important managerial implications concerning destination governance in Poznań. First, with respect to identified causes of conflicts, any conflict managing body should set overriding goals for tourism development, determine common values, encourage conflict parties to understand different points of view on controversial issues, monitor the quality and culture of communication, and introduce procedures and underlying principles that can improve communication without negative emotions and behaviours. Second, the study has revealed discrepancies between informants' self-assessment of their own capacities and resources for conflict management and the way their ability to act as a conflict manager was assessed by other stakeholders. In particular, the relatively high self-assessment of the Poznań Tourism Organisation (see Tables 3 and 4) stands in contrast to the fact that only two stakeholders indicated it as a potential mediator. On the other hand, the lower self-assessment of the city administration was inconsistent with 4 indications from the other informants.

6. Conclusion

The article contributes to the literature on overtourism by using a method adopted from conflict theory to determine the intensity of this phenomenon on the basis of objective measures and data. By applying Moore's [2014] circle of conflict model to the field of urban tourism, it was possible to analyse the intensity, functional structure and causes of conflicts induced by the development of tourism in Poznań. The main finding of the study is that overtourism has not appeared in Poznań as a public issue, but the city is facing similar problems as a result of the uncontrolled consumption of the city's offering by its inhabitants, residents of the metropolitan area and visitors. In this respect, the article has a diagnostic relevance by highlighting emerging problems related to the development of tourism. As noted by many authors [Dodds, Butler 2019b; Novy, Colomb 2019; Postma, Schmuecker 2017], emerging conflicts expose dysfunctionalities of local tourism systems and reveal differences between key stakeholders.

Moreover, the article also contributes to destination governance theory and overtourism studies by proposing a method of evaluating capacities and resources of key stakeholders regarding their involvement in managing tourism-related conflicts depending on their causes. The Poznań study continues and verifies research started in Cracow [Zmyślony, Kowalczyk-Anioł 2019]. The method also helps stakeholders choose a leader or mediator in the conflict management process.

Nevertheless, the study has certain limitations. First, it involves a single case with strong managerial implications, and, consequently, its findings can hardly be generalized [Yin 1994]. Second, without the use of advanced reputation methods, the interview technique is prone to biased response owing to the subjectivity of self-assessment questions. Third, the findings and conclusions may have been affected by the limited number of informants.

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Identyfikacja zjawiska *overtourism* w Poznaniu poprzez analizę konfliktów społecznych

Streszczenie. Artykuł ma dwojaki cel: zdiagnozowanie konfliktów występujących w poznańskiej przestrzeni turystycznej poprzez określenie ich intensywności i kluczowych stron konfliktu, a także ukazanie potencjału kluczowych interesariuszy miejskiego systemu turystyki w zakresie zarządzania konfliktem. Złożona natura nadmiernego ruchu turystycznego w miastach powoduje, że jest to zjawisko zarówno niebezpieczne, jak i trudne do pomiaru. Jest ono jednak zawsze związane z konfliktami społecznymi. Jego natężenie i przebieg można zatem mierzyć poprzez analizę konfliktów w miejskiej przestrzeni turystycznej, wykorzystując narzędzia znane z teorii zarządzania konfliktem, przede wszystkim model koła konfliktu autorstwa Christophera Moore'a. Na podstawie przeprowadzonego badania stwierdzono, że zidentyfikowane obszary konfliktowe odnoszą się nie do overtourismu, ale do niekontrolowanej konsumpcji oferty wolnego czasu w mieście, uzewnętrznionej w zachowaniu mieszkańców miasta i odwiedzających jednodniowych przybywających z okolic miasta, a dopiero następnie turystów. Wkład artykułu do studiów nad nadmiernym rozwojem turystyki w miastach polega na zaproponowaniu alternatywnej metody identyfikacji zakresu i intensywności overtourismu w warunkach braku obiektywnych miar i danych dotyczących tego zjawiska. W opracowaniu zaproponowano także metodę oceny predyspozycji kluczowych interesariuszy do zarządzania konfliktami w Poznaniu.

Słowa kluczowe: overtourism, konflikt społeczny, analiza konfliktów, turystyka miejska, Poznań, Polska