

# *Dynamics in urban places: public parks in the inner city of Poznań, Poland.*

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**ABSTRACT:**

The purpose of this research is to identify what is the dynamics in public parks in the inner city area in Poznań, Poland. 6 parks of different size and with different amenities will be investigated basing on two main methods of data collection: observations and interviews with park users. The city of Poznań was chosen for this research as it has the unique system of green radial gores that connect the city centre with the city outskirts. This provides plenty of opportunities for leisure and recreation. Despite these vast green areas parks located within the inner city area are still very popular among citizens of Poznań and their offer expanded significantly in few last years. This research will investigate what is the dynamics of these place i.e. what are the users of given parks and when do they use them, what are the interactions between these users, how parks differ between each other, what are the factors that facilitate the park use. Results of this research might help to better understand what is the dynamics of the park use thus identifying the periods in which park use is not popular and finding the reasons for that. This in future might serve as a guide for the city council to better organize the parks and to better plan their offer to prevent exclusion of some groups from the park use.

Key Words: dynamics of urban places, public parks, park users, leisure and recreation

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# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1. TOPIC OF THE RESEARCH

The dynamics in urban places can cover a variety of different issues. These can be dynamics of a single place in the urban structure that presents different use between different parts of the day. But these dynamics in particular place can also be different in various seasons, parts of the year or even times of the week. What is more, these dynamics do not necessarily have to be different in one particular place but they can differ between places, thus many urban spaces will have different dynamics at the same time of the day. Some places might be more static while others can be more dynamic. Their users might also differ and their perception of use of those places might also be different. Users might actually create different sense of dynamics. Or perhaps the spaces themselves might be responsible for creating different sense of dynamics among their users. Among all the confusion that is created by different perception of dynamics one thing can be taken for granted: there are not many places in the urban fabric that could be called static or non-active or single-purpose only. In fact, observing users of different urban places may indicate that the more users there are the more activities can be observed. How the city authorities should respond to these dynamics? They should provide variety of different spaces that could accommodate different needs of city users, thus creating dynamics within these spaces but also between these spaces. With such approach one aspect should be considered cautiously: the dynamics of urban places should accommodate the needs of their users, not exclude those who cannot be part of these dynamics or that have different dynamics. Although the users often foster or facilitate the dynamics of the places they use, there should be some management structure or authority that would secure the presence of all the groups in the city life and city dynamics. Another aspect is the lack of any dynamics in some urban places. Where dynamics do not occur and users avoid such places the authority should provide amenities that would attract the users and thus to artificially create such dynamics. Thus, the dynamics is not always neutral and natural and does not always come from people but it can also be created or enhanced artificially by some higher authority that would be concerned with the static or unattractive character of some places.

This research will particularly focus on dynamics of urban parks. Parks are considered to be rather static places of leisure without variety of functions. In some cases depending on their

size, parks can also serve variety of users in terms of recreation and activities connected with active leisure. However, parks are seldom associated with commercial activities or especially with entertainment. What is more, parks are very rarely considered as a part of official night-time economy. As this research will show, there hardly can be a simple definition of a park. Parks despite their initial similarities, differ very much from each other but what is more important, their dynamics varies a lot in the sense of their use, their users and also what behavior is dominant over which parts of the day and of the week. Also, despite their public character, parks can sometimes serve commercial functions or can be considered as semi-privatized. Those particular issues effect in exclusion of some groups of urban dwellers but also attract some other groups of people which were previously not present among frequent park users. Overall, the research will show how parks can be dynamic and how many different activities can be performed within a park but also how many conflicts can such dynamics create.

## 1.2. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AREA - POLAND

Polish context is very special for this particular research topic. First of all, during the communist times of 1945-1989 it was strictly forbidden to lie or step on the grass. Majority of the lawns had signs with information that stepping on them is prohibited. Those regulations were kept in force also in the post-communist times of 1990s and 2000s. Eventually, in 2008 Polish parliament started working on the amendment of the old communist law. After 2 years of work of parliament members the amendment was approved by the parliament in 2010 (Polish Parliament, 2010). The reasons for the amendment were explained in the bill itself as “this project will enable people’s contact with nature, finding rest and recreation outdoors” and that “the health status of urban dwellers will increase thanks to the healing influence of nature”. The bill makers also noticed that “urban greenery is often the only connection between urban citizens and nature” (ibid.). This revolutionary change had many consequences for the social and health issues of cities in Poland. Previously the fine for stepping on the grass in city parks was up to 1000PLN (around 250EUR) which prevented many people from spending their time in city parks. Also the municipal police was very active in doing set-ups in parks to catch and put fines on people who violated the law. Thus people that wanted to treat parks not as memorials but rather as a site for recreation had to do it in constant stress or rather avoid doing it at all. This law hardly meant that parks could be associated with any positive health related recreation or places for social gatherings. The Polish context is special

for parks as after more than 60 years it was again possible to legally step on the grass in cities. Although that the new bill brought nationwide media attention people were still afraid of using lawns for recreation or leisure. It took some few years before organized events were set up in parks or before meetings of groups of friends or people playing Frisbee or just lying on a blanket in the middle of a day took place. As this research will show, Poznań, which is the city that this paper focuses on, is in the middle of this social revolution and allowing people to step on the grass meant that dynamics of urban parks in the city changed a lot.

Another important issue related to urban parks is Polish perception of drinking alcohol. In Poland the regulations of drinking alcohol in public are set up by the general bill that forbids drinking alcohol in streets, parks and plazas outside of areas designated for alcohol consumption (ArsLege, 2012). Other areas may also be excluded from drinking alcohol but this is regulated by the local municipalities. The city council of Poznań introduced the ban on alcohol in the following areas: recreational areas, buildings and their surroundings, parking lots, beaches, cemeteries (City council of Poznań, 2008). Despite that, according to national survey from 2010 8% of people in Poland regularly drink alcohol outdoors in public areas (CBOS, 2010; p. 6). Violating this law can cost up to 100PLN (around 25EUR). As this research will show, drinking in public very often occurs in public parks which are perfect spots for social gatherings as they offer free sitting space and the bushes and trees act as a perfect landscape for hiding from the police. Such drinking in parks mainly, but not only, occurs during the night time and on the weekends when the night life connected with entertainment and widely recognized clubbing starts. Another important aspect of this issue is the market price of alcohol. Average price of beer in shops equals from 2.00 to 4.00 PLN (0.50 to 1.00 EUR) while beer in restaurants or pubs in large cities usually costs from 6.00 to 12.00 PLN (1.50 to 3.00 EUR). What is more, in Poland the structure of grocery market is very split to small retailers. Shops with area of up to 99m<sup>2</sup> stood for 52.8% of the market in 2008 (Gębska et al., 2011, p. 29). Many of those shops are located within the city centre close to the entertainment district and are open 24 hours a day as the procedure for getting the off-license is simple and given by the city council that is eager on tax revenues. In fact, many of those small shops are located within the close proximity of public parks which makes the parks perfect spot for consumption of alcoholic beverages.

### 1.3. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AREA – CITY OF POZNAŃ

Poznań is one of the biggest Polish cities with population of 548.000 in 2013 (Poznań City Council, 2014). The city itself is very rich in green areas in its core and also outside of the central area in the suburbs. The history of creating the green areas dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century when Poznań was part of Germany. Joseph H. Stubben was the architect that set up plans for development of parks in the city: he introduced a system in which there were radial gores among the rivers and also three rings of green areas among the fortifications of the Prussian forts (Kodym-Kozaczko, 2007, p. 6) as seen on the plate 1.1.. Those gores were planned to be located in the natural river valleys of Bogdanka, Warta and Cybina. The main aim of them was to protect the ground water and water reservoirs and also to aerify the city with fresh air (Poznań Urban Plan Study, 2006, p. 3). As a result a structure of multi-functional green areas system was created: hygienic-health related, microclimatic, recreational-sports related, compositional, decorative, social, educational and cultural (Kodym-Kozaczko, 2010, p. 28). The main aim of such system was to bring the nature as close as possible to the city centre. The radial gores also changed with the distance from the city core: from representative state-of-art greenery in the city centre, through district parks with sport centres to forest parks in the forest surrounding the city (Kodym-Kozaczko, 2007, p. 7). In the gores, the dominating type of areas are forests (around 3650ha of which 72% are forests managed by the city) that are complemented with allotment gardens, parks, green fields and green cemeteries (Poznan Urban Plan Study, 2006, p. 3). Green areas surrounding



**PLATE 1.1. Location on of the radial gores of green areas annotated on the satellite map of Poznań; Source: Google maps**

Poznań in the shape of radial gores and rings have enormous potential for recreation and are important element of the city landscape that builds the identity of its dwellers. In last few years there has been an incremental progress in terms of maintenance of the green areas and their amenities that influenced the increase of their users for leisure and recreation (ibid., p. 7). Today, the so called forest parks are said to be the most important element of the system of recreational areas of Poznań – there are about 2500ha of them with some located even within the city boundaries like e.g. Marceliński Forest (Urbański et al., 2008, p. 5). There are also 42 parks in Poznań with 9 of them being historical parks that cover 47ha and 33 being non-historical and cover 458.12ha (ibid.). The historical parks are part of previously mentioned first ring. Their character is mainly representational and leisure oriented without many amenities that would encourage active recreation. These parks are well maintained and often located within a close proximity from the most famous architectural spots of the city. Their main equipment could be listed as well shaped plants and shrubs accompanied by well cut grass and benches among the paved alleys. On the opposite, the parks that are located within the second and the third ring of Stubben have much wider offer in terms of recreation. Among their amenities could be listed extensive network of paved and unpaved alleys for jogging and bicycle riding, cafes or restaurants serving food, drinks and alcohol, playgrounds for children or other rare amenities such as toboggan run or a skate-park. Apart from the parks in historical or specially designated areas, there are also many parks that are located between the housing apartments in the old large tenement housing estates built during the communist times. These estates were built according to modernist ideas with separation of vehicle traffic from the flow of pedestrians. As a result the areas between blocks of flats are pedestrianized with small shopping centres, churches and extensive parks with a lot of trees, playgrounds and benches. Example of such planning can be Chrobrego settlement rich in green areas as seen on the plate 1.2. Another important fact about the parks in Poznań is that most of the parks in the first ring are fenced and usually are open between 7AM and 10PM while other parks further away from the city centre are open 24 hours a day without fences surrounding them. Other relevant issue connected to parks is the perceived safety of their visitors. According to a study conducted by the City Council (2010, p. 17-19) the perceived safety during the day in city parks and other pedestrian recreation areas in the scale of 1 to 5 raised from 3.0 in 2002 to 3.5 in 2010 and after dark it raised from 1.9 to 2.37. While during the day the safety at parks was among average in comparison to other city areas, after dark it was perceived as the most dangerous place scoring the lowest and described in the study as fairly bad rating. Although the score raised over the years it is still too low to consider parks a safe place after it gets

dark. Overall, the studies show that percentage level of green areas within the city structure decreased in last few years which shows that the city should not only preserve its historical radial grove scheme but should also design and create new green areas (Urbański et al., 2008, p. 7).

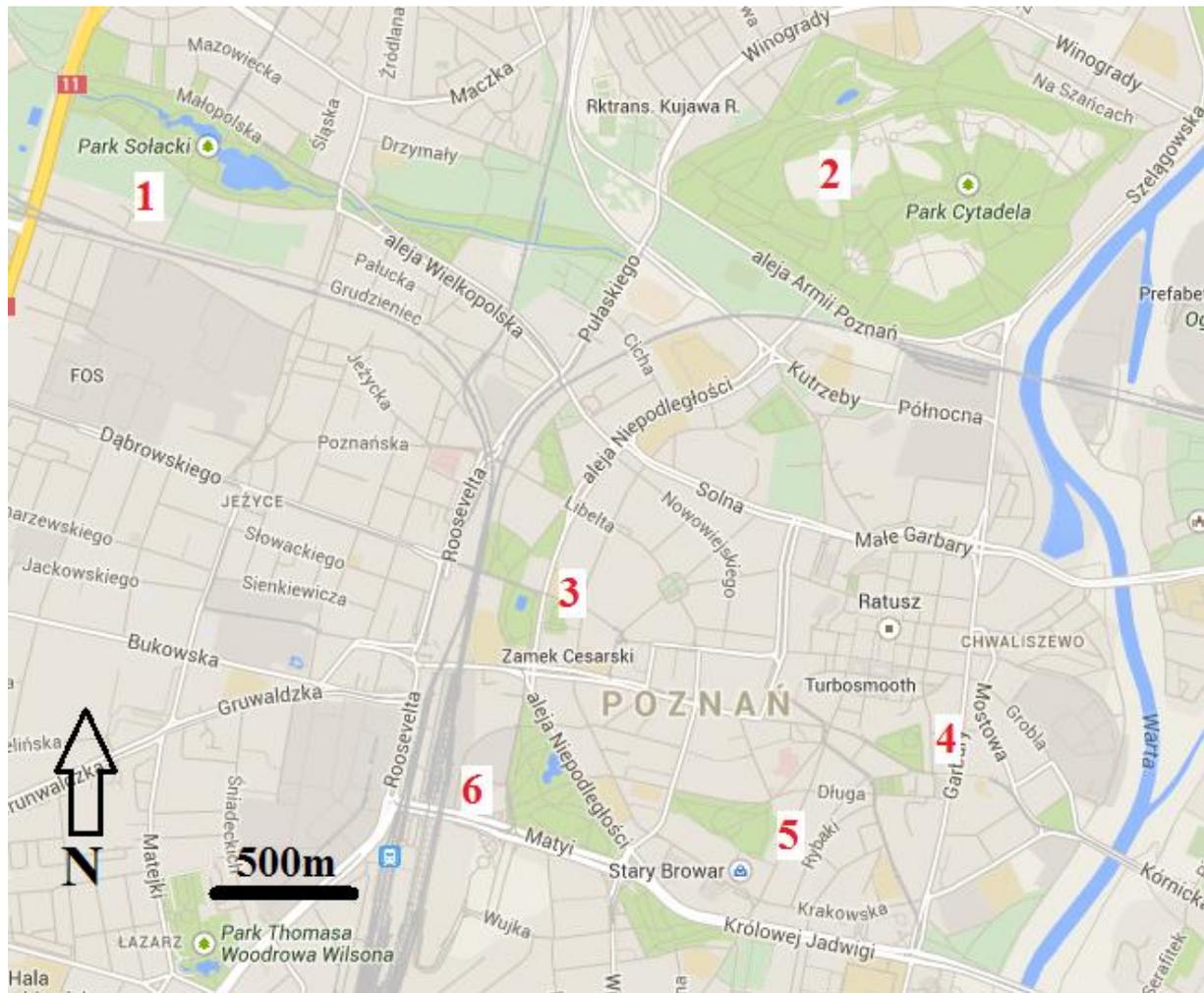


**PLATE 1.2. Small park in the typical communist settlement – Chrobrego settlement in Poznań; Source: Internet**

#### 1.4. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main aims of this research are listed in the 4 research questions:

- a. *When, by whom and why are parks being used – what is the dynamics of use of those parks in different parts of a week and a day?*
- b. *What is the most important factor for the use of the park for different groups of users and is this facilitating given behavior or attracting certain groups of people?*
- c. *How do parks differ between each other in their use and what is the reason for that?*
- d. *What are the potential conflicts/interactions between users – how do users perceive the presence of other users and how does it affect their behavior or frequency of park attendance?*



**PLATE 1.3. Location of all the parks that are part of this research; 1-Solacki park, 2-Cytadela park, 3-Mickiewicz park, 4-Chopin park, 5-Dąbrowskiego park, 6-Marcinkowskiego park; Note the size difference between Cytadela park and other parks Source: Google maps**

First of all, the dynamics of use of the parks must be investigated – who uses the parks, how often, when exactly, in what character: alone or with anybody else and especially why. This is connected with the second question that specifically asks what is the major factor that stands behind the reasons for particular park use. Revealing this reason might also answer the sub question of does it actually enhance some behavior or rather discourage some use. Another important question will be that of how actually investigated parks differ from each other not only in general reason for using them but overall in all of their uses. The last question asks about the potential conflicts between the park users and if those conflicts might influence the decisions for using the parks. All of these questions in general will try to find the answer for the question what is the actual dynamics of use of urban parks in Poznań and answering this

question might help the city officials to better plan the parks. Finding out why people do not visit parks in some periods or do not like some other's behavior may be a direct advise for the professionals responsible for park planning as to change the present outline of parks or their offer as to encourage park visitation in less popular periods. These questions will also help to find the answer of who is excluded from the park use in certain periods and why, providing information on e.g. when the police presence might be strengthened to provide more security in parks. All the parks that are the object of this research with their location are visible on plate 1.3.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

First of all, one should establish a clear definition of what a park means in the modern city and how this definition changed over the years. Good introduction to what parks mean for urban dwellers brings historical account of young people's use of public parks in New York City. Wridt (2004) explains that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century before the car became the dominant mode of transportation for cities, 'the street was a space for enjoyment, adventure and independence for both young children and older youth'. However, it all changed as the automobile became more and more dominant on the streets. The creation of parks and playgrounds for children in New York City was therefore viewed as a way to protect them from potential physical injury and harm that started to accompany everyday playtime in the streets. Thus, the parks might be thought of as giving a relief from the business of busy streets. So what area they should cover to produce such relief? Harnik (2010, p. 20) argues that 'figuring out the proper balance between parkland, structures, and streets on the urban canvas is an art more than a science'. Therefore, parks should have different functions comparing to the size of the urban area. Swanwick et al. (2003, p. 98-99) distinguishes few different park types basing on their size but also on their function: City Parks of more than 8.0 hectares with wide catchment area and full range of facilities, District Parks up to 8.0 hectares with a catchment area up to 2000 metres and variety of sport facilities, Neighbourhood Parks up to 4.0 hectares with a catchment area up to 1500 metres with mainly landscape features and Local Parks up to 1.2 hectares with a catchment area up to 1000 metres with a small play area and some basic landscape features without majority of facilities. Adding to that, traditionally parks were divided into two categories: active, being more sports and recreation oriented and passive, with more orientation for leisure activities. However, to fully describe what functions and what size park should have, one have to think about what is the general role of urban green space and who is going to use it. There are two important facts about it: 'First of all, urban nature fulfills many social functions and psychological needs of citizens, which make it a valuable municipal resource and secondly, different age-groups have different motives to visit the park and different activities they are going to undertake' (Chiesura, 2004, p. 137). So there can be e.g. more regulated or competitive activities that can involve greater speed and violence being a threat to babies, children, seniors, women, pets or

picnickers and such activities might encourage creating boundaries between users such as fences (Harnik, 2010, p. 22). Thus a new thinking about park use and their role needs to be established. Harnik (*ibid.*, p. 23) describes the example of Portland in the US: ‘using a spectrum that ranges from spaces of extreme sociability to spaces of extreme ecological purity’ the planners ‘created a three-way classification they call people-to-people places, people-to-nature places and nature-to-nature places’. Such system brings clear orientation on how to plan facilities in parks and how to set up the regulations for park use. However, such system should also be based on people’s needs and their experiences but not assumed by planners but expressed by the park users as assessing and developing parks especially means asking the communities what they need from the park areas and the starting point in developing a plan for any public space is to first identify the needs of the community (Hargett, 2001, p. 44). This is also supported by Harnik (2010, p. 23) who argues that ‘the park experience is intensely personal and can never be entirely quantified’. It is also important as apart from the environmental services such as air and water purification, wind and noise filtering, or microclimate stabilization, urban parks especially provide social and psychological services which are crucial for the well-being of urban dwellers (Chiesura, 2004, p. 130). However, having in mind all of the aspects of different functions parks should have and many needs of urban dwellers and their demands about how the parks should look like caused the parks to undergo a process of segmentation and specialization. Specialized park segments appeared already in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the groups demanding specialized settings multiplied and the role of urban parks changed from older central-city parks to new segmented ones (Young, 1996, p. 549). What is more, the creation of such parks was one of the important features that fostered the four virtues of a good society: public health, prosperity, social coherence and democratic equality and also the presence of new parks asserted that society would become healthier, wealthier, more crime-free and more democratic (*ibid.*, p. 537). Nowadays, not all of these theories turned out to be true. One of such examples can be Briant Park in New York which became a place of class-conflict. Park became a prototype of a new public space. By changing the landscape, fencing the park, setting up guards and opening new fashionable cafes user change appeared: old users stopped using the park while new white-collar workers from Manhattan were attracted which also changed the accepted mode of behavior within the park. Zukin thinks that since then the park has lost its democratic and public character and became an arena of cultural battle between the classes which she called the ‘pacification through cappuccino’ (Gądecki, 2011, p. 192). Although that there might be different concepts of park size and facilities it should have, although that parks

should have democratic character concerning their use and amenities provided basing on the needs and opinions of local communities, sometimes the parks might serve the needs of capital that will ignore all of the principles of parks sustainability and follow the undemocratic capitalistic ideas. 'The urban moral order desired by park advocates consisted of a set of social ideals, which were the antitheses of urban vices' (Young, 1996, p.537), but these did not anticipate the creation of semi-private or completely privatized urban parks that serve the narrow needs of some specific groups.

The number of numerous activities that can be undertaken in parks matters for social life of the city and public parks are important for people as gathering spaces, but not only. Apart from these benefits, parks are also very beneficial in terms of their health-related effects for the lives of urban dwellers. Lee and Maheswaran (2010, p. 212) argue that 'physical and psychological benefits have been linked to green spaces their purported effects on physical activity' and these benefits might include prevention of 'cardio- and cerebro-vascular disease, diabetes, colorectal cancer, osteoporosis, depression and fall-related injuries' but also better 'mental functioning, mental health and well-being'. What is more, parks are said to be very important in encouraging physical activity among various subpopulations such as age-groups, ethno-cultural, and socio-economic groups (McCormack et al., 2010, p. 712). Thus, parks are important because they often support the physical activity through their accessibility and they have enormous capacity to provide opportunities to a wide range of users which altogether makes their design and upkeep as vitally important for population health (ibid.). This is especially crucial for socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, as their residents are often exposed to increased risk of inactivity and associated poor health (Veitch et al., 2013, p. 732). However, as Lee and Maheswaran (2010, p. 213) argue, 'while there is strong evidence of the health benefits of physical activity, the evidence for the link between physical activity levels and green space availability is weaker'. Another important point is made by Cohen et al. (2011, p. 2) who argue that 'it is unclear exactly which park characteristics and conditions will draw more people to promote greater population-wide physical activity' and that parks need to provide multiple of functions to become attractive as 'the conventional wisdom is that parks must be attractive and safe, and have a sufficient diversity of amenities and features to meet the needs of people with multiple interests'. However, Lee and Maheswaran (2010, p. 217) again argue that 'the presence itself of green space is unlikely to explain the public health benefits and the relationship is likely to be complex and influenced by multiple factors including attributes of the environment and the individual'. Response to that, might be a study

conducted by Besenyi et al. (2013) that found out there were significant demographic variations in observed energy expenditure across park activity areas. Their results also showed that understanding these differences in physical activity across park areas by different groups can affect health-related park planning (ibid., p.80) as e.g. playgrounds were mostly used by children and teens while paved trails were the areas where adults/seniors were more active. Although that the study was very limited in its scope as it mainly analysed age-related and gender-related differences it clearly shows that the potential health benefits for using parks might be very different for groups of users as these users might use these parks more and less actively, accordingly. Another point is made by Lee and Maheswaran (2010, p. 218) which state that also personal attributes of users might affect their physical activity levels and use of green space, which can include factors such as: age, gender, ethnicity, disability, psychological factors such as self-efficacy or perceived barriers and also safety within the park. Moreover, the social atmosphere might affect the outcome of park use as shown by the study of McCormack et al. (2010, p. 723) which showed that socializing and undertaking any activities in the park independent of adults was an important contributor to park use for teenagers even when the physical environment within the park was in a poor condition. As a result the reviewed qualitative evidence that McCormack et al. (ibid.) reviewed 'suggests that social environments are crucially important and that understanding their influence on physical activity patterns may require different methodological strategies than physical environments'. What they actually propose is to conduct qualitative research which might help to build association between social environments, physical environments and physical activity in parks. In some cases separation of users might be supporting different groups use of the parks but on the other hand park planners could design park spaces for family-oriented or intergenerational physical activity through built environment like e.g. all-ages playground equipment such as outdoor gyms or also walking trails around the playgrounds) (Besenyi et al., 2013, p. 80). One more study of 30 parks in Southern California in the USA conducted by Cohen et al. (2011, p. 4-5) showed that on one hand the growth of number of organized activities was connected with larger number of users, with 58 more users for each additional activity, but on the other hand showed that among busiest parks the significant number of users were spectators attracted by the large sporting events and this explains why the busiest parks had a lower percentage of moderate-to-vigorously active users. Other studies also show that public transportation as a way of getting to the park and overall park visitation might be important factors for enabling physical activity (McCormack et al., 2010, p. 716) and thus the future interventions should focus on ways to increase park visitation at all (Veitch et al., 2013,

p. 734). Despite the transportation mode, generally the ‘investments in park programming and unique features appear to be associated with higher use’ and better health-outcomes and as the majority of residents do not participate in park programs, the outreach of those must be a priority (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 5).

But to talk about the health outcome of park visitation or to consider different ways of transportation as more or less beneficial for physical activity levels and health outcomes of park users, one should also think about the accessibility of parks and constraints for their use for different groups of people. The overview of researches published on social roles and leisure constraints written by Scott (2002) shows that time constraints are the most frequently cited reason why people do not use parks and recreation services and the other constraints reported are fear of crime and safety concerns, lack of interest, lack of access, lack of information, and lack of transportation. Nicholls’ (2001, p. 205) research checked against the most basic form of measuring the accessibility: using GIS for calculating the perimeter of park that can attract local visitors. She herself put a counter-argument to that stating that ‘the problem with such container approach is that it assumes the benefits of services provided are allocated only to residents within the predefined zone in which they are situated, and that no spatial externalities to surrounding areas occur’. What is more, another major disadvantage is that such approach does not consider the spatial distribution of opportunities while the location of parks relative to their potential users is crucial for the assessment of their accessibility (ibid.). Nicholls (ibid., p. 217) also argued that characteristics of parks are more important than their physical accessibility so more qualitative analysis would be needed to check upon the parks’ attractiveness. Another study by Scott & Jackson (1996, p. 6) provides similar outcomes showing the relative importance of constraints to park visitation. The biggest importance of constraints was associated with lack of time, being too busy with other activities, being too busy with family responsibilities, pursuing recreation in areas other than parks, fear of crime and lack of information about existing parks and park programs. Among the least important were reasons such as: parks are too far away, public transportation accessibility, no way to get to parks, park facilities and programs cost too much or parks are overdeveloped. But what is important about this study apart from the standardized reasons for park constraints is that it distinguishes between different groups of users basing on their age. Thus, the ‘respondents in the oldest age-group were far more likely than those in the other age-group to indicate that their use of parks was constrained by fear of crime, no none to go with, poor health and no way to get to parks’ contrasting with the youngest respondents aged up to 25 that indicated more frequently being too busy with other activities, lack of time and

pursuing recreation in areas other than parks (*ibid.*, p. 8). Another interesting study was conducted by Abercrombie et al. (2008) that tried to find out if there is any relationship between income and racial disparities in access to public parks and recreation facilities. They found out that the number and size of public parks were not equitably distributed across the study area. As this study also included research on private recreational facilities it concluded that ‘a reasonable policy goal would be to provide the highest number and quality of parks in low-income areas, because people living there do not have access to other recreation opportunities due to financial limitations (*ibid.*, p. 13). Erkip (1997, p. 359) adds that further policies on urban public services such as parks ‘should consider income levels of neighbourhoods and the importance of the distance to target users, as proximity appears more important for the low-income groups with less mobility’ and for these groups ‘park usage might be promoted by establishing neighbourhood parks’ near where these groups live. However, what Erkip (*ibid.*, p. 355) also stated is an important point about public service characteristics: ‘parks, like other fixed facilities, cannot be equally accessible to everybody’ which results in situation in which territorial justice occurs where there is the aim to equalize service on a geographical basis. This is supported by Madge (1997, p. 238) who argues that ‘there is an increased awareness that parks are not used identically by all members of society for two reasons: first, the urban population’s needs regarding use of public parks are not homogenous and, second, access to public park facilities and urban open space is not equal to all. As a response to that, Scott & Jackson (1996, p. 14) argue that park districts must rather individualize planning and marketing strategies of parks if they want to attract different groups. They also suggest that there are 3 client groups of potential park users that need particular attention. These are older women that are mostly prevented from using the parks because of fear of crime and lack of companionship, middle-age women that are mostly affected by family responsibilities and are constantly ‘on call’ and have difficulty in scheduling leisure for themselves and lastly the young and middle-age adults of both sexes that had greatly limited time to be frequent park users. In response to that, as Scott & Jackson (*ibid.*) argue that interpretive or nature programs, walking clubs, and other group-oriented programs may provide older women both security and companionship in parks. For middle-age women there might be some kind of child care or perhaps provision of facilities in which groups of mothers would be able to structure their own cooperative child care arrangements. For young and middle-age adults accurate response could be to expand the program offerings and provide more opportunities for short, self-desired leisure experiences and also providing complete information in the promotional literature. However, what Mowen et al. (2005, p.

198) found in their ten-year comparison between two time periods in Ohio parks was that ‘perceived park visitation constraints remained stable even in the face of increased park utilization and despite park agency efforts to minimize park use constraints’. Examples of actions taken included promoting the parks program to non-users and infrequent users as the park agency found out that special events and festivals were more likely to attract infrequent users, or the staff switched venue locations as a way to specifically acquaint non-users and infrequent users with park areas across the county. Despite all of that there was not a significant increase in the park visitation which might be explained by the existence of a saturation point at which ‘the public’s desire for more information and activities cannot be satisfied nor significantly altered by the efforts of individual park and recreation organizations (ibid., p. 200).

But what was also found out in the previously mentioned study was that there was some small change in perception of safety within parks which attracted some new users. Fear for personal safety is an important factor for mobility within the city as it affects large numbers of individuals, particularly in inner city areas (Lynch & Atkins, 1988, p. 260). This is particularly true for the night-time when ‘public spaces remain contested arenas with radically different meanings for night-time consumers, leisure business, police, public health agencies, local residents, night workers and local government’ (Crawford & Flint, 2009, p. 407). Madge (1997, p. 244) expands this thought by stating that ‘the geography of fear not only has a social component but it also varies with time of day and place: it has temporal and spatial components’. And the individuals that are mostly affected by this fear are especially young and elderly women as they are generally less able to counter attacks and are more fearful generally (Lynch & Atkins, 1988, p. 262). This is supported by the research done by Madge (1997, p. 237) on British cities in the 1990s who argues that urban parks were rapidly becoming areas of neglect within the city and were increasingly avoided by the general public and that there were some significant sub-groups such as women, children and minority ethnic groups that found parks intimidating and avoided using them. This research also showed evidence on gender-related differences where 75% of women compared to 50% of men stated that fear restricted their use of parks (ibid., p. 240). What is more, park settings often are designed and located in an area that buffers distractions of surrounding stressors or the city which makes them secluded areas for park visitors to ‘get away’ but on the other hand makes them less populated and less accessible in case of emergency and crime (Jorgensen et al., 2012, p. 805). Talking specifically which features discourage women from park use one can

use the study conducted by Jorgensen et al. (ibid., p.814) which state that women are especially fearful of crime in park areas where there are no people around them and that the presence of nonthreatening others may act as a great safety buffer for women. Indeed, also the presence of others reassures that only legitimate uses are supported in the park and criminal acts are more difficult to commit as there is plenty of potential rescue in the event of an attack (ibid., p. 807). Apart from the social and psychological effects of safety one should also consider infrastructure and design as important for the perceived safety of parks. As Muderrisoglu & Demir (2004, p. 76) found out, the parks that were rated as the safest among the respondents of their study, had long view distances, large amount of grass and water view, signs of development and nearby populated areas while the elements that decreased the perceived safety were man-made features such as graffiti or old buildings nearby. Another kind of infrastructure located within the park that might be perceived as unsafe are skate-parks. These are often associated with being dangerous places that are occupied not only by skateboarders but also by graffitiists, bullies and drug-takers creating the overall feeling of 'teenophobia' of socializing young people as found in the study of Taylor & Khan (2011, p. 490). What is the answer for all of those safety concerns? One of the solutions might be to attract diversity of use in all periods of a day to bring more people and ensure that they are constantly presents in the park as the more people in an area the less crime (Jorgensen et al., 2012, p. 815). So parks should be designed in such way and provide such opportunities to ensure that there will be continual flow of people throughout the day and also in the evening so it will ensure an informal surveillance (ibid.). Madge (1997, p. 246) also brings the argument of informal surveillance as effective to encouraging women's participation in park activities, and also adds the establishment of local 'authority' figure such as park warden who might reduce the likelihood of potentially threatening situations. In this context, interesting point is made by Dixon et al. (2006, p. 201) who state that some of the behavior that could be perceived as potentially threatening such as public consumption of alcohol, does not inherently have to be a problematic activity itself. It rather becomes such when this action is 'defilling' the character of places such as public parks. But if one put nice tables with parasols and a nicely-designed bar within the park the act of consuming alcohol does not have to threaten anyone any longer. What is more, paradoxically, types of design and programming strategies of attracting diversity of use of public spaces is e.g. providing amenities such as cafes or bars selling drinks including alcohol that might enhance the social image and use of a given area.

2.2. THE LITERATURE GAP

Basing on all the literature reviewed above one can draw a conclusion that all the authors focus on single issues connected with park use. However, rarely any research checked the dynamics of use or public parks. And such dynamics of use would involve the type of behavior of users in given parks but also the reasons for their use of the park. Thus, this research will look at the issue from a complex perspective analysing different user groups and their use of the parks and basing on that drawing conclusions about the dynamics of urban parks. Only the research done by Swanwick et al. (2003, p. 103) touched upon the issues of frequency and periods of use of the parks and also differences between the user groups and the reasons for their use of the park. However, that research was more general about the overall nature role and value of green space in towns and cities. This research will be more detailed and focus on this narrow subject only.

## CHAPTER 3 – METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

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### 3.1. INTRODUCTION TO METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

In this chapter methods of data collection will be described. Variety of different methods have been used in this particular research. Clark (2005: 57) sets up a division for two main data sources: primary and secondary ones. The primary data is what ‘the researcher gathers for himself’ and the secondary data is ‘the information that has already been collected by someone else and which is available for the researcher’. As this research is a qualitative one, primary data sources are the most important. These include: conducting interviews on different groups of park users, participant observation of people doing particular activities in parks and taking photographs of people or of parks and their infrastructure. The secondary data sources are based on maps and statistics mainly provided by the official public authorities.

### 3.2. PRIMARY DATA SOURCES

#### 3.2.1. INTERVIEWS

Main research method of this research are interviews. These will be conducted in each of the 6 parks being investigated in this paper. As every park is different it was decided that first of all the participant observation of park users will take place and then the dominant user group will turn out. This particular dominant user group in each park will be then selected for interviews. As a result there will be at least 10 interviews conducted with each of the user groups. The overall number of interviews will be limited by the aggregation of data till the answers start to repeat but the overall number of interviews should equal at least 60. The interviews will take place during different time periods and on the different parts of the week. There are 3 main types of interviews that can be conducted. These are structured, unstructured and semi-structured. This research will focus on the last one because ‘this form of interviewing has some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant (Longhurst, 2010: 105). Bryman (2008: 437) states that in opposition to a structured interview typical for the quantitative research in which ‘the researcher has a clearly specified set of questions that are to be investigated’, in the qualitative research ‘there is an emphasis on greater generality in the formulation of initial research ideas and on interviewees’ own perspectives’. Valentine adds to it that ‘the advantage of that

approach is that it is sensitive and people-oriented, allowing interviewees to construct their own accounts of their experiences in their own words' (Valentine, 2005: 111). Bryman (2008: 437) complements her by arguing that in qualitative interviewing 'there is much greater interest in the interviewees point of view, rambling or going off at tangents is often encouraged' and also 'interviewers can depart significantly from any schedule being able to ask new questions that follow up interviewees' replies'. As a result, the qualitative interviewing tends to be more flexible adjusting not only to what and how the interviewee tells but also to important issues that emerge in the course of interviews (ibid.). Bryman (ibid., p. 438) also sets up the frames for the semi-structured interview: 'the researcher has a list of questions or topics to be covered, referred to as an interview guide' and 'the questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule' but some other questions 'may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees.'

As it was previously mentioned all the interviews will take place within the parks on the spot of the park users doing activities. It is important for this research that investigates the dynamics of urban parks basing on people's opinions and their observations to ask a question of what is the relationship between what people say and where they say it (Holton and Riley, 2013, p. 59). Also, 'as the place in which interviews take place may serve as a prompt or cue for respondents' narratives, place-based interviews have the potential to unpick more experiential understandings of these places' (ibid., p. 60). Thus, following the interviewees while they perform some action like jogging might also show some insight into how they navigate in a given park and what is their route or which places they avoid.

In terms of the types of questions being asked this will be based on the Bryman's (2008, p. 445) criteria. In this particular research the successful interviewer should be clear on what he asks, knowledgeable showing familiarity with the focus of the interview, open and flexible to what the interviewee says and critical and prepared to challenge the interviewees' opinions. The questions might also follow the following guide: introducing questions for bringing the attention of interviewee to the topic, follow-up questions for gaining more in-depth information about what the interviewee said, probing questions that help to extend the topics covered by the interviewee, specifying and interpreting questions that help to get clear on the intentions of the interviewee and finally direct and indirect questions depending on the interviewee and context of his words (ibid., p. 445-446).

All the interviews will be audio recorded on a mass storage memory which enables quick access to the files and easy copying and processing of the tracks. There is also one important advantage of recording the interviews instead of taking notes. This helps the researcher to

more concentrate on the matter of the interview instead of struggling to quickly write down all the details of interviewee's words under the time pressure (Valentine, 2005, p. 123). As these interviews have to be further processed in a coding software the clear recordings might be important for transcribing all of the interviews details (Dunn, 2010, p. 119).

### 3.2.2. PARTICIPANT AND BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATION

The observation method will act as a base for further research. First of all, the park users will be observed in given periods. In the end of those observations the dominant group will be described i.e. the group of users that mostly use a given park and dominate it in terms of number of people from this group attending the park and the type of activities that they bring to the parks and that other users would follow. Aim of this method is to find 6 dominant groups in investigated parks. These groups will serve as an indicator for the interviews, the second research method.

As this research is mainly interested in finding out the dynamics of urban parks this means that the observations should take place in different times of a day and of a week. They will take place in 3 different time periods: from 7:00 to 10:00, from 12:00 to 15:00 and from 20:00 to 23:00. There will be two week times in which the observations might take place: either from Monday to Thursday (ordinary weekdays) that would be then referred to as 'week time' or from Friday to Sunday (party time in the evening in the night time economy and the most busy period for parks) that would be then referred to as 'weekend'. The observations will be conducted in two time periods: first set will take place in March/April and second set will take place in May/June. In each of the parks the observation will be carried out both in one of the weekdays and on one of the weekend days.

The observation will be split into two different methods. First of all the scientific behavioural observation will take place during the daytime. According to Montello et al. (2006, p. 66) 'it aims to apply the typical values of scientific practice, such as systematicity and objectivity, to observing behaviour e.g. scientific observation should be based on a planned strategy and should produce data on behaviour rather than inferences about the meaning or intention of the behaviour'. It should also include 'a complete record of the setting and its inhabitants and involve an attempt to overcome subjectivity in observation, such as when an observer is more or less sensitive to the occurrence of particular actions because of his personal interests'. This will be the most objective observation in which the users will be observed from a distance not being conscious of the presence of the researcher. Notes will be taken into the fact sheet and then processed to produce an objective data sheet of observations.

Then, the more extreme form of behavioural observation will take place. Participant observation will be conducted as a covert role. The participant observation in the covert role might be more successful as there is no problem of access to the park where some particular user groups gather and also reactivity of people is not a problem as this role reduces reactivity significantly due to the anonymity of the observer which also results in the objectivity of the observations as the participants do not adjust their behaviour because of the researcher's presence (Bryman, 2008, p. 406). This particular method of observation might be used in observing night-time users of parks drinking alcohol and breaking into parks after the official closure of gates. The problem of taking notes might be overcome by writing short notes on the phone as using a mobile phone in a public setting is a common thing which does not bring any suspicion and resembles just texting messages. These notes will be compared with the data sheet of the behavioural observations.

### 3.2.3. PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs are essential method in the qualitative research as they 'are all capable of showing and revealing the complex nature of landscape' and 'these representations are viewed as cultural images that represent, structure, and symbolise our surroundings – the images become places that can be analysed to better understand lived experience' (Aitken and Craine, 2005: 256). In this particular research there will be mainly research-generated photographs specially produced by the researcher for the purpose of this paper. Their role in this research may be twofold according to Bryman (2008, p. 519): illustrative or just act as data. Thus, the photographs will illustrate the report to bring the information and visual idea on how the particular parks look like in relation their infrastructure, maintenance, area and the openness of space that they have. Also the park users will be visible on photographs to make the reader more familiar with how the park users look like and in which situations they appear. But the photographs will also serve as data on their own. They will become part of the researcher's notes perfectly complementing them.

## 3.3. SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

### 3.3.1. STATISTICAL DATA

Where such data is available it will be used to accompany the ethnographic findings. It is assumed that some important demographic and economic data on the local situation of Poznań might be accessed from the City Council website and the folders edited by the City Council.

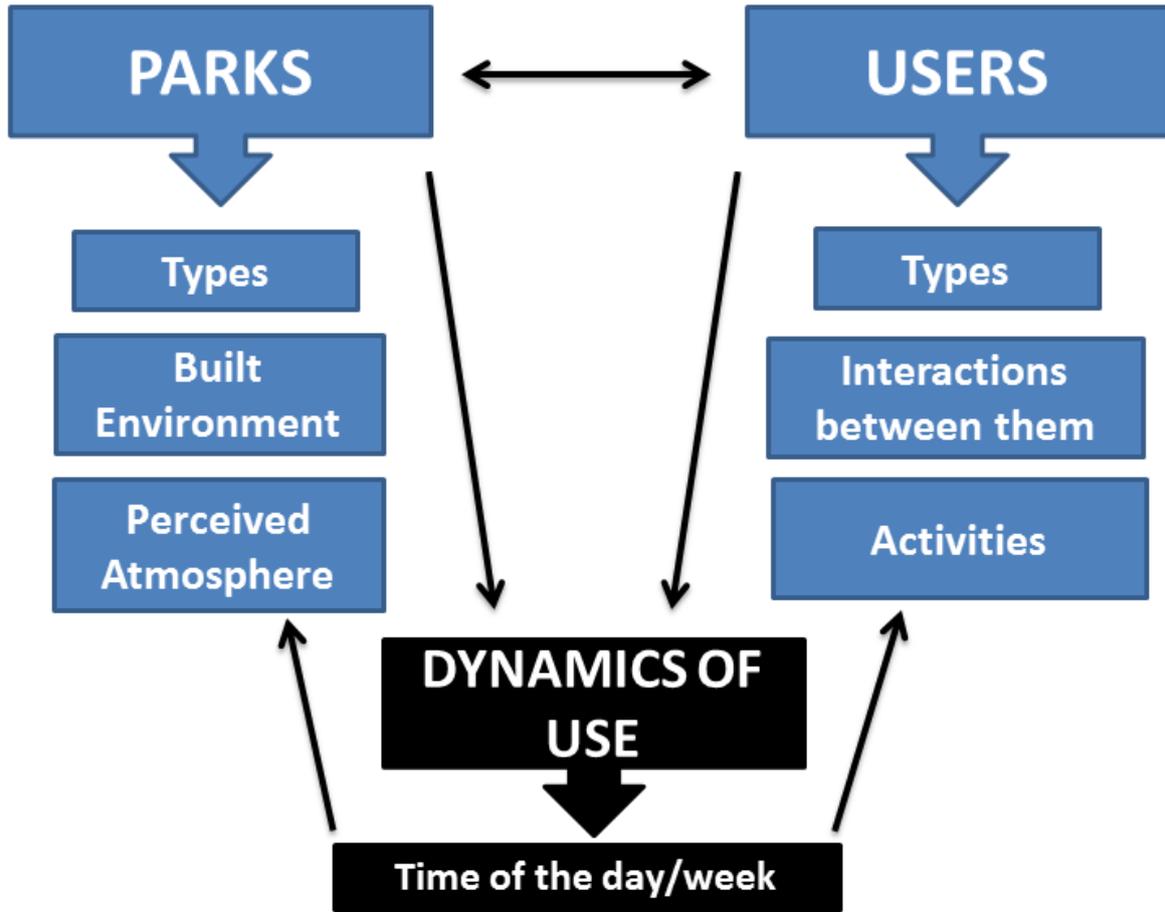
Some data might also be accessed from national statistics and local websites connected with Poznań. Such official government or council data is associated with good quality and reliability and overall the statistical data is cheaper and quicker to obtain for the researcher than setting up research methods to collect this data on its own (Clark, 2005: 58). What is more, such data can provide some context that might be helpful for setting priorities in the primary research (ibid.).

### 3.3.2. MAPS

Maps in this research will be an important mean for showing the dynamics of urban parks. Use of parks in different periods can be annotated on park maps to clearly show the differences. But first of all, maps might be used to show the context of Poznań and location of parks to the reader. This is because maps are ‘a powerful medium for the representation of ideas and the communication of knowledge about places used to store spatial information, to analyse and generate ideas and to present results in a visual form’ (Perkins, 2010: 350). Satellite imagery from Google will be particularly useful for this research but also some historical maps showing the origin of park system in the city might be used.

### 3.4. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Basing on the literature review and the methods of data collection the conceptual model was developed as seen on plate 3.1. It shows what will be the objectives for data collection and then further conclusions from the gathered data. First of all, two main objects of the research are parks and users and the interactions between these two (arrows between boxes ‘parks’ and ‘users’). Then one has to distinguish between different aspects of parks and users such as types, built environment, perceived atmosphere, interactions between users, activities of users (arrows going down from blue boxes). The main aim will be to analyse the dynamics of use of parks and also what are different dynamics of users (black arrows from blue boxes to black box). This dynamics of use will be mainly checked on the daily basis and the weekly basis (arrow from top black box to the bottom black box). So in the end all the aspects of parks and users will be analysed on the basis of the park dynamics so it will be checked when the activities occur, how often and why (black arrows going to the top to blue boxes).



**PLATE 3.1. Conceptual model of the research; Source: author**

## CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS & ANALYSIS

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### 4.1. CHOPIN PARK

#### 4.1.1. BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATION

The most dominant group within this park turned out to be elderly people. However, despite that, it needs to be said that park was very diverse in terms of its users. But the elderly were for sure the most dominant group not only in terms of users that attend the park but also in the area in the park that they covered. In this particular location elderly people were commonly seen in each of the park corners and did not scatter in any particular location. This is due to the fact that technically the benches in the park are evenly spread throughout it and are located among all the alleys. Elderly people are the most frequent users of the benches in comparison to other groups. Most of the activities done by them are reading books, newspapers, magazines, solving crosswords, feeding birds, sunbathing, having rest, chatting with their partners or sitting alone. All of these activities indicate that their use of park is rather leisure-oriented and that park is not intended for any recreation. The atmosphere is very static meaning that it is very quiet and people behave reasonably without any shouting or loud conversations. Thus, other users were identified as young singles reading books also using the benches, groups of youngsters hanging out in the park corners and some small number of families with children that usually spent time actively doing some basic recreation or walking with the children along the alleys. Young singles are the second most dominant group in the park. These are usually females that read books or lecture notes, such as on plate 4.1. Surprisingly, very seldom people talk on the mobile phones. Another important group are youngsters hypothetically aged between 13-18 years old. These hang out in the park mostly in the afternoons when they finish classes at school. They would usually occupy the areas of the park that are further from the fence and park entrance, such as on plate 4.2. where they stand in the park corner. Their main activities include gathering in a group and loudly chatting with each other and smoking cigarettes. Usually after few cigarettes such group would just leave the park indicating that this is their main purpose of park visitation. It also can be seen that in the spots that such group occurs there are no other users in the close vicinity. People reading books do not seem to be enjoying company of young and loud people. However, all of these groups are described for the day use of the park. In the evening there is a complete change in

character of users. All of the groups that were present during the day are gone and there is a new group of students that occupy the park to drink alcohol in it. When the park is closed at 22:00 people often jump over the fence and head to the back of the park where they are less visible from the street. They usually occupy benches and gather in groups of at least few men. Park is suitable for such behaviour as there is plenty of sitting space available and also the park lamps do not work until then so people can hide in shadow. But this was more part of the participant observation.



**PLATE 4.1. Young people reading books in Chopin park is a very common view in the afternoons; Source: author**



**PLATE 4.2. Youngsters often hide in the park corner not to be visible from the street as they drink often drink beer and smoke cigarettes; Source: author**

#### 4.1.2. ACTIVITIES IN OBSERVATION TIME SLOTS

**7:00-10:00:** straight after opening the gate at 7:00 there were no people coming at all. It can be deduced that there was just too much litter in the park to attract anyone. And situation was the worst during the weekends when people mostly drink in the park. There were hundreds of empty bottles from both vodka and beer in the morning and the cleaning staff often came just before 10:00 making the park nearly inaccessible in the morning. Apart from some single users coming to the park early, park was in majority abandoned in this time slot.

**12:00-15:00:** Very busy period in terms of number and diversity of users. A lot of children from the schools located nearby come after lessons to smoke cigarettes and talk with each other. Elderly people in large numbers present in the park. Overall, if one wanted to sit on the bench he would not find any available.

**20:00-23:00:** this park is fenced and the fence is pretty high making it very hard to jump over it. There are just 2 spots where the fence could be crossed more easily but it still demands some strength. From 20:00 to 22:00 the park is moderately packed with people. However,

when the gates are closed at 22:00 and it gets very dark a lot of people start coming especially during the weekends. In practice, Chopin Park is one of the few within the city that is actively being used during the night time even despite the fact that it is a fenced park hardly accessible after 22:00.

#### 4.1.3. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Main target of participant observation were previously mentioned students drinking alcohol in public. Their general outlook was not very hospitable for others from outside - they were little bit tipsy and they often shouted. However, approaching these groups was not very difficult and they were usually open towards outsiders to join them and have some drinks together. In terms of what were the reasons for such behaviour vast majority pointed out close proximity of the Old Market Square with all of the music clubs. It is important to note that the park itself was not a destination for these people but rather a transit point before going to a party. Also, paradoxically, drinkers felt rather safe from the police in the park as they were protected by the fence and in their opinion police is too lazy to jump over the fence to fine them. Also they were out of sight of the street so randomly passing police patrol would not become interested of them unless they were seen.

#### 4.1.4. INTERVIEWS

First of all, what was actually striking in the interviews is the conflict between the users that was not met on such a scale in any other park investigated in this research. The respondents that were interviewed were elderly people and vast majority of them complained about the heavy presence of the drinking people. Examples of 2 respondents that avoid the park in the evening due to the feelings of lack of safety in the evening: *'I'm not sure if I have different strategies. I just avoid both of them [Mickiewicz and Chopin parks] in the evenings. You don't want to know what happens there when it gets late* and the second respondent: *Sometimes it would be nice to stay little bit longer cause what else I can do at home (...) But I don't feel very safe so in the late afternoon I usually go home.'* The issue of young people drinking and perceived safety of the elderly is of crucial importance for this park and is a clear sign that city authorities should do something about it. Among the possible solutions there are many ideas provided by the respondents. Sa one respondent describes: *'I wish it was more organised. I mean, some kind of small scene, maybe a cafe, they would play some jazz music*

*or some old hits in the evening and people would enjoy it more and I think more elderly people would come. And now they are being all forced out by young guys with a bottle of beer in their hand. And police just does nothing about it!*' This opinion clearly shows the antagonisms between the users. These are not only between one group and the other but mainly between the visions how the park should look like in future and what functions should it perform. Another issue is also the problem of privacy. For some interviewees the CCTV cameras would help to keep the order as the police would be able to control the park and send patrols if any illegal behaviour occurs. In fact, after the young people and students the police is the second group that are accused of problems with the park not responding to the problems that occur. Apart from the problems with tensions between the user groups elderly people seem to be enjoying the park very much. One note from a respondent: *'I think every part of the day is perfect to enjoy this park. Just apart from the evening when strange people come in here.'* But also the behaviour that is met during the evening affects the park outlook in the morning. One of the respondent's opinion: *'I don't like coming here early in the morning. I went few times cause I get up very early anyway. And what I met were piles of rubbish, bottles everywhere even, leftovers from puking. You wouldn't like to sit in such conditions.'* This view is supported by the member of cleaning staff that cleans the city parks in the mornings: *'(...) we observed this rule that the further you go out of the city centre the better it is (...) we have more work to do with 2 or 3 parks in the city centre than with the rest of the parks in the whole city.'* This suggests the locality of the problem that is present in just few small parks in the city centre but is still unsolvable for the city officials. The biggest problem here is, that what elderly respondents recorded was their lack of mobility. They often travel only to the parks that are nearby where they live and only those ones accessible by the public transport. This makes these people being excluded from the full range of activities and in such case being actually forced to use only given parks that they can access. In terms of particular reasons for coming into the park one of the respondents stated: *'We rarely go to any holidays as we cannot afford it. So park is for us some kind of green oasis within the concrete city. I can't imagine the city without its parks.'* This particular quote shows not only the importance

of parks for the elderly people but overall of poor people living in the city centre where there are always parks that they can access.

#### 4.1.5. ANALYSIS

Chopin park is a very interesting example of a serious conflict over the public space. On the one hand there are elderly people that are often poor and park is their only way to have a rest. On the other hand the park is located very close to the entertainment district of night-time economy and all the pubs and restaurants. This makes it a good spot for drinking in public. What is more, in last few months the city police announced doubling the number of police patrols within the Old Market Square area. But this still did not change the character of the Chopin park. What the participant observation actually showed is that the fence that should prevent people from getting into the park is actually a tool that protects people drinking alcohol inside of the park after it is closed from the police. Also, the park offer in terms of its amenities is very poor. Basically, there are just benches in the park and nothing else. And the number of benches is limited in peak times. What is surprising is that there were no events taking place within the park during the conduction of this research. Although the park has some nice history of organising the piano concerts as it is named after great Polish composer Chopin, these actions did not have any continuity in coming years. In fact, this park is one of the few within the city that does not have any kind of facilities at all. This also might partially explain why it is so popular among elderly people. As it was shown in the interviews elderly people do not demand much service and facilities, they are just satisfied when the park is nicely maintained and that is it. Also the park location far away from any busy street makes it hardly accessible for many groups of users. In general, the park can be only reached by tram and these are elderly, students and youngsters that are the most frequent users of the public transport service in Poznań. Generally, the biggest problem of the park is its vast dynamics of use. Park is not used in the morning, then used for the whole day by some very static group of users and then suddenly in the evening there is a complete change in dynamics. And such dynamics in terms of what are the users' needs but also how they behave is not beneficial in this particular example. The internal daily dynamics in lives of these 2 dominant groups are too different from each other to be accommodated. However, the situation with this park became dramatic and cannot be left as it is any longer. The city officials by closing the gates and putting cleaning staff in the morning try to hide the problem. But perhaps setting up CCTV supervision in the area would solve the problem - creating stable dynamics of a total

control of this place and unification of its use to accommodate demands from the elderly clientele. Nevertheless, this particular park shows that where there are two contrasting dynamics of different groups of users conflict is inevitable and will not solve on its own but there is some intervention needed.

## 4.2. CYTADELA PARK

### 4.2.1. BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATION

Cytadela is the biggest park in Poznań. It is not only unique because of its size but also due to landscape characteristics – it is built on a small hill which makes its terrain to vary a lot between the different areas of it. This characteristic is used by cyclists who take specific routes as to ride down the hill to gather high speed. Overall, this park is mostly dominated by people doing sports and the biggest group of users are cyclists. And these are not cyclists as thought about in a Dutch way but rather people riding MTB bicycles for sports-related purposes. The infrastructure for cycling in the park is moderately developed. All the paths are made out of tarmac which makes it convenient to ride a bicycle. Also there are many different paths all around the park so some people were riding around doing circles. The park itself is completely separated from traffic so the cyclists feel safely. However, the paths are not designed for cycling but rather for pedestrians walking through the park. Although there are many cyclists, the pedestrians have priority on the paths and cyclists are just allowed to cautiously use them sharing with pedestrians. As a result there are many threatening interactions between the users of these park alleys. As there are no signs informing that the paths are also designated for cyclists, the pedestrians walk widely on the whole path. Cyclists often approach them from the back causing dangerous situations of passing people by closely. Also the fact that park itself is not treated as a transit route but as a recreational area makes the cyclists ride much faster. What is more, despite the number of cyclists in the park there are just few bicycle racks located within the park which makes it extremely hard for the cyclists to leave their bicycle and do something else apart from riding. As a result, in many case cyclists enter the park, do ride inside of it, and then just leave the park. Although it is not a place of transit, the whole activity of riding around and leaving the park without event stepping on the ground can be called as a ‘recreational transit’. Apart from the cyclists there are also other people doing sports: jogging, rollerblading, running with dogs or playing Frisbee. Two of these activities that involve the lowest interaction with other users are

running or playing with dogs and playing Frisbee. The park is really huge and there are even specially designated areas within it where people can legally set their dogs off the leash and run with them freely. This does not affect other users so much as these areas are rather remote. Also people that play Frisbee usually do it on grass far away from others not disturbing anyone. The real problem occurs on the park alleys when people doing sports meet other dominant group of users in the park: mothers with children and the elderly people walking besides them. Important feature of the park are also cyclical events of different groups that take place in the park. Every Sunday there is a small running competition in which amateur runners come and their time is measured. These events usually attract up to 100 people. From time to time there are also commercial events organized by private companies that attract masses of visitors. Within the park there are two dining points, but comparing with the overall size of the park it seems to be rather a low number. During peak periods, especially in the weekends, these bars are very occupied and there is no place to find any seating. Another amenities within the park include art sculptures that attract people taking photographs, museum of warfare, playgrounds for children and even an outdoor gym.

#### 4.2.2. ACTIVITIES IN OBSERVATION TIME SLOTS

**7:00-10:00:** this was not the busiest period of the park use. Park was empty during the week time but during the weekend many people came even around 7:00 to jog around or to ride bicycle but still the number was very limited in comparison to other periods.

**12:00-15:00:** This was a very busy period for the park but mostly on the weekends. From Friday to Sunday park was very much occupied and the flow of pedestrians on the park alleys was so heavy that it was difficult for the cyclists to effectively pass the pedestrians safely. Park amenities such as bars or playgrounds were moderately busy in the week time but occupied to the place capacity during the weekends – cues for the available beach chair or for the table were common.

**20:00-23:00:** this park is also a non-fenced one so it can be accessed 24h a day. The unique feature of the park comparing with the other parks in this study is its size and especially its remoteness. Although there are street lamps along the alleys the park does not seem to be a hospitable place in the evening. The large open spaces are completely dark and there is not security nor any police presence in the area. It all results in very low use of park, especially when it was getting dark.

Generally there was much difference between the park occupation in the week time and in the weekends. Although that park was quite popular from the morning till the early evening in the week time it was the busiest in the afternoon. And during the weekends park was far more visited than at any time during the week time.

#### 4.2.3. INTERVIEWS

Cytadela is mainly a sports-oriented park. There are many benches though and a beautiful area called ‘Rosarium’ that is perfectly designed for sitting in a beautiful landscape but these are hardly used. It is important at this point to find out why is it so that so many cyclists, runners and rollerbladers come to Cytadela even if they have many other recreational areas in the city. One of the respondents explains asked about what is so special about the park: *‘You know, the kind of spirit that you experience here during the weekends, lots of cyclists here, people jogging, rollerblading, you can feel the atmosphere of exercise.’* One can argue that there are people jogging and doing other sports in and around other parks as well. But the location and surrounding of Cytadela park are different than in other parks as stated by the next respondent: *‘(...)it is different. Here, the scale of it is different. What I only hear in here are birds and people talking. I don’t hear any trams, cars, or buses. It makes me so much comfortable in here.’* Also other user draws on that describing his running experience in the park: *‘I think it is one of the best places for doing so in the city. The park is really huge and you can choose different paths every time. I never run the same route but I change them which makes it really interesting.’* One should also think about the park accessibility when so many people come to it on bicycles. Many of the respondents indicated that they come to the park because it is easily reachable by bicycle paths. In fact, not too many people boasted coming to the park by public transport. This can be connected with the fact that people doing sports are not only active within or in the park but also actively reach it from home. This also explains why people do not use parks in the city centre or their surroundings to jog or cycle around. It is because many of these do not have good cycling paths around, the parks their selves are too small or that there are inconvenient feature such as many street crossings with long time of waiting for the green light etc. And Cytadela is just convenient to reach as noted by one of the respondents: *‘You have bicycle paths nearly everywhere around so it is easily reachable’.* Talking specifically about the park use and potential interaction between the users there are many points of conflict there. Fast cycling people are the number one problem in the park as paradoxically stated by other cyclists: *‘There are loads of younger people on MTB bikes that*

*ride really fast cause they treat it as some kind of physical exercise. It is not really safe in my opinion.*’ This opinion is supported by other respondents. Also some of the responses indicate that some of the users choose specific periods of the day to avoid congestion and peak periods when there are many cyclists in the park. Thus, they are restricted by other users as explained by the respondent doing the Nordic walking: *‘This is also why I come here during this time [midday]. The park is not so busy, and especially there aren’t too many cyclists. They are the ones that freak me out. They are fast and often pass me very close when I don’t expect them. They should have more respect for walkers.’* As the users cannot cooperate with each other another view shows that separation of those users would solve the problem: *‘You see, the problem is that you don’t have separate lanes for bikes and for people walking. And then I have to horn at people when they get in my way.’* Such separation on a different basis serves well for dog owners that come to the park for recreational purpose. They have their designated part of the park for walking their dogs freely, playing Frisbee with their dogs or running around and not scaring anybody like elderly just because of the dog presence. Statement made by a respondent running with her dog: *‘I can set him [the dog] loose and nobody cares cause people are still far away from us. So we run around not being bothered by anyone’.* The last point about this park made by interviewees is its safety in the evening. As the observations showed, the park usage dramatically falls in the evening when it gets dark. In the late evening there are hardly any users at all. Even despite the fact that park is open and in the majority of its area is not fenced at all. This aversion to its use is described by a female respondent: *‘It is a vast area and there are just few lamps! Have you ever seen police in here?(...) This kind of dark open space is overwhelming for me. You can’t see if anybody’s coming. And still not so many people here then, so even if I scream nobody would help me at all.’*

#### 4.2.4. PARKRUN POZNAŃ EVENT

Every Saturday morning when the weather allows for it there is a runners’ competition on a distance of 5km with time measurement. Potential users register at the event’s website and they obtain an identification number. Then, they can take part in the competition and run with others. The event is free of charge and is run by sponsors and volunteers. The average number of people taking part in the event is around 100. This run is not an official one so the park is still open for everybody and runners are asked to be cautious not to disturb other users. Such

event promotes the park to wider group of users and accommodates the park use at the time in which the park is rather unoccupied.

#### 4.2.5. COMMERCIAL EVENTS

Cytadela due to its incredible size is often a place for commercial events. During this research one of such events was a “Dog Chow” show in which there were many dog-related competitions and shows which attracted thousands of spectators. Although that because of the heavy pedestrian use of the alleys these were inaccessible by other users like cyclists for nearly whole day, such events bring and attract potential park users that would not normally come to the park at all. This particular event brought massive media attention and its programme was available on the website. Apart from the organized events there were food stalls and tents of local organizations such as city kennel which promoted dogs adoption which also brought a social dimension to the event. This event also revealed problems with bicycle infrastructure as hundreds of people came to it on bicycles and had nowhere to park so the bicycles were often lying on a pile being an easy target for the potential thefts as visible on plate 4.3.



**PLATE 4.3. Large commercial event “The Dog Chow” brought masses of people to Cytadela park and many of them came by bicycle but the park infrastructure does not support this kind of use as there are hardly any bicycle racks; Source: author**

#### 4.2.6. SUNDAY FUNDAY EVENT

Interesting non-commercial event of use of the park was “Sunday Funday” event. This is a series of events that are from time to time depending on the weather organized in Cytadela Park. The event does not have any clear structure and is mainly based on spontaneous response of young people. The event itself is created as a Facebook event and then people responsible for its creation just invite their friends and others join basing on a snowball effect. This action usually attracts around 100 people and the participants discuss at the event fan page about what to bring and what activities they will perform. Among these are playing football, organizing picnic or playing Frisbee.

#### 4.2.7. ANALYSIS

There are many external and internal dynamics within the park. First of all, there is much variation in the park use between different part of the week and of the day. During the week time the park is less used than during the weekend which makes the park underused in some cases and overused in other. One of the important features of the internal dynamics is how the park itself is being used. There are some areas that are hardly used at all despite their potential. And many others are overcrowded at the same time. Overall the park is underdeveloped and despite its huge potential nothing really happens in it. The dining offer is very much limited and very modest in comparison to the park size. There are hardly any facilities apart from two playgrounds for children and old and not very popular warfare museum that is fenced and hardly accessible. Also low quality of infrastructure, as there are good paths for running and cycling but these have to be shared with people walking, creates additional dynamics. Some of the users come to the park early in the morning or late in the afternoon or evening to avoid the peak of walkers in the midday or early afternoon when more elderly come to the park and also mother with children often walking with pushchairs as visible on the plate 4.4. Such dynamics is created by lack of infrastructure that would separate different groups of users from each other. Also the park is not used at all in the evening. It has an old outdoor theatre but it is derelict right now. As there is no supervision of any security nor from the police all the users are pretty much gone in the evening leaving the park unoccupied. This situation might be changed by some programmes like organizing concerts in the old theatre but this would involve some kind of investment but overall would expand the potential visitor hours to later periods causing new dynamics to occur. However, it seems that despite all of those needs there is no one to respond. The park is poorly kept and there were

no major investments recently. The park does not have any management but is managed by the general board for the city greenery. It is also not surprising that there is no website that would inform about upcoming events. There is also one more important feature in the recent management of the park: the loss of park dynamics. This interesting process was liquidation of a MTB track that was very popular throughout the whole week creating a stable dynamics and replacing it with a toboggan run that is hardly used by anybody and that has no dynamics at all. As explained by one of the member of an organization that managed the MTB track: *'I think this shows how the city understands the kind of recreation within the parks. It can't be too much extreme cause it would discourage people like mothers with children from using it. It has to be family oriented (...) I think Cytadela will not be considered any sports place at all in future. There is not investment in that. You don't see any football pitches, volleyball pitches, you don't even have any bicycle racks at all despite the fact that hundreds of people come on bikes in there. The only thing that you can do now is playing Frisbee but what kind of sport is that?.'* Not only the park has a strange internal dynamics cause by the conflicts between users but also it is loses its potential dynamics of more frequent use or even total and constant use throughout the day and the evening 7 days in the week as a central recreational system of the city. Limited investment and limited information about the events taking place in the park also means limited dynamics of its use.



**PLATE 4.4. Typical view of the park alleys on busy Sunday afternoon; Not that the alley has to accommodate pedestrians, rollerbladers, cyclists, runners, small children on bicycles and people walking their dogs – it is thus not very convenient to ride a bicycle through such crowd and there are no separated lanes for bicycles at all Source: author**

### 4.3. DĄBROWSKIEGO PARK

#### 4.3.1. BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATION

The most dominant group in the park were couples. There are many seating spaces of various types. These are benches but also other means such as beach chairs that look modern and fashionable in comparison to more traditional benches. The couples often sit on the beach chairs and order drinks from various bars that are located within the park. Some of them also occupied benches. What is more, it was observed that very often the couples were entering the park from the direction of the shopping mall Stary Browar. It might be concluded that couples go to the park after shopping instead of using the indoor food courts as there is a good dining offer outdoors. Often couples were seen carrying shopping bags. What is more, interestingly, many couples came to the park on bicycles and not cars that are usually associated with shopping mall visitation. Also some of the couples lied on the grass on blankets but not too often. These were rather group of friends, the second mostly present group in this park, that were sitting on the grass. They often did not even have a blanket which meant that their visit in the park was rather spontaneous than planned as they were not prepared to carry the blanket with their selves. The couples were very static often not performing any activities at all. In opposition to that, groups of friends provided more bustling behavior. They were often loud and could be easily heard by others. Also in terms of their sports-related activities they were not static at all. Often they played Frisbee. Some of them tried to practice football on a limited scale, because there were also cases in which security guards reminded them that it is forbidden as it disturbs other guests of the park. There were also cases where group of male friends practiced volleyball passing. Among other activities not related to sports, the most dominant apart from just sitting and chatting, was dining together. It was very common to see young people buy food in the supermarket located on the ground floor of the shopping mall and then to consume this products as a form of lunch sitting on the grass in the park. In the afternoon it could also be seen that people carried pizza from outside of the park and ate it on the grass. The last visible group of the park users were middle-aged singles who treated the park as a point for resting and reading newspapers. Users of this group often sat on benches near the park exit with a newspaper or a magazine and they occupied this space for less than 30 minutes. It could be seen that users of this group avoided groups of friends as these were loud and rarely used any of the beach chairs. Interestingly, they only used the benches and were more present in the areas that were further away from the dining and bar area that was

more loud and often played the music. What is more, groups like elderly or students reading lecture notes or studying were almost completely missing from the park presence. The most striking feature of the park was that people usually scattered near the dining area in which it was rather loud and the music was played. Although that there was no regulation for the use of beach chairs and these could be moved to any of the park corners, most of users still occupied areas near the bars even if they did not order anything. Another interesting observation was the behavior of dog owners just outside of the park. People walked their dogs along the park fence on a narrow strip of grass that was poorly maintained and often blocked by cars. They could not enter the park as it was forbidden to enter the park with a dog due to the regulations set up by the park management.

#### 4.3.2. ACTIVITIES IN OBSERVATION TIME SLOTS

**7:00-10:00:** interestingly there were some users in the park even early in the morning. The people usually came to eat breakfast in one of the bars located close to the shopping mall. Especially on the weekends there were people having a morning coffee there. During the week time the park was less frequently used in this time slot but still more than other parks.

**12:00-15:00:** this was the busiest period of use among the 3 time slots. Interestingly, there was some slight difference in terms of users between the weekend and week time. During the week time the most dominant group in this period were groups of friends that were usually students coming from the University of Economics that is located nearby. On the other hand, during the weekends the couples were the most dominant group in this period as it was more connected with using the park after shopping.

**20:00-23:00:** this park is completely fenced from all sides. As the fence is really solid, tall and designed in such way that it is impossible to jump over it there are no users that would try to use the park after the gates close. As a result in most cases the observation slot was shorter than till 23:00 as park was usually being closed before the dusk so around 21:00-22:00. Interestingly, during the week time there were much less people in the park in this particular period and on the weekends people tended to stay much longer in the park which was also supported by the park management on the side of the shopping mall that allowed for the gate to be open till late.

## 4.3.3. INTERVIEWS

The user group interviewed in this park were couples. Usually the couples were approached and one person was involved in the interview. One of the main features regarding this park is that it is a private area. The park used to be located on a parcel that belonged to the city and was for years a public park. However, when the land was sold to the private investor that built the shopping mall nearby the park was part of the agreement and was sold too. As a result, in last few years there was a complete metamorphosis of this area. The changes are usually positively described by the respondents, as one account follows: *'(...) the alleys where very dirty, when it was raining you couldn't walk here because it was all mud. The grass was full of dog poo and it was horrible – you wouldn't ever lie on it as we lie today. There was nothing in the park – it was only a passage through which you could get to the shopping centre. Few years ago I wouldn't even imagine that me and my wife would lie in here like today and have a cola from a bar nearby. Unbelievable how it all changed.'* This account shows how much change there was not only in the reception of this place but also in type of behavior that predominated this place and that now occurs. According to these words the park used to be just a green parcel without really a recreational or leisure function. Of course these changes also brought questions about how much public this space still is and to what extent it is privatized and what behavior is allowed in such reality. One of the respondents described the current situation as 'consumption related': *'I mean the park reflects the style of the shopping mall – both are perfectly maintained. There aren't even real bushes in this park, just grass and nothing else.'* So the architecture and park designed reflect the style of the interior of the shopping mall which boosts the consumption and does not leave any unmaintained areas. This opinion is supported by other respondents' accounts that complained about lack of freedom in the park use by e.g. stating that they were stopped by the security guards because they were riding bicycle within the park. One respondent concludes: *'I think it clearly shows how much privatized is this space. You don't really know what you are allowed to do. I've seen people playing Frisbee here and it was okay. But when people started playing football with a very soft ball and with a lot of care the security guards suddenly came and asked them to stop.'* But on the other hand, some of those accounts might be very subjective not looking at the park from a wider perspective of its history. Previously the park was in a really bad shape which is brought into account by some other respondents: *'You can say that it's all about money. But to be honest, the park entrance is for free, you can sit on the beach chairs without charge, you can listen to nice music, the grass and everything in the park is well*

*maintained. So it is kind of a public place now that a private company took care of (...) one should remember how this park looked before the private company took care of it. It was horrible and city did nothing with it. And now it works. So maybe the city should privatize those parks which are not popular and that are rarely used.* Another question asked about the role of this park and its semi-public character is who is allowed to enter it or rather who is pushed out because of the new character of this place. One respondent comments on that: *'I think this area became really fashionable and now it is not only about relaxation or leisure that were originally main reasons behind the decision to go to park but it is also to show off yourself. Look how people are dressed in here, they are mostly in nice designer clothes and really being high end. Typical customers of Stary Browar shopping centre.'* Another respondent clearly describes who are the users that are not accepted in the park: *'(...) there are no drunks in here and no homeless people which I'm usually aware of. So they try to keep them out of park I guess, cause I've already seen few security guards. But it's good, when the homeless stay in the park people don't want to come. And people should not be terrorized but they should use the public space freely.'* This respondent associated the security guards with keeping the order in a public space not being aware of the fact that it is actually private – it might be because they usually stay in the background being out of sight as seen on plate 4.5. Strictly, there are specific user groups that should be kicked out of the area with no right to interfere in other users' leisure time. Talking about the semi-private character of this place and what is the boundary between public and private other respondent brings an interesting quote: *'Here you can only drink what you bought in the official bar and only in designated marked area. If you go out of it they would approach you immediately. But on the other hand you can't legally drink beer in a public park so you are constantly in a fear that police will come and fine you. Is there really a difference?'* Another thing that was also touched upon in the interviews is the fact that most of the couples were young people. There were hardly any elderly couples present. This might be explained by one of the respondents' account: *'When you look at parks like Chopin park people sit there and they just contemplate. Some others would read a book and that's it. Here, people really gather to meet and not to just sit. That is the main difference. In Chopin park when you talk loudly or you gather in a huge group all the elderly people look at you with disappointment, they are too afraid to speak up but they look at you. And here there is nothing like this, you feel that the atmosphere that they create here is much younger and more lively.'*



**PLATE 4.5. The area where drinking alcohol bought in the park is designated with red lines. The security guard (dressed in black suit) stands on the top of the hill and observes if people do not carry the alcohol out of the designated zone; Source: author**

#### 4.3.4. EVENTS ORGANIZED BY THE SHOPPING MALL STARY BROWAR

As the park belongs to the owner of the shopping mall that is nearby also most of its activities are organized by the marketing department of the company managing the shopping mall. Since the park transformation and investment in new alleys and infrastructure, the shopping mall is trying to attract people to the park probably trying to extend its scope to new users in outdoor activities. The whole thing is nicely branded with the logo of the company and information about the events might be often found in local media but also on the website of the shopping mall and its facebook fun page where also photographs from the events are often published and also schedule of activities might be found. Among the activities organized there are sports classes in Zumba, Yoga, Capoeira and a boot camp that are all very popular as can be seen on plate 4.6. There is also an information point within the park where one can rent

beach chairs, blankets, sets for beach tennis, and also Frisbee. Also there are some special events like music concerts that attract masses of people. All of these activities are free of charge and take place both during the weekends and week time.



**PLATE 4.6. Zumba classes in Dąbrowskiego park organized by the Stary Browar shopping mall. These classes are very popular among women while their partners often come with them and sit in the bar and watch it; Source: Internet**

#### 4.3.5. ANALYSIS

Overall, the impression of Dąbrowskiego park after observations and interviews is very positive. It is one of the few parks in this research that is actually used full time from the morning till the evening. Paradoxically, one of the reasons for that might be the exclusion of certain groups like drunk people in the evenings and homeless people sleeping in the park in the morning. For most of the interviewees such aspect is positive and they usually stated that they can use the park more freely because of that. In other parks, like e.g. Mickiewicz park, the presence of homeless people in the morning prevented many of the respondents from using the park in the morning. Also the presence of people drinking alcohol in the evening discouraged some groups like females or elderly from staying in the park. In Dąbrowskiego park the situation is completely different. There are users drinking morning coffee at the outdoor café, there are many couples but also other groups of users coming to the concerts or

other special events in the evenings. There are also couples coming to do the shopping in the afternoon and then staying in the park afterwards to eat or drink or just to have some rest. Thus, this park has a unique dynamics of use that is more or less constant from the morning till the evening with some peaks when the special events are organized. But there is no period to be stated by the respondents and also by the observation when the presence of some users or their behavior would discourage others of coming and using the park. Also the difference between the week time and weekends was not very significant. It all shows that fencing the park that used to be an open public space for years was positive in this particular example. The place is bustling and attracting masses of people. The dynamics of use ensure that there are constantly other users in the park so people are not afraid to come such as in the other parks when the emptiness of the place actually discourages its use. And still the security ensures that park is well maintained, that no disruptive behavior is allowed and that there is no littering. In fact, loads of litter on grass in the morning negatively affect park use such as jogging or walking the dog or just contemplating in the park in the morning in many other parks that are part of this study. Here, the gates are being closed in the evening and opened in the morning and the place itself is strictly supervised. But apart from this positive changes and that the place dynamics ensure its constant use, the fact that there are no conflicts visible in the park use does not mean that these do not exist at all. These conflicts are not present because the private supervision of the park does not allow for that to happen. But what the observations and interviews revealed was the fact that some of the groups that were present in other parks were completely missing in this one. These were mostly elderly but also students and mother with children. They were replaced by couples, single professionals and also middle-aged people doing shopping and resting in the park. As the interviews' accounts showed, these groups were missing because of the branding of this place as a fashionable and high end, with also types of food and drinks and their prices showing what is the 'entry level' for potential users that would like to take part in full scope of park activities. This brings another type of dynamics, a historical perspective in which people used the place in their own manner and it suddenly became changed and its previous use was completely eroded. Such place dynamics not only shows that use of a given place and its character is not taken for granted but also that users change and migrate between places as these change. But most of the respondents did not see any problem with that and this stands in accord with what Crawford & Flint (2009, p. 411) wrote: *'In a context in which the idea of the city as a place of diversity is being eroded and the nature of the public realm is being squeezed by dominant private interests, questions about the social and civic qualities of urban life remain largely*

*unspoken.*’. Another strong point is made by Dixon et al. (2006, p.191) that agree that *‘the dialectical tension between freedom and control that defines public space is not merely an issue of concern for town-planners, architects, politicians, and other bureaucrats of the city. It is also a matter that must be confronted in everyday living. Public life presupposes life-in-public and thus a constant engagement with, and evaluation of, others’ presence, actions, and entitlements. This process inevitably raises a range of concerns for the ordinary users of public spaces. Among other things, such concerns have to do with the maintenance of personal safety, the reconciliation of personal rights and desires with the rights and desires of others, and, as we shall emphasize, the preservation of the kind of social space in which public life remains possible.’* This is especially seen in the Dąbrowskiego park where its management ensures the dynamics of its use but only to a specific groups of accepted users with accepted behavior.

#### 4.4. MARCINKOWSKIEGO PARK

##### 4.4.1. BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATION

The park itself is currently being renovated in terms of new alleys and some small improvements such as lamps and litter bins. Its distinctive feature is that it has a large pond with beautiful trees surrounding it. Another important thing is that it is divided into two halves separated by a street with a car traffic. There is also a small bar near this street that can be described as belonging to the park as its tables face the park alleys. In terms of any facilities there is a small playground for children that is well maintained. In a close proximity to the park there are two universities with few departments so hundreds of students pass this area every day. The park is also located between the railway station and the city centre so acts as a transit route. The most striking thing about the observations in Marcinkowskiego park was that apart from one distinctive group there were hardly any people within the park. This group were users of the skate park that is located in the southern part of the park. Other users were people walking their dogs in the park, some people passing the park just in transit and elderly people sometimes occupying the benches. But overall, it can be said that the park was almost empty. In this case the observations focused on the skate park area. The area surrounding the skate park facility is very basic in its shape. Literally, there are no amenities apart from few benches and a sign informing about what is allowed and what is forbidden in

the skate park as visible on plate 4.7. Its users are mainly youngsters and it can be concluded that the mean age is between 15 and 25 years old. Majority of users were male. For the most of the time people were just skating in the park on the pipes and concrete devices but they were also resting on the grass just next to the skating facility. On the opposite side of the people resting there were often females looking at their friends sitting on the benches. What is apparent here is also the fact of interaction with some few users of the park. When people were passing the area they never crossed it near where the skate park is but rather chose longer route omitting the skate park. Another striking behavior was that skate park users were leaving a lot of litter after themselves but this can be also justified with the lack of litter bins in that area. Generally, the skate park area was extremely popular not only in terms of number of people using it but also in terms of periods when it was used. There were people all the time whenever the observations took place, no matter early in the morning or late in the evening. And in relation to other parts of the park there were nearly no users in the morning and in the evening and only limited number of users in the afternoon.



**PLATE 4.7.**  
**Basic area**  
**around the skate**  
**park with only**  
**limited amount**  
**of seating**  
**available and**  
**practically no**  
**litter bins;**  
**Source: Author**

#### 4.4.2. ACTIVITIES IN OBSERVATION TIME SLOTS

**7:00-10:00:** there were hardly any users within the park. Park was empty both during the week time and during the weekend. The only users were noted on the skate park and this relates both to week time and the weekends. Occasionally there were some homeless people sleeping on benches in the early morning.

**12:00-15:00:** The skate park was moderately used at this time. The whole park was used only to a very limited extent, mainly by elderly people sitting on the benches. There was more people during the weekends than in the week time.

**20:00-23:00:** this was the busiest period for the skate park but not for the park itself. As the skate park was extremely popular in this period, the same cannot be said about the park that was completely empty. There were only some people walking their dogs.

Generally there was some difference between the weekends and week time – the number of users increased during the weekends.

#### 4.4.3. INTERVIEWS

As the observations did not bring too many effects it was crucial in this park to carry out interviews to understand what are the reasons for the situation of lack of use of the park. First of the striking issues after the observations was the emptiness of the park itself. The respondents usually blamed lack of any facilities, remoteness and difficult accessibility as reasons for low popularity of the park. As one respondent said: *'(...) look at the location of Marcinkowskiego park. It's a remote one. I would have to walk around 20 minutes to reach the Old Market Square. And from Chopin park I only have to walk 3-4 minutes. None of my friends would bother to come here at night cause it's also creepy to drink in here as there are no people.'* Another account also supports the previous thesis about the park: *'It is nice but is inaccessible. I mean, people don't come here. It's just between the city centre and the railway station. People just cross it to get from one place to the other. Otherwise why would you bother to come here at all?'* Another issue was the skate park and its location. In fact, despite that the park was not used at all, bustling skate park was located in a very remote area at the edge of the park away from its core. Despite that the park is rather well maintained in terms of cleanliness the same cannot be said about the area where skate park is located: *'They don't even clean the litter. It is a no-go place for public services. I've never seen any of the officials here neither any police. It is just how it is.'* Perhaps the reasons for locating the skate park in this particular location were predominated by the fact of potential clashes with other users and noise that skating often creates. This thesis is supported by some respondents: *'It is just at the edge of the park. No one comes in here apart from the people that use the skate park. I think that many people, especially the elderly, are just scared of what we do, also the graffiti stuff on the hoops. That's why they put it not in the prime location but more in the remote one.'* Despite the limited number of park visitors still the creation of skate park created

a huge tensions between the elderly people traditionally using the park and the skaters as stated in one of the respondents' account: *'(...) they [park users] are just afraid of us sitting and smoking cigarettes and doing the whole skating. I mean, they look at all those empty bottles here, graffiti and people dressed like skateboarders and they think "oh, I don't belong in here".'* Not only the tensions between the skate park users and other park users are common. Due to the extreme popularity of the skate park and its busyness there is also a problem of priority in the use of hoops and tricks performance at the skating facility. Some of the younger skaters are harassed by the older ones, a respondent states: *'(...) during the weekends it gets overcrowded. You can't sometimes really compete with older skateboarders. It is just that you know you can't be there as they would say something to kick you out. When there aren't too many people it is cool but usually in the weekend there is a problem.'* It is supported by one other account: *'But I don't stay really late cause the later it gets the older skaters come. And then you feel this kind of pressure to go home because they are old and they ride really fast and I don't feel like getting into trouble with them.'* The last issue touched upon in the interviews was the location of the skate park within the Marcinkowskiego park and the facilities surrounding it. The problem is that the skate park is located at the edge of the park and apart from few benches there is nothing else. The respondents complained that they are even not able to buy anything to drink: *'They just randomly put it here. I mean, there wasn't any major plan behind it. And the result of that is that you have this small skate park here, everybody is coming, people are having fun but that's it. When they finish they just go elsewhere. I mean, they didn't think how to keep these people in here, organize any activities any facilities to stay, drink or sit. It's not well organized.* Overall, lack of shops or places where one can buy food or drinks was seen as a major problem for this area. This meant long walk through multi-lane street to reach such amenities. Mostly, respondents thought that the area near skate park and the park itself is a suitable place for a fancy bar as they compared it to the Dąbrowskiego park where they often headed after the visit in the skate park.

Apart from the general recorded interviews there was also one thing that most of the interviewees said off the record. For most of the respondents the park overall was associated with an commonly heard story that Marcinkowskiego park is a meeting place for homosexuals and this was stated as the reason for lack of popularity of the park.

## 4.4.4. ANALYSIS

Marcinkowskiego park turned out to be the least successful park in this study. The observations showed that it was hardly used at all. Reasons for that might be found in the park's location. Not only the park is divided into 2 halves that are separated by a street but also the park is surrounded from two sides with at least 4 lanes of traffic and all the pedestrian crossings are with traffic lights. This means that pedestrians that want to cross the street need to walk few hundred meters to the closest crossing and then wait very long for the green signal. This creates a psychological effect of lack of access to the park as explained by Lee & Maheswaran (2010, p. 220) who argue that 'there are also difficulties capturing factors such as environmental barriers that hinder access such as the presence of heavily trafficked roads, lack of pedestrian crossings and quality of pavements' that might limit use of a given place. The dynamics of this place might be limited to a week time and weekend as a main division between busy and very busy use. But this mainly relates to the skate park itself because while it is too small to accommodate all the users' needs the huge park nearby stays completely empty. Striking feature was a well maintained playground for children that was not used even by a single child on Sunday afternoon on a sunny day as documented on plate 4.8. What was not clearly visible in the observations but was well explained by the respondents that were interviewed is the enormous scale of the conflicts in this area despite its low use. The traditional users were not coming into interactions with skateboarders because in their opinion they were just too afraid of them. It could also be seen from the observations that elderly users tried to walk on different alleys not to approach the skate park too much. This lack of social cohesion in the park might suggest that there were no public consultations before the decision to build the skate park in this location and now there is much anxiety because of that. The elderly users were not interviewed in this study but basing on the observation of the youth using the skate park it can be concluded that apart from littering that was justified by lack of proper number of bins and lack of cleaning services on the side of municipal services, there were hardly any fights or aggressive behavior. As a result of such popular associations with the skaters, 'skate parks are often situated either in low public visibility sites (e.g. industrial sites, back-ends of sport fields or concaves in community nature park reserves) or in high visibility low public transverse sties (e.g. adjacent to busy intersections/roadways)' as argued by Taylor & Khan (2011, p. 499). And this can be seen in the location of the skate park in Marcinkowskiego park, remote from its core. Also, despite that it was not visible at all in the observations, there turned out be some internal conflict in the skaters group. Younger skaters

were pushed out of the skate park in given hours (especially in the late afternoon/evening) which limited the dynamics of use for the youngest group that was forced to come earlier. Overall, the older users stated that they do not usually bother when they come to the park because it is always busy. And because they usually keep in a group they are not afraid to use the park late in the evening which enhances the park dynamics to longer hours. On the other hand, the dynamics of use for other significant group, the elderly, was much more limited as these were not present in the park at all in the evenings. Last conflicting issue is the virtual conflict between what is the perception of a public park. For most of the users of skate park lack of any facilities in the close vicinity was seen as a problem. But one should not question if this is objective or not, but one rather should think about what is the role of a park itself. It cannot be judged whether the skaters needs are good or bad, and would a bar selling soft drinks or beer be necessarily good for the park. This is a striking feature about this park, that its users demand a new kind of park, more dynamic in response to the needs of its users. It does not always have to just serve the purpose of having rest and enjoying the nature but also in serving the commercial demands. Response to that conflicting issue might be comparing the Marcinkowskiego park with Dąbrowskiego park which is very attractive for younger users and is just located about 500 metres away. At the same time, Marcinkowskiego park is empty and apart from the skaters there are hardly any users, and there is also hardly any idea how to change that situation.



**PLATE 4.8. Amazing view for a well maintained playground nearly in the city centre on a sunny Sunday – no children at all; Source: Author**

#### 4.5. MICKIEWICZ PARK

##### 4.5.1. BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATION

There was no other park in this study that would be so much homogenous in terms of users. This park was completely dominated by students. The main activities performed by students were especially resting on the grass often on blankets. These students could be split into few different groups due to observations. First one are single students who usually come to the park to read a book. There were also many students reading notes from the lectures that appeared to be learning to their exams. Occasionally there were also people sitting against a tree with their laptops and surfing on the Internet probably being connected to a free-wifi provided by the city. They often also have headphones on their heads creating a cocoon that allows them to escape from everyday life. Among those that were cocooning were often students that slept being probably tired after the lectures. Important observation was made about the fountain that is located in the centre of the park. It was often used a seating space for people. Before it was filled with water people were sitting inside of it resting against its wall and reading a book creating their own basin of being separated from other users as seen on plate 4.9. Here, another group of users appear. These are also young people but with a direct activity to perform: skating. Before the fountain was filled with water it was regularly used by skaters who used its walls as a great type of infrastructure for performing the tricks. This created some tensions between users. Most of the students that looked for a peaceful environment moved elsewhere demonstrating their unhappiness with skaters' performance. However, at no time any verbal conflict occurred nor any arguments between the users. This problem disappeared when the fountain was eventually filled with water in the early summer. This change occasionally brought another group to the park: mothers with children that use the fountain as a playground bathing inside and splashing each other with water. Despite the fact that bathing in public fountains that have a closed circuit of water is not safe for children's health, parents were very happy to see their children perform like that. However, occurrence of children with parents was very occasional in comparison to a constant presence of students. Apart from the individual students that used the park there were also groups of students gathering. These groups can be further split into small groups and large groups. Small groups were classified as 2,3, or 4 people usually chatting with each other and being moderately loud and also doing some simple activities like e.g. playing frisbee. In case of large groups the situation was quite different. When there were groups of 5 students or more it

was usually loud and people were often shouting. Small grass parties were also accompanied by eating together take-away food and by drinking small amounts of alcohol even during the day. There were also some exceptional users as professional performers who put an elastic jumping line between the trees and did some tricks. The crowd gathered in the park cheered them but to surprise of everybody the police came fining these performers of acting unsafely. In the evenings there were many people drinking alcohol in the park which completely changed the place from a peaceful and rather quiet environment to a loud full of people shouting and screaming not hospitable for resting anymore. Interestingly, what also changed in the evening in terms of behaviour observed is the location of users within the park. As during the day these were mainly seating in the middle just in front of the fountain, in the evening they were hiding behind the trees just on the edges of the park. This is due to the park design which has an area covered by grass near the fountain in the middle that is accessed by the sun, and also edges where the paved alleys are located that are accompanied by benches and that are hidden from the sun by the densely growing trees as seen on plate 4.10. These benches are also used by the homeless people as they protect them from the wider view of the public. Overall, it needs to be said that there was no major difference in the park use between the weekend and week time. Park was very popular during the Friday or Saturday evening but it was also popular during the week time.

**PLATE 4.9. People cocooning with a book or notes from the soundscape of the city; Source: Author**



**PLATE 4.10. Youngsters drinking alcohol on the park edge in the early evening; Source: Author**

#### 4.5.2. ACTIVITIES IN OBSERVATION TIME SLOTS

**7:00-10:00:** during this time park was mainly occupied by the homeless people. This is perhaps a very popular sleeping place during warm days of late spring and early summer. Homeless people occupied most of the benches hidden in the shades of trees and also used the main middle part of the park but usually were hidden between the low bushes. Apart from their static and quiet presence nothing much was going on in the park. It also needs to be said that park was full of litter that was usually collected around 9:00 by the cleaning company. Straight in the morning the park was not a very hospitable place have rest in.

**12:00-15:00:** Usually at this time park was very busy with users. A lot of students finished their lectures and came to the park. One could notice that there is a huge difference between the morning and the afternoon in terms of number of users and the overall liveability of this place. What is more, there was no major difference between the week days and the weekend in terms of number of users at this specific time slot. Some small groups of elderly came at this time to the park, especially on the weekends and had some rest on benches located on the edges of the park.

**20:00-23:00:** this park is a non-fenced one so it can be accessed 24h a day. Its unique characteristic is that it is located very close to the city centre and still is hidden from the main light of the night-time economy entertainment district. All of this made it extremely popular in this particular time slot. A lot of young people came to the park with their own alcohol and were drinking and socialising. Such situation was common both in the weekends and in the week time.

#### 4.5.3. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

In this park also the participant observation was performed. Main target of participants were groups of drinkers. The main issues that people discussed were very trivial and the type of drinking that they performed was getting drunk very hard and quickly. Most of the users headed towards the city centre straight afterwards. Overall, among the reasons for not drinking in Old Market Square or any other legalised areas the users listed lack of money. And for the reasons about choosing this particular location they listed its proximity to the city centre, lack of fence and low presence of the police. However, it was noted by one of the female participants that she used to come to the park much more often while she was in the beginning of her studies. But now, when she is on the final year the police presence in the

park is much more common these days so people cannot come to the park as often as they used to.

#### 4.5.4. INTERVIEWS

The most dominant group identified were students and these were interviewed on the park characteristics. First of all, from the interviews it appears that ban on sitting on the grass was one of the main features that blocked the park use. The overall outlook of the park was inviting people to sit while it was still forbidden. As a result there were fines given, as described by one of the respondents: *'I think the biggest revolution in Poznań in terms of city use by people who really enjoy being in the city was the abolition of law that forbid sitting on the grass in public spaces (...) I remember when we were coming here and the municipal police was hiding behind the trees just to fine you. It was ridiculous.'* Another user also pointed out that forbidding to seat on the grass in Mickiewicz park basically forbid to use the whole park at all as its main function is recreation and leisure on the grass: *'(...) parks should be aesthetic but they should also remain functional! And for me forbidding lying on the grass makes the park dysfunctional.'* Another important point that the respondents touched upon is the location of the park and its perfect recognition by the citizens. It was suggested that park can act as a great meeting point cause everybody knows where it is, how to reach it and it has unique buildings in its neighbourhood such as Opera House that is recognised by most of the Poznan citizens. One respondent notes: *'I think it [the park as a meeting place] is because everybody knows it and you just say ,lads, let's meet near the fountain' or ,near opera house' and everything is clear.'* Another respondent adds to that: *'This is a famous spot well recognised even by people who never come to the parks. My parents, they never visit any park. But if I describe them where I am going they always know and say ,oh yes, I know this place, it's just near the park with the fountain'.* Apart from its perfect recognition the location of the park is also important. Particularly, there are two main features that respondents brought to the discussion. One is the physical design of the park as it is located in the basin and surrounded by trees that protect it from the noise of the cars and buses coming from the streets as noticed by one of the respondents: *'What I mostly like about it [the park] is that it is in the city centre and you don't feel that at all.'* Other important aspect in terms of its location is the fact that it is close to the city centre which provides its users with ability to use many different facilities during the day. The do not necessarily have to spend the whole day within the park but when they do feel like they can cross the street to Fredry street and have

something to eat. Or after spending few hours in the park they can go to the city centre to a pub or to a party. Next aspect described by the interviewees is the park openness and ease of access. In comparison, just cross the street there is one more park behind the Castle which is hardly used by anybody. One of the reasons for its lack of popularity stated by the respondents is the fact that sitting on the grass is forbidden in this park. Another is its closed appearance as explained by the interviewee: *'I've never seen too many people there (...) so I thought it is just a part of the Castle, for employees or something. I think it is a bad idea that they have this fence there.'* On the opposite, the Mickiewicz park has a wide entrance from the side of the Opera House and can be also accessed from other sides without any fences. Among the exact reasons for using the park most of the students would respond that they live in inhospitable environment which often means a flat shared with other students that does not have any green area in the backyard nor any garden. So coming to the park is the only opportunity to breathe fresh air and to have rest. But not only resting is important for students but overall hospitable environment that allows for studying as explained by the respondent: *'I often go to parks to read things for my studies. I do it because I live with 3 other guys in a student flat and you can't really study in there. They drink all the time and being in the park is the only time when I can focus on reading.'* Seeing students with lecture notes, academic books or laptops is a very common view within the park. But most of such students leave the park in the evening as it is too dark to study and they are replaced by another group of students that do not treat academic duties with so much respect. These are young people that drink beer and vodka in the park when it gets dark. Reasons for that are brought by one of the interviewees: *'Park is nice, there are these benches behind the trees so if you want to drink something you are not very visible in the street. There are no cameras so the municipal police wouldn't find you. Perfect spot.'* But what students think about such drinking is surprisingly found not to be anything negative. As most of the respondents complained about lack of money and limited monthly budget they treat drinking in the park as something completely normal. What is more, some of the respondents indicated also using other parks such as Chopin park for the purpose of drinking alcohol in public. What is appearing in the interviews is the fact that respondents do not necessarily see any sense in the ban on alcohol and treat that as a pointless thing such as was the ban on sitting on the grass. Some of the respondents argue that despite the ban on drinking in public, still there are people drinking in the park every week and nothing changes about it. In this case, a proper solution would be to legalise the drinking which in the current legal situation means creating a designated zone for drinking the alcohol as explained by one of the respondents: *'The fact that everybody drinks in this place is so*

*obvious that the city should do something about it. They should put some small bar in the corner so people can come here and have a beer. It is ridiculous (...) And putting a bar or a special zone in front of the fountain that would sell beer in here would just mean legalising it.* Most of the students sees the ban on alcohol in park as a serious problem and they would expect some kind of cheap bar to be installed straight inside the park as a solution to the problem of illegal behaviour and drinking in public. The last distinctive feature which occurred in the interviews was the fact that students are very mobile. They use many different parks and seldom focus just on one single park. Although they dominate in Mickiewicz park they are more open than any other group of users to use other parks frequently. However, their two mostly used ones are the Mickiewicz park and Chopin park as these are located within the city centre where many students live so they can access them quickly. Also some of the university departments are located in the close proximity from the parks which make them, and especially Mickiewicz park as a desirable destination for students after finishing lectures.

#### 4.5.5. YOGA IN THE PARK EVENT

Some of the respondents complained about the static character of the park. In response to that during the summer months of July and August city council organises yoga classes in front of the fountain in Mickiewicz park. This event brought mass media attention and was also sponsored by some local companies. As a result, first class was joined by about 300 people which is documented on plate 4.11. This highly popular event shows what is the potential of this place because of its magnificent landscape. In comparison, yoga classes organised in Dabrowskiego Park are not that popular which can be blamed for just normal outlook of this park in comparison with more beautiful view of Mickiewicz park.



**PLATE 4.11. Masses of people on the yoga in front of the fountain event organized for the first time in this summer on 1<sup>st</sup> of July;  
Source: Internet**

#### 4.5.6. ANALYSIS

This park is not very stable in its dynamics of use. When the park life wakes up in the morning the park is quiet and unoccupied. The life in it wakes slowly as slowly wake up the homeless people lying on the benches in the morning. But then the park is very much busy throughout the afternoon and still does not lose its popularity in the evening. This is the first dynamics which shows the changes throughout the day. But in terms of user dynamics the result is much weaker. There are some groups of users apart from students such as parents with children bathing in the fountain or some elderly people having rest on the benches but these people were just few in comparison to overall number of students. Generally speaking it can be said that there is a strong need of extending the dynamics of use into longer hours for some specific groups like female students. These are often pushed out of the park as drinking secretly between the trees is mainly a male activity. Also doing it this way does not create a resemblance of safety and comfort for young female users. Despite its unique architecture and majestic landscape during the day the place loses its attractiveness at night. Lighting up a

beautiful scenery of the Opera House and setting up a small bar in the middle of the park could mean extending the official dynamics to later hours and also extending the dynamics of many students living in the city centre. Now, after few hours spent in the park most of them would just leave in the evening as there is no opportunity for them to have any fun in the park at this time. The extended police presence in the area at night might still influence the dynamics of use creating an empty period of lack of dynamics at all in the evening. If the city sees people drinking in the park as a problem and tries to get rid of them it has to provide any other facility that would maintain the dynamics of the park. But this is only a wish while the real actions head towards preserving the really majestic landscape of the park in the evening, a landscape free of any people that would disturb it.

#### 4.6. SOLACKI PARK

##### 4.6.1. BEHAVIOURAL OBSERVATION

Observation of the behaviour of people using the park brought some interesting conclusions. First of all, the most dominant group was identified. Despite that there were many couples coming to the park because of its beautiful scenery, the most dominant group were mothers and overall parents with children. There were few age groups of children. The youngest were babies in pushchairs that were most commonly looked after by their mothers. The mothers were usually seating on benches along the alleys or walked with the pushchairs. In some minor cases there were examples of mothers meeting with each other and talking but not too often. Older children aged around 6-12 years were mainly present in the area of a large playground having fun on the facilities provided. Their parents were usually seating on benches and occasionally reading books or magazines. Sometimes the parents were accompanying children while there were using taller and more extreme features of the playground. There were also groups of young children from schools or kindergarten coming to the park with their teachers as part of their outdoor activities. The second most dominant group in that park were couples. These were mainly young people aged 15-30 years that most commonly were seating on benches and talking with each other. Surprisingly, couples were mainly seating on hard wooden benches and occurrence of people seating on the grass on a blanket was very low. Some of the couples were walking through the park without stopping and having ice-cream bought in the nearby ice-cream shop, which is located around 300 meters from the park. Third most dominant group were elderly that mainly sat in areas

fronting the ponds. They often fed the ducks by specially bringing bread from home for this occasion. About 75% of elderly were coming to the park alone without any partner and their main activity was reading the books. There was also substantial number of elderly coming to the park on the bicycle. Among other user groups there were very low numbers of young people either in groups or coming alone apart from couples. Very rarely any students or groups of friends came to the park to socialize. Basing on the observations one can say that the park is not intended as a typical meeting place nor is it favorable for any kind of entertainment. There is one restaurant in the middle of beautiful park ponds but how it is used by park users suggests that it is somehow detached from the park. Most of the restaurant users came to it by car and did not use any of the park facilities but left the park directly going to the car after a dinner. There were no other facilities within the park that could be used for any kind of activity. There was also one important factor regarding the park function: it lies on the cycling path connecting two different parts of the city. There is a wide and well-designed cycling path available on the edge of the park. However, some of the cyclists despite the signs forbidding their access still ride bicycles inside the park and cause hatred among people walking due to high speed and near-misses with pedestrians. Also this cycling path in one point connects with the pedestrian walkway where people sit on the benches causing dangerous situations as visible on plate 4.12. Another interesting fact about the park is that due to its beautiful old-looking scenery it is a commonplace for the wedding couples to take wedding photos there.



**PLATE 4.13. Blue sign showing people and bicycle means that the park alley has to be shared by both groups and that there will be no separated lanes; arrow shows the direction for car drivers as this group is separated from park alleys; Source: Author**



**PLATE 4.12. As there are no separated lanes for pedestrians and for cyclists the latter have to maneuver between the former riding in a 'zig-zag' manner causing dangerous situations; Source: Author**

#### 4.6.2. ACTIVITIES IN OBSERVATION TIME SLOTS

**7:00-10:00:** there were hardly any users within the park. Park was empty both during the week time and during the weekend. The only exception were people jogging in the morning but these appeared on a random basis without any clear pattern and sometimes there was none.

**12:00-15:00:** this was the busiest period for the park. Most of users were already present in the park when the observation started after 12:00 and they were usually leaving before the afternoon. During the weekends there were more people in the park, especially parents with children that were using the playground which was often too busy to accommodate everybody's needs.

**20:00-23:00:** the park is a non-fenced one so it can be accessed 24h a day. Despite that in the evening the park was hardly occupied. There was no difference between the week time and

weekends – people usually left before it got dark. Participant observation was not performed due to lack of groups of users that could be joined.

Generally there was little difference between the activities performed during the weekends and week time – only the number of users increased during the weekends.

#### 4.6.3. INTERVIEWS

The most dominant group within the park was identified as mothers with children and this group was interviewed to check against the observations and expand them. The first thing which many of the respondents pointed out in the interviews is the good accessibility of the park. There were many mothers with children that came by car as the park was nicely accessible by multi-lane streets from many parts of the city. Many mothers actually found the car crucial as a way of moving within the city with their small baby. Such situation excluded some parks in the city centre from their use as these parks are more difficult to access by car because of more narrow streets, traffic jams and problems with parking. But it was also found out that the park is nicely accessible by public transport for mothers living in the medium-range from the park. As one respondent stated: *‘All the buses now are low-floor ones so it is very easy to get inside with a pushchair. If I wanted to get to the other parks in the city centre I would have to take a tram. And trams that come here are the old ones with a high-floor and it is really difficult for me to get inside. I always have to ask someone for help which is really frustrating.’* This indicates that some of the parks might be chosen instead of others just because of some trivial reason like type of the floor level in the vehicle which makes it less or more accessible for a pushchair. Despite that place being easily accessible by car, the park itself is still very much separated from traffic even that the multi-lane street goes just nearby. Separation of traffic is especially important for mothers with very small children as they seek tranquility, one respondent notes: *‘The infrastructure is prepared and designed for walking. I mean, you don’t have any cars, it is quiet so the baby can sleep well and I feel safe in here. I don’t have to freak out that any speeding car will pass me by.’* Another point of focus in the interviews was the provision of amenities within the park. Respondents were asked to judge if there are enough facilities in the park to accommodate their needs. And this field is especially important as mothers with children need some special features such as playgrounds, changing stations, play areas, sandpits and benches that they can look after their children from. As the observations showed, during the weekends the playground area was becoming very popular and was too busy for children to safely play in there. Also parents had troubles in looking

after smaller children as these were sometimes approached by older children who posed potential threat. This was all expressed in the interviews where mothers complained about the limited infrastructure, as one respondent argues: *'Now some people get disappointed by the number of children playing and they decide to take their kids elsewhere. I'm more patient but still something can be done about it. I mean, the area became extremely popular in last few years but it is as it used to be in number of facilities.'* However, more insight of those mothers that went elsewhere as pointed out by this respondent, also shows that it might be not a problem of Sołacki park that it does not accommodate all the needs of parents with children but it might be a more complex problem of the whole city in terms of facilities available. This is explained by another respondent: *'Everywhere you go in the weekend it is crowded. The shopping malls are crowded, cinemas are crowded, Malta lake is crowded and there are queues everywhere.'* Next negative point about the facilities in park is about the provision of food and shopping opportunities. Basically, within the park there is a restaurant, but it is rather expensive and detached from the general life of the park. It is also reported by some of the interviewees that actually do not use it or avoid it. There is one more small restaurant that is less expensive but it only has got few tables of limited capacity and it is separated from the park with tram line rails without a pedestrian crossing which prevents many people from going there. Lack of opportunity to buy food or drinks is negatively affecting the outcome of the park for many of the mothers, as one of the respondents said: *'I always need to plan the visit here in advance. I mean, there isn't any shop in the area so when it is as hot as today I need to take some drinks with me cause after he [son] comes back from the playground he's always thirsty and tired and needs to drink.'*

#### 4.6.4. BREAKFAST MARKET EVENT

What was unique about this particular park in terms of its offer for attracting visitors were events organized by a private company that were called "Breakfast Market". It takes place every Saturday in Sołacki Park and every Sunday in Kasprowicza Park. The event was widely advertised at bus and tram stops and brought the media attention spreading the news were widely. Moreover, the event has its own website with all the details of food served and also runs its Facebook fun page at which people exchange their views on what they liked and disliked about the recent edition and what can be added and these opinions are taken under consideration by the event organizers. The company organizing the event brought all the fashionable cafes, bars and restaurants from all over the city and each of the dining firms

created its own stall where it sold food. The offer was very wide: from traditional Polish breakfast dishes, through American food, to Hebrew cuisine ending on fresh fruit squeezed into juices. What is more, it was not only about food but there were also specially designated areas for children with animators looking after them. In this case, as it was observed, many parents left their children in these play areas while they went to eat something together and rest from the children. There were also picnic benches put during the event so people had a seating place to eat comfortably. Another interesting issue was that despite the fact that a nearby street was completely packed with cars, there were hundreds of bicycles in the park. This revealed few problems with infrastructure, as noted by one respondent: *'There is my husband over there, he is looking after the bikes as there is nothing that the bikes can be attached to (...) I don't understand why they don't put any bicycle racks if they provide nice access by [cycling] lanes.'* In fact, bicycles were attached to trees or just put on the grass one on top of the other. In terms of people that attended the event there was a complete mix of different groups – the only group that was visible to be missing were elderly. But what should be noted here is the fact that the park itself did not see so many people gathering in it for years. This is explained by the quote from one of the respondents: *'We came specially for the breakfast event. We rarely go to any of the city parks cause we have a garden in our house (...) I think the event itself is something special. The fact that they eventually did something to bring people to this park. I haven't been here for ages.'* Another respondent stated that: *'We are more engaged because of the market I guess.'* This all shows how much need there was in organizing such event and what potential there is in the public parks to attract masses of people that normally do not visit the parks at all which can be seen on plate 4.14. On the one hand one can speak of the breakfast event as a fantastic way of park regeneration but on the other hand one can speak of lack of action and malaise of the public city officials in providing anything more than just maintaining the park in a proper state.



**PLATE 4.14. Masses of people during the breakfast market event; Source: Author**

#### 4.6.5. ANALYSIS

The Solacki Park is often said to be the most majestic park in the city. But it is for sure not the most popular one. Although that the place is so well maintained that there are wedding couples coming for photo sessions its popularity is still rather moderate. On the one hand it is good as the park preserves its resting character which brings a lot of mothers with children, couples and elderly, but on the other hand makes this place very static. In fact, the dynamics of this place can be distinguished in three different ways. The first dynamics is the normal state in which the park stays for the most of the year being a very static and stable place attracting specific groups. In this particular dynamics there occurs a daily dynamics of different frequency of use. In the morning and in the evenings the park is nearly completely abandoned while during the day is moderately popular. The second main dynamics can be observed during the weekends when a lot of mothers come and the park becomes too much occupied in specific areas. But what was mostly interesting about this park was revealed by the third general dynamics – the breakfast market event. This event caused a complete change of users changing from a calm and quiet place for elderly and mothers with children to a place for families, groups of friends, youngsters eating fashionable and rather expensive food. In this context the elderly people are missing despite that they are the second most popular group

in the park of the first and the second dynamics. This shows the strength of the event that despite its limited character can become a no-go place for some groups on specific dates. What is more, the introduction of this event perfectly showed what can happen with parks if they become arenas of commerce. Masses of people might be attracted causing the park to be something similar to a shopping mall. Also, designated well-designed areas can extend the park use to longer hours also extending its dynamics which is now very limited as the users avoid the park when it gets dark. As most of the users complained, they do not have much time to use the park, so when they finally do have some time for entertainment or leisure they should be attracted by some factors. As Sołacki Park is static and apart from the majestic landscape does not offer even a shop with cold water in hot summer days this discourages the potential users. One is sure about this park: it is very static and its dynamics is very limited. What this research generally shows is that making it more dynamic can mean economic gains and bringing more popularity and higher turnover of visitors but still this can discourage some traditional users.

## CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION

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### 5.1. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This research was very extensive in its scope. The parks that were investigated were mainly located within the city centre. There were also 2 parks that were slightly further away – Cytadela park and Sołacki park. However, all of the parks were different in terms of their users, the facilities that they had, level of their accessibility, and especially, the dynamics of their use which was the main point of this research. The general conclusion of this research was that not only the parks were different from each other in terms of their built environment and facilities that they had, but also users between these parks differed not only basing on the choice made about the park offer but also due to some psychological reasons. All of this conclusions can be made thanks to splitting the research on two different parts. Firstly, the observations were made within the parks which helped to draw conclusions on what is the potential use of the parks. Secondly, the interviews were conducted to reveal more information about the users behavior. These two methods resulted in complete data that was analysed to give the answer to what is the park dynamics in given parks that were part of this research.

The first research question specifically asked about when and by whom were parks being used to give the answer what is their dynamics. Analysis of 6 different park in Poznań shows that each park has its own specific dynamics and no 2 parks can be compared to be similar. What is more, the dynamics of the park users was also significant as these users used the parks in different context and the users their selves had also their own dynamics. Drawing general conclusions from all of the parks studied it can be said that there are few main levels of dynamics. First type of dynamics might be distinction between the use in week time and during the weekend. General conclusion drawn is that every park had more visitors and in longer periods of time during the weekends. In many cases parks were not only more often used during the weekend but this use was also extended to the periods of morning and evening that was not so common in the week days. However, still the morning and evening use is very sporadic and there are mainly specific narrow groups that attend the park in this period. This has other implications for the rest of the users. One can say that e.g. the Chopin park has extensive place dynamics during the weekends but in fact in the morning it is

occupied by homeless people discouraging other people to use it and in the evening it is mainly occupied by the students drinking alcohol which on the other hand discourages elderly and female users from staying in the park till late. Each park had its own unique dynamics and each user group was also attending parks in specific hours. The problematic issue concerning the results and analysis was the migration of users between different parks which was not investigated in this research to a sufficient extent. Thus, a cyclist using Cytadela park might also visit Dąbrowskiego park with his girlfriend with a completely different purpose and still drink with friends in the Chopin park. Each of the users might have its own dynamics in terms of how often, when and why use specific parks. This multiple park use was partially investigated in the interviews asking respondents to state parks that they use apart from the park where the interview took place. Basing on these answers it might be stated that many user groups are very active in park visitation and do not rely on one park only. The more static groups were elderly, mothers with small children and professionals. The first two groups had limited mobility options so were not visiting too many parks, and the third group did not have enough time to actively spend time in different parks. Overall, the general findings that parks are mostly visited on the weekends and that the most busy period is the afternoon might serve as important data for the park management on the side of the local council to enhance and adjust the park offer to attract visitors in the less popular periods of time.

Another important finding was associating the reasons for park use with different groups of users. Thus, e.g. the elderly users needed calm and quiet environment, mothers with children needed similar conditions but also ease of access and public transportation with low-floor vehicles to transport the pushchair easily, students tried to look for less formal environment out of sight, cyclists were interested in various land forms and variety of wide routes not to get bored of cycling constantly in the same direction, skaters demanded more amenities with the park as they often spend few hours in one location, and couples were mostly interested in some dining offer as they could sit together and chat. However, each users in a given group might also be the user in other groups on different occasions. So the findings are very general and might be subject to some bias. What is important at this point is to say that not only the built environment was responsible for attracting groups of users but also it was the common reception of the park among the people e.g. many people perceived the Dąbrowskiego park as a hipster high-end place and did not go there at all. For some particular groups the built environment might be crucial for the park visitation as e.g. for cyclists that need wide paved tarmac alleys, but for some other groups also psychological effects might be as important or even more important than the park facilities. It is also important to note that some factors that

are attractive to one group of users such as e.g. lack of fence and open space with shaded areas densely covered by trees was attractive for students that were drinking alcohol in the Mickiewicz park, but on the other hand it was discouraging female users from using the park. This point brings the next important issue revealed by this research. Although that each park looks similar due to its built environment, they all are well maintained and kept in a good shape, parks had extreme differences in terms of their reception and users. Thus the overview of the parks brings interesting results: Sołacki Park mainly attracts mothers with children, elderly and couples, Chopin park attract elderly and single students, Marcinkowskiego park attracts skaters and elderly, Cytadela park attract cyclists and all the people doing sports, Mickiewicz park attracts students, Dąbrowskiego park attracts couples and groups of friends. Each park is different in its use and character, despite the similar outlook of the built environment. Sometimes slight differences in that built environment might be responsible for attracting some users as e.g. large area of Cytadela attracting cyclists, but some difference cannot be really explained by it like in Chopin park and Mickiewicz park that are very similar to each other but during the day time the first is used by elderly and the second by students. Thus, the reasons for that might be strictly psychological. This finding might be crucial for the local council that is responsible for parks. In the present situation there is no general idea of how to attract some users to given parks, there is no master plan on how to prevent exclusion of certain groups in given parks. This research acts as a guide on who is excluded and where and it is an invitation to take action on it. However, the important limitation here is that this research did not take into account the characteristics of the neighbourhoods where the parks were located. The reasons for some of the parks being dominated by a specific group might also be connected with the characteristics of the particular part of the city like e.g. near Sołacki park there are mainly family houses without flat apartments and a lot of families live over there so this might translate into bigger presence of mothers with children in this park. But this was not investigated in this report and for the results and guides to be really objective one could add that to this research.

The last important point are the actual conflicts and interactions between the park users. These often have crucial importance for the dynamics of use of given parks. Also the previous points are interconnected with this one. It is because negative feelings to some user groups that normally frequently occupy some of the parks might prevent one from using other parks at all. In less extreme cases conflict or fear of other group might create different dynamics of park use for different user groups that want to avoid each other. In such case a freedom of movement and freedom to fully participate in the urban life is seriously affected. Interesting

example was in the Marcinkowskiego park where the periods of park use were age-related. In this particular park younger skaters tried to avoid evening periods when using the parks as these were more popular among adult skaters that pushed the younger fellows out of the skating area. And on the other hand these older skaters mostly avoided the afternoon periods when considering the park use because they associated this period with too big busyness. In fact, it was quite common for the respondents to attend parks not basing on its offer and type of facilities provided, but rather on the users that were present in the park. Preventing oneself from visiting park in given hours like e.g. in the morning in Mickiewicz park due to presence of many homeless people, also affects the dynamics of parks. Overall, conflicts between users are crucial in understanding the park dynamics and the needs of different groups. Solving these conflicts by better planning park facilities might result in less exclusion and enhancement of dynamics of park use for particular groups.

Generally speaking, local example of Poznań was very interesting as there are plenty of multifunctional parks within the city. Also the city was quite unique in terms of extensive number of activities and events that were organized in the parks. Despite its historical grid design which provides extensive recreational areas that can be easily reachable from the city, the parks are still popular and successfully compete with many other recreational facilities located at the edges of the city.

## 5.2. LIMITATIONS

Apart from the limitations that were mentioned above the main limitation of this research was the technical scope of it. As for the level of Master Thesis this research was too wide in its scope. Number of parks was set to 6 as it was thought that such number is enough to show the main differences between different parks. However, for this research to be more objective and accurate in its results the number of parks might be lower or the research could be conducted in just one park at all investigating it more deeply. Too big number of parks studied resulted in lack of accuracy and objectivity of the results. As there were 6 user groups identified in 6 parks there were more than 60 interviews conducted. Few of those were omitted from this research because of the low value of the responses that did not bring any interesting point to this research. 60 interviews with 10 respondents in each park were left. On the one hand it resulted in wider scope of the results and ability to compare parks with each other, but on the other hand such limited number of respondents in each park highly affect the research objectivity. For this research to be more objective there could be 60 interviews in just one

park and that would for sure deeply investigate the user needs and act as a base for creating accurate statistics. However, this research was limited by time and the priorities were set for less accurate but bigger number of interviews. With bigger budget and more time, this research could be replicated in each of the parks but with a really deep study. Also there might be more differences in dynamics of use not only in the perspective of a day or a week but also seasonal or yearly. But overall, this research successfully answered the research questions and also filled the literature gap in the field of dynamics of urban places on the example of public parks in Poznań.

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## APPENDIX - INTERVIEWS

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### CHOPIN PARK – ELDERLY PEOPLE

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1. Respondent 1, male 70 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

Only when it is warm outside. I like to sit in the sun and contemplate here.

*Any bad weather prevents you from going out of home?*

Yes, with my modest pension I can't afford to go out too much to cafes or restaurants. So I can come to the park as it is close to where I live and you can sit for free and have a good time.

*Do you come here because it's free of charge or because you enjoy staying here?*

I mean, I appreciate the fact that I don't have to pay anything. But I also like this place.

This park is very quiet and many people come here to sit peacefully. There is no street for cars nearby so the air is fresh and there is no noise.

*Do you visit other parks in the city centre?*

I sometimes go to the park near opera house. It is convenient for me cause I live nearby. However, I'd rather come here.

*Why is that?*

You know, there are lots of students there. I mean, they often drink beer, they play Frisbee, sometimes they play music loud. I don't like it. I need something more peaceful.

*But here I also observed many youngsters coming and smoking cigarettes.*

Yes, but they usually hide in the back of the park so you don't really see them. And these are rather younger, so they don't drink alcohol but just smoke. And when students drink they are always very noisy.

*So when do you visit these parks? Do you have different strategies for them?*

I'm not sure if I have different strategies. I just avoid both of them in the evenings. You don't want to know what happens there when it gets late. I also avoid both of them in the mornings because of all the litter that is left. The best time is during the day when most of students would have lectures.

*Have you ever had any particular clash with young people in the park?*

Yes, once I said to one group that I really mind them shouting. And the result was that they just laughed at me. It's very hard to communicate with youngsters these days.

2. Respondent 2, female 62 years old.

*Is this the only park that you visit?*

No, but it is my favourite. I also go to other parks. I walk with my dog to Cytadela often.

*And how about Łęgi Dębińskie or other big parks?*

I don't really go there cause it's far away from where I live.

*And how about Wilson park?*

I like it. I go there from time to time but not on regular basis. It's rather few times a year.

*Okay, so what is so special about the Chopin park that you like it?*

It's very calm. I mean the people who come here are nice. There are some students but mostly these are elderly people. It means people who are not noisy and they appreciate the atmosphere of this park. The atmosphere which is quiet and static.

*If it was more noisy, then you wouldn't come in here?*

It does get noisy! In the evenings. You can see that when it gets close to 8PM people start

packing their selves and they go away. After 8PM this park is only reserved for drinking teenagers and students!

*Are people bothered with that?*

Of course, sometimes it would be nice to stay little bit longer cause what else I can do at home? Watch the TV? But I don't feel very safe so in the late afternoon I usually go home. When people are drunk you never know what to expect. Anyway, it is no pleasure to look at how they drink. I'd rather go home than look at it.

*What do you think of the skate park in Marcinkowskiego park?*

I don't know. I really don't go there.

*But you don't go because there is a skate park now?*

Not really. I heard that there is some skate park but I haven't been going there since ages even before it was built.

*What are the reasons for that?*

I'm scared of this park. It's big but it is just shady or something and you don't see much in there. I mean, Cytadela park is also huge but there is a lot of open space, so when I walk my dog I feel safe. Marcinkowskiego park is also remote. You have to walk a long distance from the tram stop. And here you just leave the tram and the park entrance is 100m from the stop.

3. Respondent 3, male, 69 years old.

*Do you like this park?*

Yes, I enjoy my time here. It's well maintained. I like coming here.

*Is there anything nice in it apart from the fact that it's well maintained?*

Access to the park is nice. You can freely walk in here. There isn't a busy street to cross. It's quite convenient for me, as I've got problems with my knees and I can't walk long distances.

*How did you get here?*

By tram. I live close to the stop so I don't have to walk that much.

*And why did you come to the park?*

First of all, I don't have a garden. I live in a tenement house and you don't have much green to see. It's hard to only look at concrete backyard where the cars are parked. It brings me some nice emotions and feelings every time I come here.

*Don't you have any other parks close to where you live?*

Yes, there are some. But I have to walk much further from the tram stop than here. It makes me visit this one more frequent.

*And how often do you come here?*

Due to health problems not that often. Sometimes once a week, sometimes twice a week. It really depends.

*What time of the day do you usually come?*

Often after church.

*Is it more in the weekend or in the week time?*

I go to church every Sunday so then when the mess is over I come here around 1PM and stay for 1 or 2 hours. But in the week time I sometimes go for a shopping in the food market that is just nearby and then I also visit the park. I would usually leave before the lunch to eat at home.

*Have you ever considered coming in the afternoon or in the evening?*

Not really. I have to eat supper at home. And I also need to watch the news in the TV at 7:30PM. So it wouldn't be very convenient for me to stay here. I've got other commitments.

*Do you ever go to other parks in the city centre?*

Not really. I only go to those that are easily accessible from a tram stop. The one in front of the opera house I also visit.

*How about Solacki park?*

No, it's too far away for me.

4. Respondent 4, female, 66 years old [Sitting with her husband on the bench].

*Do you often come here together?*

Recently the temperature got higher so we enjoy it more.

*And before?*

Not so much. It was rather rainy and cloudy. We only come here when the weather is nice enough. I would say when it is above 20 degrees.

*I see that now it is enough cause you are sunbathing?*

Yes, we live in an apartment flat and we don't have a balcony. So the only place where we can sunbath is in the park.

*Do you ever consider going out of the city e.g. to Strzeszynskie lake or Rusalka lake?*

These areas are obviously nicer. It is always the most enjoyable to sunbath near the water. But for us it is too far. We don't have the car anymore and now we rely on the public transport. And the journey there would mean at least one hour one way and 3 changes. We are too old for that. Sometimes I ask my son to drive us there during the weekends, but you know how it is, he is busy with his family and he often goes somewhere during the weekends. Park is the only place where we can easily come and sunbath on the grass. We don't have to rely on anyone to drive us here as the tram stop is just close to the park entrance. It matters a lot for us.

*Do you spend the whole summer in the city?*

Yes, we rarely go to any holidays as we cannot afford it. So park is for us some kind of green oasis within the concrete city. I can't imagine the city without its parks.

*Which parks do you also visit?*

We go to Cytadela. It is really nice. Recently we bought the Nordic walking sticks and we practice there. From time to time we also go Wilson park and to Botanical Garden which is a lovely place. But you can't really sunbath there and lay on the grass. And there is a security checking if you don't do that.

*So you appreciate the freedom that you have in here, that there is no one supervising?*

I mean, I guess it might be a problem for a police or so if I lay here half naked. But no one ever comes. I also see some youngsters drinking beer here because of that, they feel they won't be checked.

*And are you fine with that?*

If they don't play up too much then it's okay. Otherwise someone still might call the police and they would finally come.

*But you don't do it?*

No, I want to stay out of any trouble.

5. Respondent 5, female, 74 years old.

*How do you like it in here?*

It's lovely. Perfect hot spring in the city [laugh]!

*I can see that you enjoy yourself. What occupies you here?*

Now I started reading a nice book so I thought it would be nice to come here. I went to the Main Library to borrow it and I thought it's so close to the park and the weather is nice so I can come and read it there.

*Do you usually visit parks like that or you rather plan it?*

I come here from time to time. But I live with my son and his wife and we've got a nice garden over there so I rather spend my time there. But if I'm in the area to do some small shopping or go to the seniors' club or visit the library I can come and have a look if anything changed.

*Do you see any changes over the years?*

Yes, I think now the park is much more maintained than it used to be. I mean all of the plants

and bushes are very nice, also the grass is nicer. Now they also allow people to lay on the grass so I see people having picnics on the blankets or playing football. But there are also some drawbacks. More and more students come to the city and you know how students are. They never complain they have too much money. So they come and drink here in the park cause they can't always afford buying a beer in a pub. I mean, one or two beers is okay, but sometimes they do more and it gets nasty. They also started drinking vodka a lot. I remember from my young years that people rather drank it at home cause the militia was very strict about it. And now things changed and you can drink hiding in a park and the police is too busy or too lazy to come.

*But would you say the park itself is better or worse?*

Definitely better. Very well maintained. I like it like that.

*Do you also go to other parks?*

Not really. But I live close to Sołacz district so I go to Sołacki park on some occasions.

*Which occasions e.g.?*

There is this restaurant... I can't remember its name... We go there with my son and his wife for some special occasions like anniversaries. It is really lovely, just between the ponds and trees, very majestic indeed but too expensive for me to go there more often.

6. Respondent 6, male, 70 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

Few times a week. It is my only contact with nature in the city. I've got some small allotment out of the city with a small hut but in my age it is really hard to go there very often. I still have a car but I don't drive it that much now.

*Did you drive here?*

No, I took a tram. I only use the car when I go to the shopping cause I can't carry too much and when I go to this allotment. This park is perfectly accessible by public transport for me. I would say it would be much harder to come here with your car as there is nowhere to park apart from this expensive underground parking lot.

*Do you like the park?*

Yes, all the bushes here are pretty nice. I have similar in my country allotment. It's all done very good. Also the surrounding of the park is beautiful. I mean it all looks very old and has its character. The tram street after being rebuilt looks much better now and there are no cars anymore. I remember when the cars could come here, how big was the noise. And nowadays it is much better.

*Which times of the day do you most enjoy it?*

I think every part of the day is perfect to enjoy this park. Just apart from the evening when strange people come in here.

*Do you mean youngsters drinking?*

Yes, indeed. When I see that I immediately leave. I wish it was more organized. I mean, some kind of small scene, maybe a café, they would play some jazz music or some old hits in the evening and people would enjoy it more and I think more elderly people would come. And now they are being all forced out by young guys with a bottle of beer in their hand. And police just does nothing about it!

*But you have the amenities like this in the Dabrowskiego park? There is a scene, they serve drinks and they organize some small concerts, even the jazz ones.*

You should know that many of my friends stopped going there recently when they changed things. I sometimes meet people from the seniors' organization in the city centre. Some time ago we used to go to that park cause we liked it. But now it is completely privatized.

*What do you exactly mean?*

I mean that I can go there but they only sell a coffee or a tea for 8 or 10 PLN which is a lot to me! And the place is full of strange people, fancy dressed. I don't like that place anymore.

And also the kind of music that they play is not in my mood. It is too modern and I don't follow the new trends in music. I think as I don't belong to this place anymore. I'd rather come here cause I know it and nothing really changes to this place, it is open for everyone.

7. Respondent 7, male, 72 years old.

*How often do you come to this park?*

I come here every Sunday after the mess in this church nearby. Then I usually solve crosswords or read a newspaper here. It is really quiet in here so you can enjoy your time.

*Don't you come on any other day in the week?*

No, but I sometimes go to Cytadela park. My wife bought me some Nordic walking sticks and she forces me to walk with her [laugh]. I must say that in the beginning I didn't like it but now I started enjoying it. Obviously, you need to have a big enough area with diversified routes to enjoy it and I think Cytadela is actually like that.

*How about the other parks, do you have an interest in any of them?*

Some time ago I liked to go to Marcinkowskiego park, but now there is a skate park and I don't like the people who go there.

*Do you feel pushed out of there because of people skating?*

Yes, I would say so. I don't feel comfortable with these people. The way they dress, they smoke a lot, they bring a lot of litter and they shout and swear. You don't have anything like that here in this park.

*And how about in the evenings?*

Oh I don't really know. I heard that also here many young people come. But I never stay till late, no one in my age does.

*Why is that?*

I need to be careful, I'm over 72 now and you know what kind of people go out in the evening and how much they drink. It's not safe for me to stay.

*What do you do in the evenings then?*

I usually stay at home with my wife.

*What should the city do to make you feel more safely?*

I would put some CCTV around the park. And if any action like public drinking is discovered they should send the police immediately. The same with Marcinkowskiego park, they should fine people for throwing all this litter on the ground around the skate park.

*So you think that putting facility like a skate park within a park pushes people out?*

Yes, things like skate parks should be located out of the city centre and definitely out of parks. Parks are for leisure and for having a peaceful time and not for skating or doing noise.

8. Respondent 8, female, 62 years old.

*Do you enjoy your time here?*

Yes I do, it is one of my favourite parks in the city.

*Which else do you visit?*

Oh, I go to many different parks on different occasions. I like visiting different parks on my bicycle during the weekends. I recently retired and now I have more time so I bought a bike and from time to time I go to different parks to have a rest and sit on a bench for a while.

*Which one do you like the most?*

I think that the Sołacki park is the most beautiful in the city. The ponds there are majestic. And the area is very well connected by cycling paths which makes it convenient for me to get there.

*How would you compare these two parks with each other?*

I think they are area specific. I mean, here in the city centre you don't have that much space but still the size of Chopin park is quite okay. Sołacki is much bigger but it was designed many years ago before the area was really urbanized. In terms of facilities they are similar,

nicely accessible by public transport and by bicycle but without anything to do in them. They are just ordinary parks for having rest.

*So would you expect something more from a park?*

It's hard to say what I would really expect, but I remember when I was younger. They were selling ice-creams in mobile stalls and they were also coming to parks. I wish there was something like that anywhere in the parks right now. I often see people in Chopin park walking in with ice-cream bought in the shop nearby. But in Sołacki park e.g. you don't really have any shops nearby so even if you wanted you can't buy an ice-cream.

*When do you usually go to parks?*

I start in spring when I can also use my bike after winter. I mostly come during the weekends as my husband is still employed and his at work during the week like today. So I'd rather come with him. One more thing: I also love to walk in Cytadela park when the autumn comes. All the leaves fall from the trees and it is beautiful then.

9. Respondent 9, female, 66 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

Nearly every weekend. I like spending some time in parks. Now the city looks after the parks much better than some 10-20 years ago so staying here is a pleasure.

*What time do you usually come and leave?*

I don't like coming here early in the morning. I went few times cause I get up very early anyway. And what I met were piles of rubbish, bottles everywhere even leftovers from puking. You wouldn't like to sit in such conditions. Then I learned that cleaning staff come to the park around 9PM so now I do some chores at home and then I come here little bit later. I usually stay for few hours and when I get hungry I leave and go home.

*Do you leave early because you do not want to meet students coming here to drink in the afternoon?*

No, not really. I mean, you shouldn't categorize that all students just drink and do a lot of mess. Some students come to the park during the day. These are rather girls who read books or listen to the music on the grass. They behave, they are quiet. I mean there are some high school students also coming to the park that meet in large groups, smoke cigarettes and misbehave. They don't drink but they still cause people to be unhappy with their presence. But you can't really do anything about it. Everyone can access park and there isn't anyone to enforce the rules.

*And how about the Dabrowskiego park? There are security guards, no one is drinking and the everybody behaves?*

Yes, but that park is different. I don't know. Only young people go there. There aren't so many benches but more people lay on the grass. I don't like that. There is also this huge shopping mall just next to the park. It is too commercialized for me. The park is also too modern. Here, the park looks old and has its spirit. There it is just a modern style thing, but not really a park. I would call it a garden of the shopping mall rather than a park.

*So would you like the city to set up a small café in Chopin park that people would be able to buy something to drink?*

I would be cautious with that. If you push such commercial entities too much the park might lose its spirit and then people might stop going there as fashionable teenagers will come and drink fancy drinks like in Dabrowskiego park.

10. Respondent 10, male, 46 years old [Member of the cleaning staff that cleans the litter every morning].

*Do you always have so much litter to collect?*

Today it is not the worst. It is just 5 big bags.

*And when is it the worst?*

Especially when the school year begins and all the high school students start their year and then one month after the university students join them. It is a complete mess. Then we need a truck to come and collect the rubbish as we are not able to carry all of that. It is sometimes even 15 bags!

*What kind of litter do you collect?*

Every kind of bottles, cups, juice cartons, crisps packs and etc. Everything that you can associate with drinking alcohol. People behave here like pigs, they drink and then they leave everything in here! They don't care about the park at all. Maybe if we didn't come for a week or two then people would finally imagine what the youngsters are doing in the park every night.

*Which days are the worst?*

There is a culmination on Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning so after the days that all the students have parties.

*Are there any particular differences between the parks? Is this one the most popular among drinkers?*

I think this one and the one in front of the opera house. But this one is worse. It is closed for night and well fenced so people jump over the fence and hide in the back. Bottles are mostly there. And the one near the opera house is not fenced so people cannot hide that much from the police. But still police does nothing.

*Why do you think so?*

The police is just scared of those youngsters. You know, when people are drunk you don't know what to expect. And they always gather here in groups. But I think that police is just too lazy to jump over the fence. They don't care, and then we have to clean all of that.

*Do all the parks look like that in the morning?*

No, I think we observed this rule that the further you go out of the city centre the better it is. Our company cleans all the parks in the city but we have more work to do with 2 or 3 parks in the city centre than with the rest of the parks in the whole city. It is a complete mess!

## **CYTADELA PARK – BICYCLE RIDERS AND PEOPLE DOING SPORTS**

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1. Respondent 1, male, 42 years old.

*Why do you come to Cytadela park to cycle?*

I live in an apartment flat and it is really hard for me to get any exercise where I live. Therefore, I can come over here and breath some fresh air and also ride the bike which I am passionate about.

*When do you usually ride your bike here?*

Mostly during the weekends, to be honest. I often work till late and then it is really hard for me to come here in the evening. I am just too lazy for that and tired after work. But when the weekend comes I try to get up early and cycle here.

*Why don't you come here during the evenings at all?*

I sometimes do. But only during the summer. In spring and autumn when it is still warm

enough to cycle it gets dark quickly in here and I don't feel really comfortable being in Cytadela alone when it is dark.

*What makes you feel so?*

You know, people and stuff. You know, this kind of youngsters that hang around everywhere in the city. I live myself in a gated neighbourhood because of that. So I seldom leave my place when it gets dark without a car. I spent too much on my bike to lose it here in the park [laugh]!

*Do you cycle every day to work as well?*

No, not really. It is just my hobby and a way to keep fit and healthy just a little bit. I only do it recreationally. My wife forces me to do so [laugh].

*So, you treat this park as a recreational facility?*

Yes, it can be said like that. I like this place and I like its atmosphere.

*What is special about its atmosphere?*

You know, the kind of spirit that you experience here during the weekends, lots of cyclists here, people jogging, rollerblading, you can feel the atmosphere of exercise.

*And you don't see that in the week time?*

Not really in my opinion. It is much different. Not too many people here then, and also not too many doing sports. It is this lack of time you know, people working hard every day and not having any time to go to the park. So then it gets busy during the weekend.

*Do you mind when it gets busy?*

No, as I said, I like the atmosphere.

*But do you mind people getting into your way?*

No, I'm okay with it. You know, everyone wants to be here so what can you do [laugh]?

2. Respondent 2, male, 28 years old.

*How often do you come to this park to cycle?*

I try to come as often as I can, it is so great in here [laugh]!

*Why do you think so?*

Look around, it is completely separated from the noise of the city. You are nearly within the city centre but you do feel the nature here, which you cannot say when you leave the park.

*But you can also feel some kind of nature in other parks, even in the city centre. They are also somehow separated from the traffic and huge noise.*

Yes, but it is different. Here the scale of it is different. What I only hear in here are birds and people talking. I don't hear any trams, cars or buses. It makes me so much comfortable in here.

*So you don't find this kind of comfort in other parks? Do you use other parks on regular basis?*

Other parks are different. I sometimes do go there when my friends want to meet to chat. I go to the one in front of the opera house [Mickiewicz Park]. But here I can cycle from home cause I have some bicycle paths and there it is hard for me to get on bike so I rather drive my car.

*Do you come to Cytadela also by car?*

Not really, when I come here I rather do it by bike cause I like riding here around.

*So you don't meet with your friends in here?*

Rather not. I treat it more like a sports site. A quiet and peaceful one, cause I hate riding my bike in traffic surrounded by cars.

*When do you mostly use the park?*

During the week I guess. I rather don't come here on the weekends cause it is too busy. I like riding my bike here in the evenings cause you don't have too many people walking.

*Do you mind pedestrians here?*

Yes I do. You see, the problem is that you don't have separate lanes for bikes and for people walking. And then I have to horn at people when they get in my way. But still it is better than Malta.

*Why do you say so?*

Oh, don't you know? Malta has narrower lanes and there is much more pedestrian traffic. Even in the evenings. And forget about the weekends, it is unusable then! It is really unsafe when you ride fast. And I do really like riding fast.

3. Respondent 3, female, 25 years old.

*How do you feel jogging in Cytadela?*

I think it is one of the best places for doing so in the city. The park is really huge and you can choose different paths every time. I never run the same route but I change them which makes it really interesting.

*Do you also jog in other parks, e.g. in Sołacki?*

Rather not. I live close to the city centre so it would not make much sense for me to use the Sołacki park. Here, I can run from my home directly and then run back. Sołacki is so far away for me that I wouldn't have any strength to get back from there to the city centre.

*When do you mostly use Cytadela park?*

Oh, it really depends. Now it is sunny for most of the time and the day is rather long. So I come here in the evenings cause it is too hot to jog around in the afternoon. But I try to do it before the sun goes down as then it is not very safe to be in such a huge area not very nicely lit for a woman of my age [laugh].

*But there are some street lamps.*

Are you kidding me? Some? It is a vast area and there are just few lamps! Have you ever seen police in here? I mean, how would you feel as a girl being here alone when it is dark? This kind of dark open space is overwhelming for me. You can't see if anybody's coming. And still not so many people here then, so even if I scream nobody would help me at all.

*Do you feel that putting some security would help to use the park at dark?*

It depends what you mean by that. I wouldn't be satisfied with the CCTV cameras. I would only appreciate some police patrols checking the area. Or maybe some security guys looking after people in the evenings. Otherwise it is too creepy for me.

*Would you like to use the park more often?*

Yes, of course! This winter e.g. was not very harsh. Sometimes it was even around 10 degrees Celsius. I was about to jog in here but often I finished my lecture in the afternoon and it was already dark. But I did some running in the weekends.

*Did you feel that your use of this space is limited, then?*

Yes, I don't know any place around the city centre which would be so suitable for jogging. And still there are many times that I can't actually use it. I didn't think about it before but now I realized that when I go to the city centre e.g. to Old Market Square [popular meeting place with pubs and restaurants] I can go there whenever I want. But here I can't. It shouldn't be like that.

4. Respondent 4, female, 19 years old.

*Why did you come to Cytadela park?*

I really like roller blading. And it is a great place for doing it. The paths are really wide here. Also the paths' surface is really good in here. You can't do the rollerblading in too many places within the city as there isn't a good infrastructure for it. Here, the surface is made of concrete and rather flat so I find it perfect for rollerblading. And still the place is nice, perfect for exercising.

*How often do you come here to roller blade?*

You know, from time to time, it is not the thing that you would do every day.

*Do you have any preferable times when you mostly come to Cytadela park?*

Yes, I especially hate it here on the weekends! On the one hand you've got mothers with children that block your way. On the other hand you've got cyclists that always pass you so close that you don't feel very secure. You know, roller blading is specific, so the kind of action that you perform is taking a wide space, so you need a lot of room for that. People don't understand it and especially cyclists are too close and too fast.

*Are week times better?*

Indeed. Mothers with children are much less present. And also the number of cyclists is lower. Overall, number of pedestrians is much lower I think.

*When do you exactly visit the park?*

It depends on when I finish my lessons at school. But it is never really late in the evening or so. It's rather around midday or something. Although, now it is often very tiring when it is hot. So you see, it really depends.

*When it is hot, do you come here in the evening when it is dark and not so warm?*

No way! You need to be out of mind to do that. I can say that it is a nice place but in the evening you really need to be careful where you go in some areas of the city and I think this park is one of such places.

*Do you hang out with your friends in here, would that make you feel safer?*

Not very often. There are some event that I can attend in the park from time to time. But we more hang out in the shopping malls together. Or I sometimes meet my friends in McDonald's, you know, the one in the city centre.

*Do you hang out with friends in any of the parks like Mickiewicz or Chopin?*

I don't like that. I'd rather have a beer and you can't really buy one or have one in the park. I'm a girl, I don't do stuff like drinking a beer from a shop and running away from a police chasing you in a park [laugh]!

##### 5. Respondent 5, Male, 38 years old.

*Why did you come here on your bicycle?*

I find this place pretty okay for a break. I started my journey in Grunwald [one of the city districts far away] and then I'm going to Malta. But I'm meeting a friend of mine here, we will have a drink at the café and then we are heading further.

*Why didn't you want to meet in a different location?*

You know, Cytadela is nice. Everybody knows it. I can then cycle around with my friend. Getting here is also nice. You have bicycle paths nearly everywhere around so it is easily reachable. Many of my friends don't like cycling to the city centre as they don't have any good connecting routes that would be safe. Here, it is more recreational and safe to get so it's easy to meet people.

*Do you often visit Cytadela park?*

Hmmm, it is really hard to say. I would describe it as from time to time. I often go on long bicycle journeys out of town but it's really difficult to convince anyone for that so I go on my own [laugh]. But from time to time I cycle together through the city with my friends and I can tell you that whenever we do it we cross the park or even have a refreshing drink in here.

*What are the reasons for choosing this particular location?*

You know, it is just nice. You have those leafy areas in the western part of the city but for me it is really far away just for a short trip. And still, everybody lives in different locations so then for someone it is close but for others is unreachable. And Cytadela is more or less within the city centre so everybody can come here when I set cycling trips with my friends.

*How often do you do that?*

It's not regular I would say. I just don't have enough time for that. I think it's because my boss pushes me too hard at work [laugh] and I don't have any time during the week. So mostly weekend are the only possibility for me.

*Are there any factors that would encourage you to come here in the evenings?*

I guess not, cause the problem is not with the park but rather with my busy life. But I will try to cycle around more often and see how it works. Maybe [laugh]!

6. Respondent 6, male, 55 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

Oh gosh, as much as I can! Now I don't have to work that much as I used to so I have plenty of time. I try to cycle here few times a week when it is warm enough.

*When it gets colder you don't do it then?*

Rather not. You've got a lot of open space in here and it can get little bit windy and chilly so not the perfect conditions for cycling. However, I do go to Rusałka lake then, there is a forest along the cycling route so you don't feel this wind that much.

*So when do you usually start your cycling season in here?*

You know, when it gets warmer like above 15 degrees. So around April I guess.

*When it is too cold to cycle, do you come here to walk e.g.?*

Then I sometimes come with my wife and we bring our Nordic walking sticks. But I don't like it that much so you know, I'd rather come here on my own and have a peaceful ride without hearing my wife all the time [laugh]!

*Which times of the week do you use the park mostly?*

I don't really care about it that much so I don't know really. When I feel like I come here after work cause I finish around 3PM and have plenty of time in the afternoon. Sometimes I would have a short ride on Sunday as well.

*Do you see any difference in the park use between week time and weekend?*

Yes, of course. It is much more busy on the weekends.

*Do you mind that?*

No, not at all. I don't ride too fast to be honest but I see your point. There are loads of younger people on MTB bikes that ride really fast cause they treat it as some kind of physical exercise. It is not really safe in my opinion. This is a park and not a MTB track. I rather do it recreationally so I don't get into trouble with other users.

*Do you also cycle to other parks in Poznań?*

Yes, I sometimes do cycle to Sołacki Park and to forest near Rusałka Lake. In Sołacki you have a nice cycling path surrounded by trees so it is a very charming area. Also the ponds are beautiful in there so I try to get off the cycling route and have a seat on one of the benches from time to time. Especially when I cycle with my wife and she is constantly tired [laugh]!

7. Respondent 7, Female, 32 years old.

*Why brought you here to Cytadela?*

As you can see, this is my dog Alex. We run here together every weekend. I think we both enjoy it?

*What makes you bring your dog especially here?*

Huge space, you know. I can set him loose and nobody cares cause people are still far away from us. So we run around not being bothered by anyone. I live on one of the settlement with big blocks of apartments and you have some nice green areas around the buildings but there is a lot of people walking around and also moms with children. They don't seem to be very happy when a dog is set loose, they feel scared.

*And you don't find it here? A lot of mothers with children can be found here as well?*

Yes, but I do try to come here as early as possible. On the weekend when you come here

straight before 10AM it is fine. Then, all those mothers and elderly come here. And these are the groups that are most afraid of the dogs. But in the morning I feel okay in here.

*So you stick only to the weekend mornings?*

Not only. There is this place in here that you are allowed to set you dog loose so I sometimes come in here in the afternoons as well and play Frisbee with Alex.

*And how about the other parks? Don't you play Frisbee with Alex in there?*

I don't feel very comfortable with the fact that there are some people who are afraid of dogs and he is running just next to them. Other parks are much smaller, you know. You can go to Łęgi Debińskie, but it is too far away from where I live so I don't see any point in that. And apart from that park the others don't have any nice open spaces that would be far away from traffic and also big enough to play with my dog. I don't have garden cause I live in the apartment so it is important for me to play with my dog in the park.

*Would you like the City to create such areas also in other parks?*

I know that there is one nice area in Marcelesiński forest but it is also far away from here. To be honest, I only care about the places where I can walk from the place where I live. You can't really put your dog on the bus cause people don't like it and Alex likes it neither. So apart from Cytadela I can walk to parks in the city centre but they are rather small and people have rest in there so I'm not sure if they are suitable for dogs at all to play Frisbee not to even mention any jogging around.

8. Respondent 8, female, 67 years old.

*I see you spend your time in here pretty active, what brings you in here? [Respondent doing Nordic walking]*

I live in the city centre and I can easily come here by bus. It is nice in here cause there is a lot of greenery in here. Trees, grass, nice open space, birds singing. You don't really have it in the city centre which is a concrete desert for me. I have nowhere to go over there.

*But there are some outdoor gyms near city centre?*

Oh yes, but you really have to like it. I've got many problems with my muscles and I think I'm just too old to exercise at these gyms. So I have bought these sticks and I perform Nordic Walking cause it is easy and it keeps me a little bit fit.

*Why did you come to Cytadela and not to other areas that are also accessible by public transport?*

I do use other parks from time to time just to keep myself out of boredom. But I like this park most out of the others.

*And why is that?*

I think it is just because of its size. It is so big that I can do few different routes around and I already feel tired. And it is still convenient for me to come in here cause the bus ride takes me no longer that 15 minutes.

*When do you usually use this park?*

I would say around midday. I'm already retired and in the morning I go to the market to buy some stuff. Then I eat something at home to gain some energy and then I usually come in here or to the other parks to do some walking.

*Do you ever consider using Cytadela or any other park in the evening?*

I'd rather not. I feel okay when it is sunny and warm. Also I don't like it in here when it gets dark. I'd rather stay at home when it is dark. And parks in the city centre are occupied by youngsters in the evening so I don't feel very comfortable with that.

*Do you feel restricted by the park use of others?*

Of course, but I know when I can get to which place so it is fine.

*And when you get to Cytadela park around midday do you have any problems with other users?*

This is also why I come here during this time. The park is not so busy, and especially there aren't too many cyclists. They are the ones that freak me out. They are fast and often pass me very close when I don't expect them. They should have more respect for walkers.

9. Respondent 9, male, 21 years old.

*How often do you come here on your bicycle?*

From time to time. Now I finished my exams at the university so I can cycle more often. And the weather got pretty nice right now.

*But do you have any specific periods when you like coming here mostly?*

No, I think not. It really depends on when I finish my lectures. Then I take a tram from the campus cause I never cycle there cause it is too far away. So I have to collect my bike from home and I can come here to do few cycles around.

*Why particularly do you choose this park?*

It is one of the few that are so close to the place where I live and that are so nicely connected with the cycling paths. And the park is so huge. In the city centre and all around the city you can't cycle recreationally at all. You have to go out of town. But still it is difficult to cycle when you don't have good cycling routes.

*So within the city limits, do you have any other park that you visit to cycle?*

I like the Łęgi Debińskie but from my place there aren't good cycling paths connecting it so I use it seldom. Rusalka is nice but still you have to get there and it takes time.

*And how about Malta?*

You can't treat that seriously. This place is overcrowded. I sometimes go there in the evening, when it is already dark. It is not so much occupied in spring and autumn when it gets dark quicker. But in the summer I prefer Cytadela as it is closer and still the area is so huge that everybody can fit in here.

*Is it so really? It also gets crowded on the weekends.*

On the weekend I usually suffer from hangover after meeting my friends so I don't come here before the evening [laugh]. But when I come here after my lectures during the week it is pretty ok.

10. Respondent 10, male, 28 years old. [The respondent was met thanks to private contact; he was responsible for maintaining MTB track in the park before it got demolished.]

*I can see that you still cycle in here despite the fact that MTB track was demolished.*

What you can do? It is still a nice place to cycle. The terrain varies a lot within the park so you can cycle up the hill but you can also put yourself fast down the hill. This makes this place so much interesting. I've got sentiment for this place so I still come here from time to time for a short ride.

*And you don't have that in other parks?*

No, cause they are all flat. An you know, parks are not that much for sports. They are rather small and designed for leisure and not for recreation that much.

*So why did the city demolish the MTB track and change it to a toboggan run?*

Good question. I think this shows how the city understands the kind of recreation within the parks. It can't be too much extreme cause it would discourage people like mothers with children from using it. It has to be family-oriented. So they built the toboggan run that can only be used when there is snow.

*Did anyone from the city council asked you about the new investment?*

No, they just decided on their own what is best for this place. People were using the 4X track since 2008 and it was always busy in there. Dozens of people every weekend! And suddenly they want to build a toboggan run! Complete nonsense! And see what you got in here now: no one uses it because we have summer and it is unusable!

*And how about winter?*

Still it turned out that it is not very popular among children after changes. They did something wrong with the slope gradient and it is not steep enough so people cannot really use it. And still, last winter we only had 2 months with snow and there were months that it was 10 degrees. So now you would be able to use the 4X track for more time in the year than the toboggan run but still no one cares. Hundreds of people could visit Cytadela to use the track and make this place more livable.

*Do you see any chance to change the toboggan run into 4X track again in future?*

No, not really. I think Cytadela will not be considered any sports place at all in future. There is no investment in that. You don't see any football pitches, volleyball pitches, you don't even have any bicycle racks at all despite the fact that hundreds of people come on bikes in there. The only thing that you can do now is playing Frisbee but what kind of sport is that?

## **DĄBROWSKIEGO PARK – COUPLES**

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1. Respondent 1, female, 28 years old.

*How do you like the park?*

We actually came here for the first time. I think it's very well maintained. Everything is so clean. It looks modern though.

*Why did you come?*

We read in the Internet that there are some fitness classes. I personally go to the gym and I thought I might come and have a look how it is. And then maybe next time I can participate.

*And did you like it?*

Yes, Zumba is amazing. I mean, I've never seen it live before. I think I will definitely come next week and do it myself.

*And how about the park? Would you like it to be more old?*

Let's say that the parks in the city centre like the one in front of the opera house are more majestic. Here the paths are made out of concrete, the lamps are very modern and it doesn't look like a park really. It's too much organized, there is no wild nature in it.

*But you still are going to come next week despite the fact that you don't like the park?*

I mean, it is not that I don't like it. But we sometimes go together to eat some ice-cream and then we head to Sołacki park. Sitting there and eating ice-cream is much more enjoyable there than here. Here, it is only consumption related. I mean the park reflects the style of the shopping mall – both are perfectly maintained. There aren't even real bushes in this park, just grass and nothing else.

*Do you use any other parks?*

We sometimes go to ride bicycles in Łęgi Debińskie during the weekend when we have some spare time but I think that's it.

2. Respondent 2, male, 34 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

It is hard to say how often it is. It's rather not regular. But I can say that I started coming here at all when they regenerated this park.

*So you didn't like it how it used to be?*

No, the alleys were very dirty, when it was raining you couldn't walk here because it was all mud. The grass was full of dog poo and it was horrible – you wouldn't ever lay on it as we lay today. There was nothing in the park – it was only a passage through which you could get to the shopping centre. Few years ago I wouldn't even imagine that me and my wife would lay in here like today and have a cola from a bar nearby. Unbelievable how it all changed.

*Don't you think that the park outlook now is too modern?*

I think it is. But I do like it. What I don't like is rubbish and litter and when things seem to be old and unmaintained. And here it is different. I remember that few years ago there weren't even any street lamps in the park so it was very unsafe in the evenings and at night. And people drank alcohol in the park a lot. I think the changes were necessary cause the park was becoming a real shithole if you know what I mean...

*So now you wouldn't have any problems to come here in the evening?*

No, not at all. You know, there are security guards in the park so nobody does any mess. I mean, there isn't even any littering cause they would quickly approach you and ask you to clean after yourself anyway.

*And you like such regulation?*

Yes I do. I think few years ago most of the park would be associated with dangerous behavior and homeless people. And it is much different these days. You can feel that people come back to the city centre to spend some time. But this park is a nice example how quickly you can transform a place from nothing to what we have here now.

*So would you like some elements of this park like CCTV cameras or security guards to be present in other public parks as well?*

Why not. If it would mean an end to dangerous behavior then why not.

3. Respondent 3, female, 26 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

I must say that since they started the 'lazy Sunday' series in June I come here every Sunday with my boyfriend. We only missed it once cause we went on holidays.

*Which parts of the day do you stay here on Sunday?*

We usually come in the afternoon. Sometimes friends join us. We just sit, have some drinks and listen to the music. We often stay till they close the park around 10PM and when they stop playing music.

*Do you like the idea that DJ plays music all day long in the park?*

I think it is something new. If it was like that every day I think I wouldn't like it. But it's only one day in a week and for half of the day. I myself enjoy relaxing with this music but it really depends on people if they accept it or not. Anyway, you always have a choice, if you don't like it there are many parks just 5 to 10 minute walk from here. And you can go elsewhere. But I can't remember such action any time before in park, so it is nice that they practice with something new.

*Do you like the park overall?*

It seems to us that they try to make it the best place possible. You can say that it's all about money. But to be honest, the park entrance is for free, you can sit on the beach chairs without charge, you can listen to nice music, the grass and everything in the park is well maintained. So it is kind of a public place now that a private company took care of. I would say it is a

privatized park. But the result of this idea is quite positive for me.

*So do you think the city should privatize some parks to be more interesting?*

I mean I wouldn't dare to privatize all of them. But one should remember how this park looked before the private company took care of it. It was horrible and city did nothing with it. And now it works. So maybe the city should privatize those parks who are not popular and that are rarely used. Maybe the private owner would know how to bring people and city sometimes might not have enough money to introduce some bright ideas?

*So which park would you privatize first?*

I would do something about Marcinkowskiego park. I think it is in the city centre and has some potential but now no one really likes it.

4. Respondent 4, male, 30 years old.

*How do you like the idea of music in the park?*

I must say we came here because we heard the music. Otherwise we would just drive home. But I think it is nice. We've just been to the shopping centre and we didn't actually plan to come here cause we live in the suburbs and we rather don't spend time within the city centre apart from working here. I think the music is something that can bring people here, very attractive.

*And how do you like the park itself?*

I find it very attractive. I mean, nice benches everywhere, nice alleys. I do the shopping in this shopping centre since years and I think this park was very derelict for the most of the time. And then I have stopped even looking at it. And now suddenly I'm surprised how nice it is. I think we can come here one day after shopping.

*Do you visit any other parks at all?*

Not really. We've got quite a big garden where we live so we just don't need to. Honestly, I didn't associate parks with something which is here. I mean, here you can buy some drinks, you can buy food and the music is being played live. If other parks have something similar I might be there more often [laugh].

*Don't you think that this park is too much commercial?*

I don't know. I think it is just okay. There is nothing to complain about. They sell drinks here? I'm alright, it's hot now, people are thirsty so it's good that they provide something for people. I really like it.

*And is there anything that you don't like here?*

In my opinion the alley lamps are just too modern. They could look more like the architecture of the shopping centre. They don't fit in here.

*And in terms of people who come here, are you satisfied with others?*

Yes, there are no drunks in here and no homeless people which I'm usually aware of. So they try to keep them out of park I guess, cause I've already seen few security guards. But it's good, when the homeless stay in the park people don't want to come. And people should not be terrorized but they should use the public space freely.

5. Respondent 5, female, 25 years old.

*Do you like the park?*

Yes, I come to this park very regularly since years.

*And what is your perception of its change?*

I think it's better, definitely better. Now you eventually feel good in here. I mean few years ago there were people coming here and spending some time reading books or something but it wasn't the same. When you look at parks like Chopin park people sit there and they just sit and contemplate. Some others would read a book and that's it. Here people really gather to meet and not to just sit. That is the main difference. In Chopin park when you talk loudly or

you gather in a huge group all the elderly people look at you with disappointment, they are too afraid to speak up but they look at you. And here there is nothing like this, you feel that the atmosphere that they create here is much younger and more lively.

*Do you like the idea that music is being played here for hours?*

I'm okay with it. I remember when I've been to Berlin. People were bringing guitar sets with a speaker and they were playing for few hours and everybody gave them tips. So I think they just officially adopted something that is present in the western world since some time. And if people liked it in Berlin and even gave voluntary tips they should also like it here in Poznań.

*And how do you find the presence of security guards?*

I think that they just keep the things right. I don't mind it at all.

*So which parks do you also visit apart from this one and from the Chopin park?*

Last year I attended yoga classes in the Mickiewicz park. Now I came here to this park as yoga in Mickiewicz park starts in July. And I think that one in Mickiewicz park is better. I mean, you have a beautiful fountain there, more people come. The view in this park is just magnificent. And here the atmosphere is nice but the park is just ordinary. You don't have any other park that would look so great as Mickiewicz park in Poznań.

*So which one would you prefer, then?*

I think that the perfect combination would be to add some elements of the Dabrowskiego park to Mickiewicz park. Some nice place serving food and drinks would really enrich this place.

6. Respondent 6, male, 27 years old.

*Do you like it here?*

I observed the changes in the park for few last years and this summer I can finally say that I'm amazed with this park. A lot is going on in here.

*How often do you come here?*

Mostly during the weekends cause I work in the week time.

*Do you like the fact that the park is fenced?*

I'm not really sure about it. I mean, the fence is very ugly and I hear it is against the law how they built it. But still it shows the clear boundary of what is forbidden and what is allowed. If you look at the grass just next to the park fence, which is an area managed by the city, you can see how poor the grass is, there is not pavement and there is a lot of dog poo. While in the park it is clean, and there is no litter and no dog poo. I think it is better for the park is someone is strictly looking after it and shows what is allowed.

*So you don't mind the security guards constantly watching people?*

Oh yes I do mind them [laugh]. I had one situation last year that I came with my bicycle to the park. And they just kicked me out. They said I need to leave it in front of the fence. And I try to never leave my bicycle out of sight cause I'm scared that someone can steal it. And this year they allow people to bring the bikes in. You just can't ride the bicycle on the park alleys and that's it.

*Do you mind that?*

Yeah, I still do. But on the other hand when you are in a public park you also are not allowed to ride your bicycle. I'm not saying that police is very strict about it but still you can always be fined. The same is with drinking alcohol. Here you can only drink what you bought in the official bar and only in designated marked area. If you go out of it they would approach you immediately. But on the other hand you can't legally drink beer in a public park so you are constantly in a fear that police will come and fine you. Is there really a difference?

7. Respondent 7, male, 33 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

It is just my second time this spring. I heard from my friends that it is very nice in here so we

came together.

*Do you enjoy your time together here?*

Yes we do. We'll just wait till the evening for the live music performance. We will need to grab some beach chairs.

*And how about other parks?*

I sometimes go myself to Cytadela and to Sołacki park to run. And she visits the Chopin park to read some books after work cause she works in the city centre. And when we want to spend some time together we just thought it would be nice to come here. We also went to Breakfast Market to Sołacki park. Such a great idea. Families with children, dogs, elderly, youngster, just everyone. I've never seen so many different groups in one park at the moment than there. I think it is a great idea. But when you look closer you've got something similar here in Stary Browar. You've got fancy food, nice cocktail drinks but you also get some music. I also think that we wouldn't go to Sołacki park together if they didn't organize the event. I think it was the only thing that brought us there.

*And how about the restaurant within Sołacki park? Didn't you ever consider going there together for a dinner?*

Not really. It is old and the food is also very traditional. If you look at the offer of Breakfast Market you can see that people seek new tastes and the park is a very alternative space in terms of what people would eat. Also in Dabrowskiego park the food that they serve is rather very modern. I think that the restaurant and its food in Sołacki park are so old and monumental as the park itself.

*But do you think that it is bad?*

I mean when you are elderly and you have enough money, you can go to this restaurant. But I would prefer coming here and having something fancy for more affordable price.

*How do you like the idea of security guards watching people in the park?*

I'm not keen on it. I think it clearly shows how much privatised is this space. You don't really know what you are allowed to do. I've seen people playing Frisbee here and it was okay. But when people started playing football with a very soft ball and with a lot of care the security guards suddenly came and asked them to stop.

8. Respondent 8, male, 36 years old.

*How do you like the park?*

I think it is a perfect spot in the city to relax. There are nearly no streets with a heavy traffic nearby so it is very quiet and calm. You feel like you are in the city centre but also as if you were not.

*But you can also feel that in other parks within the city centre.*

To be honest, we don't really go elsewhere. We like this park cause many of our friends also come here. I'm rather not visiting other parks cause it is hard to get there by car. And here you've got multi-storey parking and you just get to the park directly from it so it is very convenient. And in the other parks it is very difficult to park or you can't get there at all with the car like in the Chopin park. And I never use the public transport so I would never go there.

*How often do you come here?*

Sometimes I would say. Now we don't go on holidays for about next two months so it is some kind of relaxation that you can have within the city. But honestly, much more fun is to go to any of the lakes surrounding Poznań. Only if you have a car cause the public transport there is rather poor. But instead of coming here I'd rather go to a lake.

*So why would you come here?*

Last time we were here there was some small concert of an orchestra taking place. And today our good friends invited us for a coffee here. So you see, we come here from time to time.

*And what is your perception of security guards that stay hidden in the park edges?*

Oh, I didn't really see them. But if there is any security and they were not visible to me until you told me then I think you should not really care about them if you behave properly.

*And what does properly mean to you?*

I don't know, it's e.g. putting your dog loose which you don't have to like, the fact that people ride bicycles in the park just in front of you which is not safe for your children or excessive drinking of alcohol which is I think common in public parks.

9. Respondent 9, female, 30 years old.

*How did you come here?*

We came on our bicycles but we didn't really like it.

*Why is that?*

I think that the park is very poorly connected with the rest of the city by bicycle paths. And here are multilane streets going to the park so you don't feel very safely. I mean they could do something about it. And now in the park you have to carry the bicycle with yourself all the time because there aren't good bicycle racks in the park. It shows that they don't care about the cyclists too much.

*How often do you come here?*

We come maybe once a week. We treat as more as going out for some dinner and spending time together than any kind of recreation or spending a whole day in the park.

*Do you also go to the other parks e.g. Marcinkowskiego park?*

No, not really. Marcinkowskiego park is completely cut from the cycling paths network. You can't really get there either way. It's hard to walk there. You can't cycle there. And it is also hard to park your car there. The only possibility is to use the public transport but you still have to walk few hundred metres from the tram stop. This is why there are no people in this park. I've seen a skate park there which was quite occupied and I think that was a good idea.

*Do you think that they should put more skate parks in the city parks to make them more bustling?*

I think in Marcinkowskiego park the skate park is near the edge of the park and the heavy traffic on the street nearby doesn't allow the skaters to be really heard. But putting such skate park in many parks would just destroy their character. However, I think that they might put something like that in Cytadela park, it is huge and its role is to serve recreational needs so I think it is a great place for it. I think that overall parks should have some more amenities in their area. When you are in some parks you can't buy anything to drink or eat even in the surrounding area which makes these places inhospitable for a daily visit. Or sometimes there are no public toilets at all. They should invest in this kind of architecture more.

10. Respondent 10, male, 22 years old.

*How do you guys like the park?*

We think that it lacks some character. I would like to see more greenery in here, I would like it to be more compact.

*And how about its social function?*

A lot of young people here, a lot of couples. I think this area became really fashionable and now it is not only about relaxation or leisure that were originally main reasons behind the decision to go to park but it is also to show off yourself. Look how people are dressed in here, they are mostly in nice designer clothes and really being high end. Typical customers of Stary Browar shopping centre.

*Maybe you like the architecture?*

I remember how the alleys looked like in the past. Then you wouldn't rather call it a decent park. But just a field of grass within the city centre. And now not only the Stary Browar is an architecture star of the city centre but also this park became something more than just a park.

Even the lamps in this park are nicely designed in a modern style. I think that in future it can be an area like the Mickiewicz park – there people admire the architecture of the opera house and a beautifully managed park, and here they will look at the Stary Browar building sitting on a beach chair. So every detail, even the smallest one is perfectly tailored in this park.

*Do you find it good or bad?*

I think that parks should have at least this small element of wilderness where people can also associate their selves with nature. But I think that the Dabrowskiego park under the management of the shopping centre is still a very young project and one should give it some time to develop and then people can start judging it.

*And do you go to other parks?*

We play Frisbee with our dog in Cytadela very often. It is one of the places where I feel also great. This huge space and not too many people in comparison to it. So sometimes I play football with my friends, sometimes we would have some picnic with beers, and on other occasions we would just have a walk. But still the atmosphere is much different. It might be silly but if you really go to different parks you would feel the atmosphere between them changes a lot and what follows that is that the users change accordingly.

## **MARCINKOWSKIEGO PARK – SKATERS**

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1. Respondent 1, male 18 years old.

*How often do you skate in this park?*

As often as I can. It is the only good skateboarding place within the city.

*And how about the second skate park in Rataje?*

Oh no. It is so much disappointing. The ramps are so huge that you are too tired to do the tricks. It is more for bicycles than for skateboards. I don't really like it – it is too big and you also have to carry a helmet. I don't need the helmet cause I know nothing is going to happen to me. I know how to handle the tricks.

*Does anyone supervise this park area for skateboarding?*

No, no one comes here. But it's good. People know how to manage this place. We don't need anyone to come in here and supervise us. This is why I don't like the second skate park. There are people from the staff and they care about how you do the tricks. If you perform too much extreme they give you a word. But nobody needs that really. Here, you've got much more freedom and I appreciate that.

*What do you mean by "people know how to manage this place"?*

You know, there are no problems in here. When anybody has any problem we just deal with it on the spot. We don't call the police or something. This is a community.

*Do you think that other park users might be scared by your presence and be discouraged to use the park?*

I don't really care. For the first time since many years we've got a nice skate park in Poznań and we are going to use it as much as possible. I don't care if people get scared. They've got other parks that they might use.

*Is this the only place that you do the skateboarding in??*

Yes, there is one more skate park but it is out of the city and I don't have a car to get there. And here it is very convenient to come as the tram stop is just nearby. But I would like the city to build more skate parks as one is not enough. It's getting boring when you have the

same hoops every day. Overall, I think that this skate park is very cool but it could be much bigger. I guess that they just wanted to save some money but still be okay that they finally did something for people.

2. Respondent 2, male, 13 years old.

*How often do you come in here?*

I come here few times a week. It is the only place in the city that you can really practice so if you want to be good in it you have to train as much as you can.

*What time do you usually come here?*

Straight after I finish my classes. I sometimes only go home to eat lunch and then I come here afterwards.

*Do you use it also during the weekends?*

Yes, but to be honest during the weekends it gets overcrowded. You can't sometimes really compete with older skateboarders. It is just that you know you can't be there as they would say something to kick you out. When there aren't too many people it is cool but usually in the weekend there is a problem.

*Do you have anyone to report such behavior that you can't use it?*

Are you kidding? No one comes here. They don't even clean the litter. It is a no-go place for public services. I've never seen any of the officials here neither any police. It is just how it is.

*Do you have any other places that you can practice?*

No, not really. It's the only one.

*And how do you find the location of the skate park, straight in the park?*

It is cool. Not too many people around. It's always nicer like that than e.g. having a concrete desert.

*Have you used the park before with your friends before the skate park was built?*

No, never. Honestly, I don't like this park. If I ever go to any I always meet my friend in the Chopin park. Nobody really comes here apart from the skateboarder. Oh, wait, yeah, sometimes some girls come over there. You see, there are some benches and they sit over there and look at us. Many people try to impress them and crash their tricks [laugh].

*Do you ever come here when it is dark outside?*

My parents don't really allow me to come to this park too late. They say it is not that safe. I can't come in here after 8PM. During summer they sometimes allow me to stay little bit longer till 9PM.

*Do your parents come here to see what you are doing?*

No, they don't like it. It is not a place for them.

*And the park itself?*

No, they say they don't like it. They sometimes go for a walk to other parks but never to this one.

3. Respondent 3, male 25 years old.

*When do you come in here to skateboard?*

I can't say exactly. I live nearby so I often come here on my bike just too look around how many people are practicing at the moment. Cause you know, the area is so popular that often is unusable for me because of the crowdedness. I need some space for my tricks and when there are 30 people or more using it it's neither safe nor enjoyable anymore.

*Which times do you prefer, then?*

I guess late evenings are pretty nice. I mean, all of the kids that come here during the day go home. Then it is usually fine to come here around 9PM cause you are still able to see something as it is bright enough. But there were even days that I came at 10PM and it was still completely occupied. To be honest, you can't really say what time is good to come. But

sometimes as start my lectures later and then I can come here in the morning for a while. And that is the only time that I do feel freedom and there aren't lots of people in here.

*Do kids bother you in this skate park?*

Yes and no. I mean, they are getting on my nerves when there are too many of them. But I understand that they need some place to practice. When I was in their age I just did that on the benches or stairs. And nowadays they've got professional place where they can go.

*Do you also use the park nearby?*

No, I just pass through it. But you can't really see people in there. I don't like this place. It seems nice but on the other hand it just freaks me out.

*Why do you think people don't use it?*

I guess it is because of its character. It seems very close, too many trees and no open space. And also the location is strange. There is nothing around apart from the offices so why would anyone bother to come here?

*What do your friends do after they finish practicing?*

We never go to the park. We rather go out to Stary Browar so we don't enter the main park itself but we go to the other direction to exit the park. We sometimes also sit around the skate park but we don't go back into the park. It is just too dark in there.

4. Respondent 4, male, 17 years old.

*I can see that you don't do the skateboarding. Why are you observing it?*

I practice from time to time but today I just came to watch how people do stuff.

*Why didn't you bring your skateboard today?*

I was just passing by and I thought it would be nice to watch and maybe meet some of my friends who are usually here. But if you look at it now it was wise no to bring it today. There is simply too much crowd in there and it is not cool anymore.

*And how do you find the location of the skate park within the park?*

I think the overall idea is nice. I guess it is the first skate park in Poznań that is located so nice. But on the other hand when you think of it you might realize that it really sucks. It is just at the edge of the park. No one comes in here apart from the people that use the skate park. I think that many people, especially the elderly, are just scared of what we do, also the graffiti stuff on the hoops. That's why they put it not in the prime location but more in the remote one.

*So you don't like it in here?*

Not really. If there wasn't this skate park in here I would never come to this park. None of my friends actually visits it too.

*Which parks do you prefer, then?*

We often go to Cytadela cause it is huge and nice and you can do a picnic there. But this is mostly in the weekends. I don't know if I might say that but one of my favourite ones is Chopin Park. But mostly after the midnight. There is a lot of police control now around the Old Market Square so that park is a good place to hide from them. The police is usually too lazy to jump over the fence so we can drink cheap beers in there before going to a party.

*But having in mind that Marcinkowskiego park is not a fenced one and that it also has many trees and lacks open space which makes it nice for hiding from the police, why don't you use this one, then? You wouldn't have to jump over the fence?*

Yeah but the fence is the thing which makes us safe from getting fined from the police in most cases. And also, look at the location of Marcinkowskiego park. It's a remote one. I would have to walk around 20 minutes to reach the Old Market Square. And from Chopin park I only have to walk 3-4 minutes. None of my friends would bother to come here at night cause it's also creepy to drink in here as there are no people.

5. Respondent 5, female 18 years old [sitting on a bench and watching since a long time]

*What are you particularly doing here?*

You see those guys? These are my classmates. I sometimes come here when they invite me to watch them do some tricks.

*How often do you come here?*

Only when they let me know. There are better and more interesting parks in the city so I don't usually come in here.

*So to which parks do you go mostly?*

The ones in the city centre are cool. I often go in front of the opera house cause it is nice to lay on the blanket. Also I go to Dabrowskiego park near Stary Browar. It has this nice atmosphere of a hippy place.

*What makes it so?*

You know, the wooden pallets as tables. Also the beach chairs are cool. I mean, you don't have any other parks in Poznań I think that would provide you with beach chairs to sit and have a drink. I think this park became really fashionable and you can see people coming there are really cool.

*And you don't see that here?*

Apart from the skate park which was a very good idea not really. I think only elderly people go to this park to sit and talk. I mean, when you look around you can't even buy anything to drink. There is simply nothing in here, no shops, no bars, no cafes, simply nothing. And when you are in the city centre there is much more and everything is much closer.

*So you think that they should open some kind of bar near skate park to make it fashionable, too?*

It wouldn't be a bad idea I think. You can see a lot of people hanging out in here. More and more coming as skateboarding overall is becoming more popular. But it is also nice when you provide people with some amenities that they can use.

*How often do you use the city parks at all?*

In the summer very often. I mean, now I finished the academic year and I have holidays so I've got a lot of time to hang out with my friends. I don't have garden at home cause I live in a flat with my parents so it is always nice to go to the park, play some Frisbee, maybe read a book.

*And how about the period during the school year?*

I tried to spend some time in parks in Spring but I had much to do for school. It really made difference, the fact that I'm on holidays now.

6. Respondent 6, male, 22 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

At least once a week. Now I am during my exams so it is hard to follow with the practicing here. But when I'm not busy with my studies it is much easier to come here more often.

*How would you rate this skate park?*

I think first of all it's good that it exists. Previously we didn't have much choice where to go. And now it's close to where I live but also people come from the whole city cause there is a nice public transport connection nearby.

*Any problems with this space?*

Yes, indeed. Too many people. You know, they just built it November. There weren't many occasions to ride during winter. So now when spring started it turned out how many people would actually like to use it. I mean, there are few hundred thousand people in this city and one skate park that has few hundred square metres. In a normal country it would be a joke. But this is reality in here. There is one good skate park in Leszno which has 60 000 people. It is 10 times less than Poznan! And they have bigger than ours!

*And what about the skate park in Rataje?*

The design is really poor. They made it out of wood and it breaks a lot right now. And still the hoops are so big that it's not much fun to skate in there. Some of my friends that participate in skateboarding association tried to influence the design process but no one from the city wanted to listen to them. And it is how it is now. Here it is different. It's maybe smaller but the design is much better and it is fine for making tricks.

*And how about this park overall?*

I don't know. We rarely go in there. There is nothing. When we finish we often go towards the Stary Browar and then we hang out in the park there. You can grab a beer in a bar over there or some Yerba Mate. It is nice. And they have the beach chairs.

*So would you like any bar selling stuff anywhere near to the skate park?*

Yes, that would be a great idea. I mean, we hang out here doing tricks and skating sometimes for hours. We do need to eat something and drink something. And you can't. So often one of us grabs orders and walks to a kebab which is 500 metres from here and brings food to everybody. But it is not really convenient cause you have to cross the 4 lane street and you have to wait a while.

7. Respondent 7, male 18 years old.

*You are the first person I'm interviewing that rides a bicycle and does not skate. How do you feel in this skate park?*

It is really cool. The hoops are not so big so I can practice more in here. Cause I also go to the other skate park in Rataje which is much bigger and do more spectacular tricks there. There aren't any places in Poznań that you would use to professionally develop yourself in this sport so I'm happy that they finally did something for us.

*Do you like the whole park too?*

No. Apart from use there is no one in here. I mean, sometimes only elderly people pass by but that's it. I mean, none of my colleagues ever spend time in this park. There aren't any amenities in close range, the whole Niepodleglosci street is full of some offices or banks. I don't really like it.

*Would you describe the skate park as making this place more bustling and enriching it?*

Yeah, definitely! Look around, it is always busy like this. I like it. You can meet new people, some friends are always here, so many things are taking place around.

*When do you usually come here?*

During the day mostly. In the afternoon it's horrible. You have to wait all the time before you can perform a trick. Whenever I come here it is always full. I mean it's very seldom that you come in here and you see no people skating, that would be odd.

*Do you have problems with other people, skaters?*

You know, sometimes when it gets overcrowded there are some clashes between people. Sometimes it's like this that you ride just behind someone and you unconsciously hit him cause you are too fast. But it's all because of lack of space.

*And do you get into any interactions with other park users?*

Not really. Sometimes people come and watch us performing tricks. But I think that people here, especially elderly, they are just afraid of us sitting and smoking cigarettes and doing the whole skating. I mean, they look at all those empty bottles here, graffiti and people dressed like skateboarders and they think 'Oh, I don't belong in here'.

*Do you ever talk with anybody coming here?*

No. If they come they just watch. Sometimes they would say something like 'nice trick' but they just stare and go usually. I think they are just scared of what we do in here. But anyway, not too many people come to this park at all from what I've seen.

8. Respondent 8, male 22 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

On regular basis. It's the only good place to skate within the city. I mean, it is small and I'm getting bored with it but where can you go?

*Don't you have any other unofficial space where you can go?*

Yeah, actually, we sometimes go to this park in front of the opera house. Now it is not so convenient cause it got hot recently and many people are sitting there. And there is water inside the fountain. But in early spring after the snow melts and it is already warm enough we go there and skate inside the fountain. Also the stairs over there are nice for tricks.

*And when there are people there, do they bother of what are you doing?*

Yes, they do. I mean, doing tricks and jumping on the skateboard is quite noisy. And I guess people sitting there want to have some rest. That's one thing. And the other is that police chases us e.g. by skating inside the fountain. They say it's a public property and we are misusing it. So skating isn't that easy. You are always targeted by some groups being angry at you.

*What would be the solution?*

They should open a really huge skate park but nicely designed. Something like in Rataje but more friendly for skateboarders. Or maybe something like in Leszno, so accommodating all the users rollerblade riders, skaters, bicyclists and runners. It's a great idea. And the thing that we have in here is just pathetic when you compare it to Leszno which has less than 100 000 inhabitants.

*Do you use any other park in Poznań for leisure or recreation?*

In relation to skating only this one and the one in front of the opera house are good. I sometimes go near Stary Browar to chill with my friends cause it's nice. There are sometimes events in Cytadela so I visit this park from time to time. I've also been to Sołacki park recently due to some breakfast event. I think much is going on in the parks right now, shamefully not as much is going on in terms of skating. I mean, they could build some small ramps or hoops in every park so people can practice a little bit. I've seen such thing in Holland. Every park had something like a single island with a ramp. It was really serving the neighbourhood. But I don't know if people would accept it here in Poland.

9. Respondent 9, male 15 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

Regularly few times a week when I have holidays from school. When I'm busy with my classes then not so often. It's always time consuming for me to come here. I need to take a bus and then a tram and it takes me like 45 minutes.

*But you still want to come here?*

What choice do I have? I'm too young to drive so I don't have a car. If I had I would go to Przeźmierowo that has a nice skate park. There is also one small skate park in Batorego and one in Łozowa street but these are just ramps. If you want to really practice the hoops and ramps have to be diversified. I heard that they are building a big skate park in Swarzedz. I checked it and you can get there by train quickly. I mean, I wouldn't go there every day but maybe at least few times a month. It's always something new.

*Do you like the surroundings, the park itself?*

It is nice but it is inaccessible. I mean, people don't come here. It's just between the city centre and the railway station. People just cross it to get from one place to the other.

Otherwise why would you bother to come here at all?

*Because of the nice environment?*

I mean, if there wasn't this skate park I would never come in here. There is nothing in this park.

*And do you visit other parks?*

Yes, after school we go to some parks in the city centre before I go home.

*But still there isn't anything apart from the benches and trees in these parks as well.*

Yes, but you have the shops and stuff in the surrounding area. Here, you have to go really far to reach a shop. And sometimes when I'm in the Chopin park I can have a beer with friends after school cause the shop is just nearby. This park in here is just too remote and not well connected with the rest of the city.

*What time do you usually come here?*

It's always busy so it doesn't matter. But I don't stay really late cause the later it gets the older skaters come. And then you feel this kind of pressure to go home because they are old and they ride really fast and I don't feel like getting into trouble with them.

10. Respondent 10, male, 21 years old [Sitting near the skate park and watching others].

*You don't seem to be very happy? What is wrong?*

Look at this. All of these youngsters came. They slow me down. Look how they do tricks, they often fall over and then they lay on the ground. And you can't pass them quickly cause you are afraid you might hit them. And they are young around 12-14 years old so if you do something you might have a problem. Too many people are here.

*So this skate park is not enough for you?*

Not really. It should be much bigger to accommodate the needs. There are some skate parks in the city though but they are too small.

*Where else do you go?*

I sometimes skate in front of the opera house. But it's illegal and you need to watch out for the police. I don't like the one in Rataje cause the hoops are too far from each other. I sometimes go to Poznań Army monument. It is quite nicely designed. I mean, they just designed it as a monument but it has a shape perfect for grinding. But it is still illegal so you always need to watch out.

*And how do you like the location of this skate park within a park?*

It seems to be a nice idea. Since we start coming here few months ago it turns out that this place can be more viable. But I think it was not done on purpose. They just randomly put it here. I mean, there wasn't any major plan behind it. And the result of that is that you have this small skate park here, everybody is coming, people are having fun but that's it. When they finish they just go elsewhere. I mean, they didn't think how to keep these people in here, organise any activities any facilities to stay, drink or sit. It's not well organized.

*And when do you usually come here?*

I meet my friends here usually in the afternoons. We skate for 2-3 hours and then we head to the Old Market Square in the evening. You know, we just come when it's sunny. And when it rains you've got nowhere to go in terms of skating. There was one skate park in an underground parking lot but they closed it. So now it would be good if they opened a skate park under roof so you can use it more often. And also, if it was as in Kinopolis [the underground parking skate park] it would also serve people in winter. Now, we can only practice for half a year when it is warm enough.

## MICKIEWICZ PARK – STUDENTS

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1. Respondent 1 – male, 20 years old.

*How do you feel in this park?*

I feel great . The architecture here is brilliant and the park itself is tremendous. And also people are nice.

*In term of people, don't you feel that some groups are excluded from this park while students dominated it?*

I mean, no one prevents people from coming to this park. One can notice that there are mainly students here but I don't know the reason for that. You can't really say that students here push people out. They just sit and have fun, yes they dominate this place but everybody is welcome.

*When do you usually come here?*

I come here every time I can. Sometimes I would come in the morning to read a book on the grass. Sometimes I would have a picnic here with my friends. And sometimes we hang out with lads in the evening and have some beers.

*Why do you drink the beer in this park?*

We are students [laugh]! I can't always pay 8 or 10 PLN for a beer in a pub. So we sometimes would just drink beer here. But we do behave when we do it.

*But others sometimes don't. There are hundreds of empty bottles in the morning every weekend.*

Yes, I know that, people sometimes shout , sometimes they become aggressive but what I can really do about it? I mean, the fact that everybody drinks in this place is so obvious that the city should do something about it. They should put some small bar in the corner so people can come here and have a beer. It is ridiculous. I often go to Berlin and there people sit in huge parks and they drink beer everywhere. Here we can't. I don't get it.

*Don't you think that then people would make this place much more noisy and this would discourage others that seek quietness from coming here?*

I don't think so. People now do sit and drink. And putting a bar or a special zone in front of the fountain that would sell beer in here would just mean legalizing it. It is no secret that every student likes to come here. I think they just come here from time to time and give fines for drinking in public to earn some money from us. Just a practical reason and nothing else. So people drink, others come, everybody is happy apart from the police...

2. Respondent 2, male 22 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

When it gets hot outside it is my favourite spot in the city. I'm here nearly every day. I often meet with my friends in here as well so it became kind of a meeting place right now.

*What times of the day are you here?*

Especially in the afternoon when I finish my lectures. I study here at Fredry street, so it's just 3 minutes walking distance from here. Then I stay till the evening and sometimes even till night. Also we often go to Old Market Square from here on foot with my friends.

*Do you ever go to Marcinkowskiego park which is nearby?*

Not really. I don't like this place cause it is more remote than these parks here from the city centre. You have to wait for ages to get green signal at the crossing. I hate it. I often come here on my bike and it is impossible to get to Marcinkowskiego park safely cycling. I know people who study at the Music University [which is near the park] who never go there. I mean it is strange, they maintain a huge park within the city centre but no one goes there. I think they are building a new department of University of Technology just next to the park so

maybe when they open it things will change?

*And how about the skate park that was built in there?*

I think it's a great idea. But I've seen such places in France and they had it connected with all the amenities. I mean, there was a huge park and people were sitting around, and there was a bar and places to sit. Here in Poznań, you've just got a small island of ramps just in the middle of the park and that's it. So this place could have a nice atmosphere that would bring more people. I personally don't skate but if it was like in France I would go there just to watch and have a nice time. It could be just much better than it is now.

*How about other parks in the city?*

I run to Cytadela. It is also a very nice place. You can spend a whole day over there just doing nothing!

*E.g.?*

There are these events called Sunday Funday. I've been there few times. Hundreds of people come and they are picnicking, doing barbecue, playing games. A great idea. Apart from running I often join this event with my friends on Facebook and everybody writes what he is going to buy from the foodstuff for this event.

3. Respondent 3, male 24 years old.

*Do you like this park?*

Yes I do. I think it is one of the most famous spots in the city. I appreciate how it looks now so people started coming here a lot.

*And how was it before that people didn't come?*

I think the biggest revolution in Poznan in terms of city use by people who really enjoy being in the city was the abolition of law that forbid sitting on the grass in public spaces. When I was in high school it was still forbidden and I remember when we were coming here and the municipal police was hiding behind the trees just to fine you. It was ridiculous. You could have got a fine of 500 PLN just for sitting on the grass. And then, they suddenly changed it when I was going to start my studies. People couldn't believe that now they can freely sit on the grass and no one will chase them for that! And look at it now, people are here on blankets and they have a good time. And the grass is still here.

*What time do you usually come here?*

It depends. I think I don't plan it in advance or I do not have specific time slots when I come here. I just live 15 minutes by bike from here and I come whenever I like. You know, it is sometimes that a friend of mine would call me and say "Hi, I'm in front of the opera house" or "I'm just near the fountain, come" and I can quickly come to chat on the grass.

*Why do you meet with your friends specifically here?*

I don't know any student who would have a huge house with a garden [laugh]... So being in a park means the only contact with nature that we can have. I mean, I live in a flat with 5 other people and they sometime smoke cigarettes inside. Then it is pleasure to just come here and breath the fresh air.

*And do you also go to other parks?*

Yes, I often go to Cytadela with friends. From time to time we drink in the evenings in Chopin park before we go to the party. When they organize a nice concert I would go to Dabrowskiego Park.

*And how about the Marcinkowskiego park?*

Not really. The park isn't nice to lay on the grass I would say. Also, there is a pond but it stinks. And here you've got a beautiful fountain. Also when you want to grab something to eat here you can go to Fredry street and get something quickly in 3 minutes. And there you have to cross the street and it takes time. I don't know if you heard about it but there is also

this city myth about the homosexuals meeting in this park to have sex. I heard this story many times so I'd rather not try meeting any of them there [laugh].

4. Respondent 4, female, 20 years old.

*How do you like the park?*

What I mostly like about it is that it is in the city centre and you don't feel that at all. If you look at it from the perspective of the opera house you would see that it is located in the basin. So it is surrounded with levees that protect it from the sounds of the streets, I mean cars, buses and all that city noise. Here I feel very peacefully.

*When do you mostly visit the park?*

I don't know. Just during the day. I mean, I'm too lazy to get up in the morning and come here. But when I'm around e.g. when I have a book to read for my studies I would often come here with a blanket and read.

*Do you ever come in the evening?*

I know my colleagues from university like having a beer here but I'm not that type of girl that would join them. I'd rather do some pre-drinks in my flat with friends and then meet my colleagues at the party.

*Do you unsafe that you never join them in the park?*

I'm not sure about it. It is just that you know, parks are always not completely safe when it is dark outside. When you are a woman you need to be careful.

*What other parks do you visit?*

I also go to Chopin park often. I work part-time in a restaurant in Old Market Square and the park is just nearby. So before coming back home I like to sit there and read a book.

*And how about other parks?*

I was being invited to a date few times to Sołacki park [laugh]. It is a lovely place. However, we were kind thirsty once and we also wanted to find something fancy to eat but there wasn't anything in the area apart from an old restaurant so we went to the city centre anyway. Some of my friends study at University of Life Sciences [which is near Sołacki park] but they come to Mickiewicz Park or Chopin park. I think it is because if you want to meet friends you would rather meet them here than in Sołacki park cause it is too far away.

5. Respondent 5, male, 23 years old.

*How often do you visit this park?*

In summer at least once a week.

*In which times of the day?*

In different times. I would say it more depends on the weather. When it is nice I can sit here for the whole day.

*Do you ever go to the park behind the Castle?*

Oh, are you allowed to go there?

*Yes, you are, there is a gate that is open during the day.*

Oh, really? I've never seen it. I didn't even know that you can get inside. I pass it very often but I've never thought that I might get there. Honestly, I've never seen too many people there too so I thought it is just a part of the Castle, for employees or something. I think it is a bad idea that they have this fence there. Look at the park in front of the fountain, you've got wide stairs, it is easily accessible and people know that they can get inside. If you put a high fence then don't expect people really to come inside. But the plant carvings in the park are quite nice so I might go there one day.

*Which parks do you also visit?*

I sometimes go to Wilson park cause I live nearby. I go to Łęgi Debińskie to cycle cause the area is huge.

*Do you visit Chopin park?*

Which one is that?

*The one near the Old Market Square.*

Oh, yes. I go there often but I didn't know its name. To be honest, I go there with my colleagues before parties. We buy some beers and we stay there in the evening. We jump over the fence, you know... [laugh]

*Does the police chase you for that?*

Not really. Sometimes they might jump over the fence. But I'm a student since few years already so I've drunk in this park many times and they don't come very often.

*And how about the Marcinkowskiego park?*

Is this the one near Niepodległości street?

*Yes, you are right.*

Oh, I've got one friend who does some skating and he often goes there. But I don't really know why should you go there if you didn't skate. I think it's more for elderly.

*And the park new Stary Browar?*

Yes, I went there with my girlfriend for a concert once. I think they did some works in the park recently and it's quite nice now. I've seen many couples there.

6. Respondent 6, female, 24 years old.

*How often do you come here?*

I come here few times a week. I live near Old Market Square and I go both here and to Chopin park. I mean, before they turned the fountain on I was more going to Chopin park. But now, I like it more here cause you can really relax with the sound of water flowing. And before it was on some skaters were practicing in the fountain basin and there was a lot of noise so I couldn't really concentrate on what I was reading.

*So you need it to be very quiet when you visit a park?*

Yes, I often go to parks to read things for my studies. I do it because I live with 3 other guys in a student flat and you can't really study in there. They drink all the time and being in the park is the only time when I can focus on reading. During winter I would normally go to the university library but I really don't like it. It is old and too monumental. Here, laying on the grass is much more pleasant.

*So I guess you don't come to the parks in the evening?*

Not really. I mean from time to time my flatmates invite me to drink with them and we might also go to Chopin park to drink. But in the evenings, especially in summer, a lot of different people come and drink so it gets noisy. And the police usually does nothing about it so I leave.

*And how about the Marcinkowskiego park? I think it is more quiet than here?*

Yes but the park is horrible. You can't really lay on the grass like here cause it is much different. They don't keep it so well as here. And I think it's also because of the noise. I'm really sensitive about it. There are multilane streets around the park where the cars drive very fast so you hear that noise all the time. I mean there is nothing which would separate the park from that noise like here cause the area is flat. I just don't like it.

7. Respondent 7, female, 19 years old.

*How do you like the park?*

It's great. It is always clean and well maintained. I mean, if you compare it with how the city looks in some streets, full of dog poo and rubbish and litter, then this park is very nice.

*So, do you visit it very often?*

I live far away from here in the suburbs and I unfortunately don't have a car. So it is hard for me to get to the city centre very often. I just finished high school and will start attending the

university here in the city centre from October so now I am meeting with my friends from high school as then I will not have time for it I guess. So during the school year I wasn't here very often but now I try to come here cause I have more time. If my dad gives me a lift I try to come to the yoga trainings here every Sunday. It's such a nice idea that they are organizing it. And it is for free!

*Do you also visit other parks in the city?*

I sometimes go with my mom to Cytadela. I mean, we drive to Rusalka lake and we park the car over there. And then we run through Solacki park to Cytadela and back again. But it's rather something like once a month and we run in the morning.

*When you meet with your friends from high school, do you ever stay in the park until it gets dark?*

Not really. If I stay overnight in one of my friends' flats and we spend the whole afternoon here, then usually around 8PM we would move to some bar or café. I don't really like the men who come here and drink. I know that there are some girls who also come but I am different than they are.

*And how about Solacki park?*

There is nothing interesting in there. I mean, my friends usually don't go there. And when it gets late I don't feel very safe in there. And then if you want to go to a party in the city centre it's so far away that it takes ages to get by tram. So I'd rather spend my time in parks in the city centre.

8. Respondent 8, male, 22 years old.

*How often do you visit this park?*

I would say once or twice a week. Mainly during weekends. We hang out with lads in the park in the evenings, especially on Friday night. And then we go and party.

*Why particularly in this park?*

I think it is because everybody knows it and you just say "lads, let's meet near the fountain" or "near opera house" and everything is clear. Park is nice, there are these benches behind the trees so if you want to drink something you are not very visible in the street. There are no cameras so the municipal police wouldn't find you. Perfect spot. And then you take a 5 minute walk and you are in the Old Market Square.

*Do you think that with such behaviour you scare other users who leave the park when you come?*

Who? Elderly? Oh, they have other places to be. They can go to the park on the other side of the street. I think it is very peaceful for them and youngsters don't go there.

*And do you go to the Chopin park?*

Rather not. It is funny. I mean, the location is perfect I know people drink there and then they are in the Old Market Square in one minute. But one of my friends who is a part of our group is rather fat and he can't really jump over the fence. So we come here to the opera house cause there is no fence and it is open for night [laugh].

*And how about the other parks?*

I invited a girl to Wilson park. It is very nice as well and not so popular so more intimate [laugh]. But overall I don't have time for it. I study medical science and I have to study a lot. So I only go out during the weekends not as a typical student that can party for the whole week. You can really say that my experience with parks is only connected with drinking [laugh].

*And how about the Dabrowskiego park? You can buy your drinks there and you can drink legally in a designated area.*

No way. We went there once but it was so expensive that it was the last time. I mean, they regenerated the park in last 2 or 3 years. I think it now belongs to the shopping mall that is

nearby. And previously city maintained it, so there were no benches, no paved alleys and no fence. And now there is this fence that they close for the night, there is security. Previously it was a good spot to drink at night but it's all gone.

*So you regret that they invested money in it?*

I mean it looks nice but it's closed for the night. If they left it open and put some less expensive bar there I would use it I think.

9. Respondent 9, female, 20 years old.

*How do you like it in here?*

I love it. Great spot.

*How often do you visit it?*

I can't say really. I think regularly but I can't exactly say how many times a week or something. It's rather that when someone calls me to ask if we want to meet somewhere in the city then we usually would come here if the weather is okay.

*Do you also go to the park nearby, behind the Castle?*

Not really. I've been there once or twice. But it is located just behind the Castle and then the sun shines in such way that it is blocked by the tall building. So for most of the time you would sit in a shade. And the areas of the park that are still covered by sun are covered with grass mainly. But you are not allowed to step on the grass. I don't understand it. I remember that it used to be like this in the whole city some few years ago when I was a kid but now you can step on the grass in every park in the city apart from this small one. I mean, parks should be aesthetic but they should also remain functional! And for me forbidding laying on the grass makes the park dysfunctional.

*Which park for you is the most functional, then?*

I think Cytadela might be such. You can do many different things there. I know that they organize some park runs there in the mornings. There are some restaurants too. You can lay on the grass, you can play Frisbee, you can have a picnic with friends, you can ride your bicycle. When I think about it I come to conclusion that there could be something here that you could buy something to drink, especially during summer. I know it is a historical site that is protected by law but they could put some small mobile stall in the street or something like that. I would appreciate it.

*And which one do you think is the most dysfunctional?*

I think it is the Marcinkowskiego park. I never go there. It is so noisy in there because of the cars everywhere. On the one hand you feel like you are close to nature cause the trees there are so beautiful and there is this huge pond but on the other hand you constantly hear the noise of speeding cars and their engines. Who would like to have a rest in such atmosphere?

10. Respondent 10, male 23 years old.

*How do you like this park?*

I think it is the most popular park in Poznań but also the most overrated one.

*Why do you think so?*

I think the atmosphere is too static. I mean, during the winter nothing really happens here and the park is almost empty. Then in spring people start bringing blankets and sitting on the grass. Then in summer they put the fountain on, homeless people start sleeping in the park due to higher temperature and that's it. Oh, and there are these yoga events every Sunday. But apart from those few minor things this place does not live. There aren't any events, any special days in this park.

*What do you exactly mean? What kind of events would you like to organize?*

To feel more exotic, I would start from putting a bar or kind of a small place that would sell drinks. You could put beach chairs on the stairs that people could chill and relax. And then

from time to time some festivals like you have the Breakfast market in Sołacki and Wieniawskiego parks. I know that these events are extremely popular so putting something like this in the city centre would regenerate the area even more.

*Why particularly here?*

Because this is the most known park in the whole city. This is a famous spot well recognized even by people who never come to the parks. My parents, they never visit any park. But if I describe them where I am going they always know and say “oh, yes, I know this place, it’s just near the park with the fountain”. I think the city should use this potential more and do something about it. Perfect example of it are yoga classes. Hundreds of people come to the park in the morning to have some relaxing fun. Amazing, isn’t it?

*And what about the other parks, do you have any ideas of improvement?*

I mean, you can’t make every park exciting. Parks are also serving the people who need to have some rest and seek quietness in them. So you can’t do the events all the time and you should also be careful about what you do. So you shouldn’t organize too many events in all the parks. I think this park as a famous spot within the city centre can serve as some nice area to begin this new trend in the city centre. I would like to see here something like an outdoor cinema e.g. during some film festival which we have plenty of them in summer.

## **SOŁACKI PARK – MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN**

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1. Respondent 1, female, 30 years old.

*Why did you come to this park? Do you live anywhere nearby?*

I can’t say that I live really close. I had to drive here. I live just at the city outskirts and the area is rather poor in green areas or any park facilities. So I come here because I can have a walk with my baby in a nice area. Overall, Sołacz is the best neighbourhood in the city, very peaceful and quiet, and this park is also like that. What is more, driving here is convenient as it has nice connection with fast double lane streets to where I live.

*Do you ever come to this park for recreation or leisure and not with your baby?*

Honestly? Never. I just don’t have any time for that. I also have other children that I need to drive to the kindergarten. I need to do shopping and cook. And then to look after my baby. But from time to time I can come over here with her as she also needs to be outside and breath some fresh air.

*Does your husband ever join you?*

No, he is too busy. He works till late every day.

*Do you also go to other parks with your baby?*

Not that much. This one is much nicer. I mean, all the trees in here are so beautiful. And these ponds! It has this majestic atmosphere. It is not just an ordinary park with few benches and nothing else. It has this kind of look that is really majestic.

*When do you usually visit this park?*

Around midday when I have a break from my duties.

*And how about afternoons or evenings?*

Not really. Then, I spend some time with my husband at home.

*What about weekends?*

We've got some garden at home so we rather stay together and have some rest after a long week in there. It is too tiring to drive to the park all the time just for a walk with baby.

2. Respondent 2, female, 28 years old.

*How often do you come to Solacki Park?*

I come here nearly every day. I'm now on maternity leave in the beginning of it so I've got plenty of time right now.

*Do you also visit other parks?*

It is not so convenient for me to go to other parks. I live 7 bus stops away from here. All the buses now are low-floor ones so it is very easy to get inside with a pushchair. If I wanted to get to the other parks in the city centre I would have to take a tram. And trams that come here are the old ones with a high-floor and it is really difficult for me to get inside. I always have to ask someone for help which is really frustrating.

*Is this the only thing that prevents you from visiting other parks?*

I think this is very important. Other parks are also nice. I especially like the one in front of the opera house. I spent some time in it during my studies and I've got some sentiment for it. However, I rather come to Solacki Park due to practical reasons.

*Doesn't your husband helps you to become more mobile?*

Not really, he works every day while I'm on the leave. He doesn't have time to drive me to the centre.

*And how about the weekends? Do you got to any of the parks together?*

I think we used to do it before the baby was born. Now we stay more at home to look after her. I personally come here on my own cause I just have much free time.

*Do you feel restricted by the fact that you are more or less forced to use only one park?*

I don't know. I've never thought about it in this way. It is just how it is. I like Solacki Park and I don't mind coming here every single day if the weather is nice. I also think that when the baby grows a little bit there is a nice playground in here so we will keep using it.

*Is there anything that you don't like as you spend so much time in here?*

There could be a public toilet with a changing station as sometimes I have to change my baby. But I guess it is just a park so you shouldn't expect that much from a public place.

3. Respondent 3, female 32 years old.

*How do you feel in the park?*

Great, I do enjoy the landscape here. You don't really feel that you are in the city while being in here.

*Do you always come here with your baby?*

Yes, it is hard to leave the baby with anyone. I always come with him.

*Does it restrict you anyhow?*

Yes, you know, sometimes I would like to spend the whole day here. Read a book or something. Just have some rest. But still I need to feed him and stuff, so it is hard to stay in a park for many hours when you have a small child but I try to come here very often cause I enjoy my time in here.

*What makes it so much enjoyable for you?*

I would say the old character of it. The park looks as if it was like 200 years old or so. All of those alleys and big trees make it very enjoyable. You know what, my current husband took me here when we were younger for our first dates. And now I come here with our son. What a time cycle...

*Do you find anything that would bother you here?*

I don't like the cyclists too much. They often ride their bikes just very close to pedestrians. I don't understand it. People walk here and they ride so fast. They've got some separated lane in here but they use the shortcut just through the park. It bothers me cause I don't feel very safe with it. The police should come and fine them.

*Do you see any other users that would discourage you from using the park?*

I don't know. I think not. I think the park is pretty safe.

*And how about the evening?*

I don't really know. I rather don't stay here that long. I come back home before the afternoon. I don't see any point in coming to a park in the evening. Something might happen I guess. But I'm not sure cause I don't go in the evenings.

*There are many street lamps though.*

Street lamps aren't everything. I noticed that closer to afternoon people change in the park. I mean, less mothers with children stay then. Some other people come.

*What kind of people?*

You know, more youngsters, some couples. Yeah, a lot of couples. This means it is the right time to leave.

4. Repondent 4, Female, 28 years old. [At the playground]

*How would you mark amenities in this park?*

I would like them to be better and more. Now it is okay. But sometimes during the weekends you've got so many children in here that your kid cannot really play in here. You have to wait in a queue. It is really annoying.

*You think that there should be more facilities for children?*

Yes, indeed. Look around. Majority of people here are mothers with children. There should be more focus on children here. Not only playgrounds, but also some events. They should do something about children.

*When do you come here with your child?*

Especially during the weekends. In the week time, he is in the kindergarten for the most of the day. And then we come here on the weekend when the weather is okay. From time to time I also would take him here after the kindergarten.

*Do you see any differences in park use between the weekend and week time?*

Yes, sure! During the weekend the whole playground is occupied by dozens of children. You need to be very careful in there as you can hit someone easily. And in the week time afternoons it is different. I would say less children in here then, and perhaps more elderly and some young couples.

*Which of those do you prefer then?*

I'm not sure. On the weekends my son has a lot of friends here to play with. In the afternoons during the week he does not. So I guess that for him more fun is on the weekend but I have a headache of all those shouting children. It is just too much for me. I would like to have a seat and read a magazine on a bench but I need to look after him not to be hit by anyone as there are so many children on the playground.

*What kind of facilities would you expect from the park?*

I would say, some kind of organized playground with some animators that would play with children. It would be an ideal place if I could just sit and relax and my boy would be taken care of. You know, the same kind of way as in the shopping mall when you leave your children on the playground and you go shopping.

*Do you go to other parks with your son?*

Not really. Maybe to Cytadela from time to time.

*Do you know parks in the city centre?*

Yes I do, but they are not very practical for us. There aren't any facilities like playgrounds for

children so I can't spend any time with my boy actively and he gets bored. From time to time I visit Cytadela thought cause there is one nice playground with sand on the ground that he likes.

5. Respondent 5, female, 29 years old [came with her husband and their son for the Breakfast Market event]

*How did you come here 3 of you?*

We came by bikes. We live nearby and it is always fun to do the family cycling thing during the weekend. There is my husband over there, he is looking after the bikes as there is nothing that the bikes can be attached to.

*Are you annoyed with the lack of biking facilities?*

You can't really say that I'm annoyed. There are lots of biking paths around so it is safe to cycle for the whole family. I wouldn't dare to put my son on the road together with traffic. But then, I don't understand why they don't put any bicycle racks if they provide nice access by lanes. I think if there are so many bike lanes it can be assumed that people would come here by bike and would like to leave the bikes somewhere. And now you can't even attach your bike to any object and lock it securely. There is no logic in that.

*How do you like the idea of the Breakfast Market?*

It's awesome! We were here last Sunday too. There are events for children as well. We left our son in one of such events and we went together to the other side to spend some time together and eat something with my husband. Overall, I think that this idea is great. We used this park in the past but now we use it more often, I think this park lacked this kind of amenities where you can buy food and drinks. This brings a lot of people in here.

*But there is this restaurant Meridian in the middle of the park.*

Yes, but it is very expensive and it does not fit to this place. The people that come here are people on bikes, young people, mothers with children, parents with kids. And this restaurant is very official and high-end. It does not serve the clientele that come to use the park. I guess that restaurant these days is not that popular anymore.

*Do you only come here on Sundays?*

Now yes, cause we still have not tried all of that great things that are here on offer. We are more engaged because of the Market I guess.

*And how about week time?*

Not really. I mean, I wish I could but we are all just too busy. Son is at school, we are at work and it is hard to designate some time late in the afternoon to come here. But weekends are perfect for that.

*Do you use other parks in the city?*

No. It is hard to get on your bike safely there. We like it in here.

6. Respondent 6, female, 38 years old [came with her husband and their daughter for the Breakfast Market event]

*How often do you visit this park?*

Not too often to be honest. We came specially for the breakfast event. We rarely go to any of the city parks cause we have a garden in our house.

*What is so special about the event that brought you here?*

I think the event itself is something special. The fact that they eventually did something to bring people to this park. I haven't been here for ages.

*Why?*

You know, what can you do in the park? Sit on the bench? I can sit in my own garden. I mean, there is nothing in the park that we can take our daughter and have fun together. You know, you can't even buy any ice-cream in this place. And look at it now! Dozens of food

stalls everywhere. Nice playground for children as well. We can eat something together, then have some ice-cream and then leave him in this playground being supervised. And finally we have time only for us. And normally? My boy would be bored after some time. He would call for going to McDonald's or something to eat.

*So do you think that there should be some food amenities in the parks?*

Yes I do. If they want to bring more people into the parks they should definitely plan some food places in here. Otherwise many people are discouraged cause they rather go to the Old Market Square or to shopping malls. I personally find the parks boring.

*Which amenities apart from food would attract you to the park?*

I think some entertainment would also be cool. I mean, we sometimes go the King Cross shopping mall to watch some movies in the open-air cinema. I guess organizing something like that in the park would also bring people. The area is pretty nice but they should provide people with something more exciting to do.

*Don't you think that this is why people come to the park, because they seek a quiet environment?*

Yes, but you don't have to play the movies all the time. I mean, you don't see too many people here in the evening. I guess it is because there is nothing to be done so people go to the city centre as it's more bustling. Organizing movie shows could make this place more viable.

*Would you use it then, with your daughter and husband?*

For sure, but you know, it depends on what they would show. The repertoire should also be various, so people can come with kids.

7. Respondent 7, female 25 years old.

*How often do you come to the Solacki park?*

Recently more often. My baby was born 3 months ago and now I have some purpose to come in here and have cheerful walks.

*And how was it before?*

Before I wasn't coming here so often. Maybe once or twice a month, only when it was sunny.

*Why not more frequent?*

You know, there are other things that you can do. I mean, you can come here and sit on the bench but what else? I think that people more like to spend their summer months near the river or in the city centre.

*What would make you visit the park more often?*

Perhaps nothing. The problem is that I don't live very close to it so I like coming here now with my baby but we drive in here. And normally I wouldn't just drive into the park to have a walk. You have to live somewhere close nearby to really use it frequently.

*Do you visit the parks in the city centre more often?*

Not really, they are too small and where you can walk? I mean, it is hard to walk constantly around. And here you have some few paths so you can walk along the ponds and then around. I sometimes also go to Cytadela cause it is not so far from here and it's also a nice place to walk with your baby.

*What times of the day do you come here mostly?*

Mostly before the afternoon. Then, my husband comes back from work and I want to spend some time with him together. And around the midday I sit at home alone anyway so it is also some kind of pleasure to come in here and walk with the pushchair.

*What are the other places where you go with your child?*

I don't really go to other places. I sometimes have walks around my house in the streets nearby but it is not a very walkable area. So park is always nice cause the infrastructure is prepared and designed for walking. I mean, you don't have any cars, it is quiet so the baby

can sleep well and I feel safe in here. I don't have to freak out that any speeding car will pass me by.

8. Respondent 8, female, 34 years old.

*How often do you visit this park?*

Usually I come here with my daughter every weekend.

*Do you ever come also in the week time?*

Not really. She has some extra classes and lessons after school like piano lessons. We generally come back home late.

*Why don't you use the park in the evening? E.g. in summer it is still bright outside till late.*

I'm not really sure about the atmosphere in the park at late. I think that after 8PM some drunks come to the park and it is not safe anymore. I wouldn't even dare to come here when it is already dark, but even when it gets shady in the evening I don't like it in here. In this case the only time that I can visit the park is weekend.

*How do you like it in here?*

It's great. There is a nice playground that she can have some fun. I usually sit nearby and read some magazines or a book. I really enjoy it.

*Isn't it too crowded for you during the weekend?*

It sometimes is. Maybe it is not like that every time but when the weather is nice more people come with children and then there are queues to the playground devices. But children just wait few minutes, they don't get bored too much.

*Would you expand the playground area to be bigger?*

Yes, for sure. Now some people get disappointed by the number of children playing and they decide to take their kids elsewhere. I'm more patient but still something can be done about it. I mean, the area became extremely popular in last few years but it is as it used to be in number of facilities.

*What kind of facilities would make you come here more often with children?*

I'm not sure. I guess there could be some events for children. I heard about the idea of Breakfast Market. Some of my friends went for it with their children. It is nice for families. If you do something that the whole family can spend time together it will bring more people.

*And do you use the park more often e.g. during the winter?*

We go to Cytadela because there is a toboggan run. But not too often. I think it is more like my daughter wants to go because there is fresh snow and then we just go. Nothing really planned.

9. Respondent 9, female, 28 years old.

*How often do you come to this park?*

Mostly during the weekends. In the week time everyone's busy at home. I work, my husband works, our son is in the kindergarten. But now it is sunny and warm so I bring my son in here.

*And how often is that?*

It's mostly on Sundays, sometimes Saturdays. I guess it's 2-3 times a month.

*Do you also go to other parks e.g. in the city centre?*

Not really. It is not very convenient to go there. You've got nowhere to park and not too many playgrounds. It is much nicer in here. And also, I often meet other friends that come here with their children so we can have a chat together while the kids are playing at the playground. It's nice that so many people come here now with their children.

*Doesn't it bother you, the crowdedness?*

Not really. Cause everywhere you go in the weekend it is crowded. The shopping malls are crowded, cinemas are crowded, Malta lake area is crowded and there are queues everywhere. I'm just used to it. I think there aren't enough places where you can go with your children so that is the problem. When you become a mother in this city you get used to that after some

time.

*Do you miss anything in the park?*

It is cool that there is a clean toilet so we don't have to go anywhere. But I always need to plan the visit here in advance. I mean, there isn't any shop in the area so when it is as hot as today I need to take some drinks with me cause after he [son] comes back from the playground his always thirsty and tired and needs to drink. I think there is one shop but it's far away and I never walk there. I wish there was also some place to buy some ice-cream. Children love ice-cream and on our way home we often go to an ice-cream shop that is some 2 kilometers from here to buy some. Someone could do a nice business out of it I guess.

*What times of the day do you come here?*

I would say it really depends on the weather. There are days that it is so hot that I wouldn't bring my son in here. Then, we come after the biggest heat so around late afternoon. But we rather don't stay too long as I'm not pretty assured about my safety in the evening.

10. Respondent 10, female 30 years old [Having a small picnic on the bench with a friend; both having pushchairs].

*I see that you have a nice picnic in here. Do you do it very often?*

No, it is a special occasion today [laugh]. The weather is very nice today, sunny and little bit windy so Maria [her friend] called me and proposed we can have this small picnic in here. We both live nearby, just few bus stops from here so we quickly came to meet.

*Why don't you have this picnic laying on the grass on a blanket? I guess it is not that convenient and comfortable having it on a bench?*

Look around. People come here with their dogs and there are loads of dog poo everywhere. So I wouldn't really enjoy having a picnic on the grass. But these benches are nice and I like the way how it is. If you look around you will not see too many people having picnics in here. I know that in Cytadela more people do that. But there people walk the dogs only in specific areas and not in the whole park. Here it is different.

*Would you normally come to the park, not for a picnic?*

I'm not sure about that. Honestly, this is my first time in here since a long time.

*But you said you don't live very far away?*

Yes, that's true. But still it takes me some time to hop on the bus and come in here. So I'd rather walk around the place where I live which is also very nice and the sidewalks are okay. And also: I more often go to Cytadela park which is nicer in my opinion. Much more space in there.

*Do dog owners bother you apart from the poo that the dogs leave?*

Yes, they do. I don't like people who put their dogs loose. When I walk in here I don't feel secure with all the dogs in here.

*But in Cytadela there are many dogs set loose by their owners as well.*

Yes, but these dogs are usually far away as the park is so huge and I find it okay. Here, it is much different as the alleys are narrow and the whole park is more compact. And you know, Cytadela in general is more recreational so you see more active people there, some of them running with dogs. Here I haven't seen too many although I'm here for just few hours. There are much more children in here so people should be more aware of that.

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