

**A DAY AND A NIGHT IN THE PEOPLE'S
THEATRE
GENTRIFICATION AS THE HOMOGENISATION OF
RHYTHMS**

By
Ian Cook

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Supervisors: Professor Andreas Dafinger
Professor Judit Bodnar
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Abstract

Budapest's VIII district is currently undergoing widespread and divergent forms of gentrification, this paper analyses how the process plays out in the public space of one street, through the analysis of urban rhythms. The district has the worst reputation in the city; its name is synonymous with crime, unemployment, crumbling housing stock and poverty. The gentrification of the district is driven by the search for capital expansion, with the state aiding the market, remoulding itself to attract capital flows. This has partly manifested itself in the concerted effort of the local government to reverse the negative image through different urban rejuvenation programmes. The state also plays an important role in 'cleansing' an area of unacceptable behaviour, to help ease the expansion of the market. Utilising Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis, it is possible to examine how the everyday cyclical rhythms of residents clash with the mechanical linear rhythms of capital expansion. Analysis of these collisions reveals the insidious nature of the state's attempt at sanitising public space, at the homogenisation of urban rhythms.

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Introduction

Népszínház utca is a street that begs to be the subject of study. Its name, People's Theatre Street, produces expectations that are fully met. A mix of shops, pubs, hotels, homeless shelters, churches, trams, a building site and a market, it is a heavily utilised public space with a character, colour and attitude that animates its surroundings. It cuts through Budapest's VIII district – *Józsefváros* – a part of town that is as notorious as it is diverse; the same offices of the state demarcate one part a ghetto, whilst celebrate another for its rich history. Close to the city centre and with cheaper house prices than its neighbours, *Józsefváros* is currently undergoing divergent forms of gentrification.

There has been a concerted effort on the part of the state to change the image of the district, leading to the formation of a publicly owned company to administer urban renewal. However it is not just via its rejuvenation activities that the state influences urban change. Through its policies and reactive measures, the state aims to re-regulate everyday urban life along neoliberal conceptions of order to help pave the way for capital expansion. Thus *Népszínház utca* is undergoing a process of attempted purification as part of the wider gentrification of the district. A process that can be felt through its collisions with the repetitive nature of everyday life.

The collisions between the macro forces driving gentrification and the effects it has on the micro actors who are displaced from an area, can be understood through the use of Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis (2004). Using the theory, it is possible to compare the life spans of buildings, the valorisation of capital and the cycles of development investment with the choice of homeless people to sleep every afternoon on a certain bench, the group of

teenagers hanging around a corner after school and the graphic designer sipping her latte during a late morning break from the office; the linear rhythms of accumulation, of a building turning obsolete and being destroyed, of the arrival of modern architecture that renders further buildings obsolete, with the cyclical rhythms of the day and the night, of our bodies becoming slowly tired over the course of the day and of the shop keeper who greets her regular customers every morning on their way into work.

This paper is divided into three main parts. First it examines how rhythmanalysis can further the gentrification literature through its ability to bring together the forces lying behind the process, with its effects on the activities of everyday urban life. The second chapter will introduce the district, first through the eyes of the state and then on a ‘walking tour’ visiting four strategic locations, which each contain clues to the changes currently underway in *Józsefváros*. The third chapter consists of a rhythmanalysis over 24 hours in *Népszínház utca*. The day and the night spent in the street reveal the process of rhythm homogenisation, alluded to above. The paper ends with a short conclusion in regards to the changes in the street as well as to the possible further application of rhythmanalysis in gentrification research.

Gentrification, Time and Space

Space is nothing but the inscription of time in the world, spaces are the realisations, inscriptions in the simultaneity of the external world of a series of times, rhythms of the city, rhythms of the urban population... the city will only be rethought and reconstructed on its current ruins when we have properly understood that the city is the deployment of time. (Lefebvre, 1996:16)

Gentrification, a politically charged and class-inscribed metaphor, has grown in use and meaning since it was coined to describe the almost charming and low-key arrival of middle class residents in a working class part of London (Glass, 1964). Tracing the writings of one of the leading gentrification researchers reveals the change in meaning from at first describing the middle class colonisation of working class neighbourhoods brought by the movement of capital (Smith, 1979) to include large scale urban renewal projects (Smith, 1996) and finally become a ‘generalised’ urban policy (Smith, 2002). There is certainly a difference between small-scale and large-scale gentrification in terms of practice, something that will be explored later. Accordingly, I will take an encompassing definition of gentrification for the enquiry into Budapest, namely the class-based colonisation of a poorer neighbourhood and reinvestment in (including demolition and complete rebuilding of) housing stock.

I do not start with supposition that the results of gentrification are always detrimental to a city or district; it is dangerous to do so without exploring the caveats and criticisms pertaining to this claim. ‘Social mixing’ that leads to the arrival of middle class residents is

often accepted as a useful tool in the eyes of local governments for ‘improving’ an area (Lees, 2008), which may not even lead to gentrification-induced displacement if social housing is provided close by to newly built middle-income housing (Rose, 2004). ‘Benefits’ of gentrification, such as increased property prices and improved services, are openly celebrated on the websites of real estate companies¹ and hotels². Whilst this may not be overly surprising, it is more interesting to note that the same benefits are often welcomed by local residents (Freeman, 2006). However, in spite of certain perceived improvements, social mixing is more often than not one sided – the rich into poor areas (Smith, 2002: 98). Moreover, is accepted uncritically by local governments despite evidence of deliberate segregation and seclusion on part of the newly arriving middle class residents (Lees, 2008), which pertains to the assumption that there is equality amongst residents that is more often than not false (Bloomley, 2004: 99), all of which eventually leads to displacement of the original working class residents. Locating the ‘tipping point’ between renewal and gentrification – finding the workable balance between improvement and displacement – is difficult because, as I will outline below, the dynamics which drive this particular type of urban development often make such an equilibrium impossible to realise. It is not surprising then that a review of all English-language empirical research between 1964 and 2001 (Atkinson, 2002) revealed that for a majority of the studied districts, the results of gentrification were largely negative including displacement, loss of social diversity, increased conflict and loss of affordable housing.

For better or worse, summaries of gentrification literature often begin by setting apart in an antagonistic fashion those who see the causes of gentrification as either ‘economic’ or

¹ www.erkelhas.hu retrieved 17/5/2009

² <http://www.expedia.co.uk/Jozsefvaros-Budapest-Hotels.0-n6051657-0.Travel-Guide-Filter-Hotels> retrieved 17/5/2009

‘cultural’ (for example, see: Atkinson, 2003) with the root of the argument based on a back-to-the-city movement of capital versus a back-to-the-city movement of people (Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). With Neil Smith (1979, 1996, 2002) in the ‘economic corner’ and David Ley (1986, 1996) in the ‘cultural corner’ engaging in heated exchanges, the stage was well set for others to join in the academic ruckus. However, it has been forcefully argued that the preoccupation with the *causes* of gentrification, with scholars aligning themselves to one corner or the other, has had negative impacts into research on the *effects* of gentrification. Moreover, both Smith and Ley have actually taken conciliatory positions that incorporate much of the supposed ‘other side’ since the debate originated almost thirty years ago (Slater, 2006: 746). Taking heed of Slater’s advice I do not wish to become bogged down covering the grounds of an old argument, especially as there has long been a call for an integrated understanding of the causes (Hamnet, 1991). However, I do need to briefly detail what I deem to be the causes of gentrification in order to later analyse the spatial and temporal effects in public space. Broadly, I take the position that gentrification is made possible by economic factors, as capital seeks to maximise profit in devalorised areas, but that it is given its specific form and is lubricated by changes in consumption patterns and the actors involved.

Capitalism has contradictory tendencies between producing the equalisation of conditions and their differentiation – so called uneven development – and this can be witnessed at the urban scale. Capital searches for economic expansion and thus leans towards the equalisation of levels and conditions of production, however differentiation resulting from the division of labour at different scales leads to capital concentration in certain places and not in others. These differences can be mediated and qualitatively measured by ground rent (Smith, 1996: 52-77). One of the particular features of capital in the built environment is a

long turn over period – the valorised capital takes a long period to pay back the investor – but once valorising is complete it creates the opportunities for a new phase of valorisation through new investments. Historically in the US and western Europe, when the inner city was still valorising it made sense for capital to expand to the suburbs, once it had finished the process the ground rent in the inner city was low and capital moved back to the areas where the difference was greatest between the actual and potential future rent: the rent gap theory (Smith, 1979, 1996: 52-73). It is possible to trace the periodic shifts of capital in the built environment over time, as it correlates to the shifts in the wider economy, with the built environment proving an attractive investment opportunity especially in times of crisis (Harvey, 1982). Indeed, this can be called the ‘rhythm of capital’ in the built environment as reinvestment is linked to the broader rhythms of national and international economies and the availability of fresh investment opportunities after revalorisation (Smith, 1996: 86).

The situation in socialist Hungary was of course very different, however there are also striking similarities as well as instances of gentrification both before and after the regime change. Certain patterns of disinvestment and reinvestment took place in Budapest, albeit for different reasons (Bodnar, 2001: 71-77) which led to a cleansing of parts of the IX district in favour of the wealthy (Sýkora, 2005) and a specific type of ‘socialist urban renewal’ taking place in the VII district (Bodnar, 2001: 79). Since the system change, gentrification of the historical inner city districts has accelerated (ANAH, 2009: 13), although research shows it is not limited to the traditional ‘downtown’ (i.e. Benedek, 2004). Moreover, the country’s integration into international flows of capital and the rapid privatisation of housing has led Budapest to be described as a ‘laboratory’ for investigating the forces behind gentrification (Smith, 1996: 173).

The liner undulations of capital can also be found within individual urban structures. In capitalist economies land, and any improvements that are built upon it, become commodities but there are certain specific traits belonging to both. Private property laws give near monopoly control over land and improvements and the value of land and improvements fluctuates due to numerous external factors (Smith, 1996: 58). The development of one area creates barriers to further development as capital is “trapped in the steel beams and concrete” (Weber, 2002: 172) of the built environment, with prior investments creating certain path dependencies. It is difficult to modify structures for new purposes, thus leading to under development that can render buildings obsolete as the advancement of technological innovation leaves aging structures behind (Weber, 2002: 174). Moreover, as the way value is perceived is prone to change at a rapid rate relative to the time it takes to construct a building, it is not uncommon to find buildings left unused for long stretches of time once they outlive their usefulness. A noticeable example of which are industrial sites, which have fallen into disuse.

The deindustrialisation of cities does not only have consequences in terms of abandoned buildings or their potential reuse. As city's industry closes down, there is a shift within the employment structure of the populace, moving gradually from factory work to office work. The growing group of white-collar workers provides a pool of potential gentrifiers (Ley, 1986: 522). However, whilst gentrification clearly is a visible spatial result of economic restructuring (Smith and Williams, 1986: 3) the process is not solely driven by the ‘new middle class’, which is itself a questionable category (see Smith, 1996: 92). Rather middle class gentrifiers, like state officials or real estate developers, are particular actors within the process of gentrification.

The role of the middle classes within the course gentrification is to shape, through their changing consumption patterns, the particularities of the process. This is especially noticeable in the case for smaller scale ‘pioneer’ type gentrification, such as when artists fight for the right to live and produce artwork in light manufacturing zones (Zukin, 1982) or hippies lead the first wave of gentrification in search of ‘authenticity’ or ‘uniqueness’ (Ley, 1996: 175) and in turn open the gates for further gentrification on a larger scale, as capital further exploits the conditions of cheap ground rent the first-wave of gentrifiers benefited from. Moreover as certain categories of the middle class begin to move into an area the cultural value of a place is abstracted into market culture, with the new middle classes helping perceive, appreciate and consume a landscape through their cultural mediation and labour (Zukin, 1991: 205) changing a district not just through increased house prices but also through their daily practices, the rhythms of their day-to-day activities, working hours, shopping habits and desired services.

The state also plays an important role and can, depending upon the decisions of various officials at different scales, help or hinder the gentrification process. In the West a rescaling of the state took place under neoliberalism, with the centralised state not withdrawing but rather giving way to a multi-scalar, non-isomorphic, polycentric state within which the different interrelated and interdependent scales are continually in a transformative, socio-spatial power struggle (Brenner, 2004: 8). One result of this profound institutional and geographical transformation has been the emergence of ‘entrepreneurial urban governance’ (Harvey, 1989) where local scales of governance adopt growth-orientated approaches, often under pressure from supra-national and national bodies. The struggle to attract capital rather than regulate it has, in many instances, turned

the state into a ‘consummate agent of the market’ as local and state governments help clear the way for gentrification under the guise of urban rejuvenation programmes (Smith, 2002: 90).

In the Hungary the state has also played an important role in shaping the housing. Its importance in the socialist system is abundantly clear, as it was largely responsible for the allocation of resources including housing. However, it has continued to play an important role under the current capitalist system, not only by accelerating the commodification of housing through its withdrawal from building and providing state housing (Bodnar and Molnar, 2009: 12) but also in a number of different ways. These include, shaping the impact of new housing developments and pushing developers into financing projects by offering cheap land in return for parts of the new constructions being turned over for public or semi-public use (Bodnar and Molnar, 2009).

Gentrification literature has grown in size and scope since it emerged in the 1960’s and does not seem to show signs of waning, as researchers and scholars attempt to produce ever more finely tuned analyses incorporating both production-side and consumption-side factors and uncovering examples of the process across the globe. With local governments uncritically accepting the arguments in favour of gentrifying a neighbourhood as part of a policy of urban rejuvenation, research into the effects of the process appear especially pertinent. One way of examining the effects of gentrification – the macro forces that drive it and the micro forces that give it its particular characteristics – is through detailing how the process unfolds in a public place. By looking into gentrification in its early stages, in a street located in a district currently undergoing widespread urban renewal, I have

attempted to capture the initial effects of the process, something which I argue is best understood through the analysis of rhythms.

Time for Space, Space for Time

Understanding how gentrification is linked to the usage of a street is bound up with understanding space, time and the relationship between the two. It has been argued that despite the increased usage of space and spatiality in social theory and social sciences, the ‘spatial turn’ has been stunted by the unhelpful dualism created around space and time that prioritises spatiality, even amongst those who argue for a more dynamic conception of space (May and Thrift, 2003: 2). The importance of time in its common sense understanding is clear in the process of gentrification, as gentrification describes change over a period of time; the different ‘tipping points’ from when gentrifying pioneers first begin to arrive in an area to the more widespread displacement through the actions of real estate companies have been traced by many different studies (e.g. Monterescu, 2009; Rubino, 2005; Zukin, 1982). Gentrification is even more clearly about space in its common sense understanding, as it is about the change in population in a specific area of a city. However, neither time nor space are static containers but rather processes, or more precisely, as I will outline below, part of the same process. Understanding the production of space/time will allow the unification the micro and macro processes and, through attempting to unpick the conflicts that arise from this process, the effect on everyday urban life. To do this I will first explore time and space in the urban setting separately, before advancing the analysis of rhythms as a way of overcoming this duality.

Time is crucial in the capitalist system as social labour is a measure of value; surplus social labour time lies at the foundation of profit (Harvey, 1996: 242). Thus it is not

surprising that fundamental reconceptions of time were wrought with the transition from feudalism to capitalism (Le Goff, 1988), the night has been colonised (Melblin, 1987) or that onset of capitalism went hand in hand with the encroachment of clock time on our lives (Le Goff, 1980). The faster the turnover time capital has the quicker profit can be made, leading to a shortening of social time horizons and the “annihilation of space by time” (Marx, 1993: 539). With the success of a state highly dependent upon the degree to which a society is capitalised, various scales of the state attempt to impose temporal orders such as public holidays, working hours, school time and public transport schedules, based upon an organised and linear conception of time (Migdal and Schlichte, 2005: 29). However, the lives of urbanites cannot be understood through an analysis of bus schedules and city maps alone.

Time and space are not empty containers where ‘things happen’, rather they can be experienced in a relational, ever changing manner, “space and time do not exist outside of process; process defines space/time. Each particular kind of process will define its own distinctive spatio-temporality” (Harvey, 1997: 22). Consequently, an examination of the gentrification of a street along this line of enquiry requires a thorough exploration of the processes that bring the spatio-temporality into being.

Lefebvre (1996) offers one of the most interesting insights into the different processes that produce space, proposing a ‘spatial triad’ of the dialectical process that produces spatio-temporalities. The triad consists of a) representations of space, b) representational space and c) spatial practices, or more simply ‘conceived’, ‘lived’ and ‘perceived’ space respectively. *Conceived* space is the space of the technocrat, the planner or the local government setting out its ‘rejuvenation programme’. Because it is a conceived space,

invariably ideology, power and knowledge are embedded in it; representations of space are tied to the dominant power in any given society. *Lived* space meanwhile, is the space of everyday experience, the space in which people interact with one another, it is alive, it speaks, it is organic. This fluid and dynamic space can be linked to the clandestine aspects of everyday life, where the societal order is contravened (Merrifield, 2004). Finally *perceived* space includes the routes, networks and patterns of behaviour that secrete society's space. In this way it helps to structure the everyday reality, moving dialectically between the *lived* and *conceived* space.

However the dialectically created spatial-temporalities that can be examined through this model do not lend themselves to analysis over a period of time. Analysing the urban setting with this conception makes it seem as if each temporality appears as a new and separated event, like beads on a necklace stretched out through time divided from one another by empty string. Time and space is a process that is lived, conceived and perceived neither in isolation nor in a divided series. This continual process does, however, produce repetitions and regularities as time and space is something which we live through our everyday activities; the everyday "conveys the fact of repetition; it refers not to the singular or the unique but to what happens day after day" (Felski, 2000: 18). It is through the analysis of these regularities and repetitions that we can begin to unpick the micro and macro forces that produce temporalised space/spatialised time and to analyse the effect they have on the everyday in urban public settings.

An appropriate framework through which to analyse temporalised space and its relation to gentrification is rhythmanalysis, Lefebvre's (2004) unfinished project of the analysis of rhythms. To understand from where rhythms come from requires the deployment of

another triad with *space*, joined with *time* and driven by *energy* (Lefebvre, 2004: 15). Everywhere that there is an interaction between space and time, something that would not take place were it not for the expenditure of energy, there is a rhythm. In the course of our everyday activities the natural rhythms of the body come into contact with the rational, numeral rhythms that society imposes upon it. It is via these collisions, through these meetings of opposites, that we can acquire a different understanding of how the body functions in space. Examples of these different opposing, antagonistic yet interrelated rhythms are numerous: repetition and difference, mechanical and organic, cyclical and linear, quantitative and qualitative (Lefebvre, 2004: 9).

This conceptual framework is especially useful for the analysis of gentrification, because it provides a way of bringing together the macro factors that lay at the root of gentrification and the micro activities of everyday urban life and analysing how they interplay with one another. For example, we saw earlier how the rhythm of unevenness of capital in the built environment can result in gentrification, as well as how the consumption patterns of individual gentrifiers can change, through their daily practices, the rhythm of a neighbourhood. Examining various rhythms at different scales, it is possible to analyse macro and micro rhythms in the production of one specific place, without reifying their separateness or ignoring historical precedents (Karides, 2006).

The cyclical nature of everyday life increasingly comes into conflict with the linear nature of work processes and technological advancement under capitalism, these sites of conflicts are a window into how the rhythm of a public place is abstracted and unified as conceptions of time and space are imposed, displacing its previous users. “Everyday becomes a stage upon which the conflict between the indestructible nature-rhythms and the

socio-economic processes are played out in dramatic fashion,” (Meyer, 2008: 159) between animating rhythms that refresh and renew and the monotonous abstracted rhythms of capital. The gentrification process in a public place can be seen as an attempted homogenisation of the plurality of rhythms that constitute it; the advancement of certain temporal and spatial conceptions of what a place should and should not be.

A rhythmanalysis of a street can provide a sophisticated micro-history, bringing to the fore the effect of gentrification on people utilising public space and highlighting the macro forces behind it. Thus, it contributes to the literature on gentrification by giving prominence to the importance of both time and space and by attempting to bridge the micro/macro divide – analysing how global, national and local forces affect the everyday. In the final section I will explore how this conflict between indestructible nature-rhythms and the socio-economic rhythms is played out on *Népszínház utca*, Budapest.

Catching the Rhythm: Where and How

I chose to research *Népszínház utca* (see Map 1 in Appendix for location) and not another street in the district for a number of reasons, the primary one being that I prefer beer to coffee. Slater (2006: 738) remarks that after giving a paper on gentrification at a conference he was accosted by a political scientist who told him that the only reason people like to study gentrification is because it is nice to hang around cafés drinking lattes with the middle classes. The point that Slater goes on to make is that too much gentrification literature is based on these types of ethnographies. The research is easier to do, but the results are one sided. Thus I decided to focus on a street that is less than compliant with the drive towards homogeneity, a street that is not yet gentrified, yet shows the early signs. What made *Népszínház utca* even more appropriate was that it is not

directly affected by any of the three development programmes currently underway in Józsefváros; I did not want to make a case study on the effectiveness of an urban rejuvenation project, which though interesting, might take the emphasis away from the gentrification of public space that had originally captured my imagination. Finally, I think it is not such a risky prediction that *Népszínház utca* will (once the metro is built, the house prices increase, enough hotel guests complain) be a very different, gentrified, place in the next ten to fifteen years. Even if it does not prove to be the case, if the processes I observed do not result in gentrification, I still show how gentrification in other parts of the district (because this is certainly going on) affects *Nepsinzház utca*. Primarily, I wanted to understand how the gentrification process works in its early stages.

Although I moved onto the field site in May 2008, making the time I have lived on the street almost one year, I only began to take an academic interest in November 2008. Most of the work that forms the backbone of the ethnography is from an intensive one-month period in April 2009. I do use material gathered from observations or public meetings throughout the year however, which further complements the material gathered in the intensive research period. Whether conducting interviews, making observations, using my body as a research instrument or attending public meetings, the underlying focus of all of my research was to explore the collisions between the everyday and the macro forces behind gentrification. As argued above, a suitable model for this is rhythmanalysis.

Locating the source of different rhythms and the outcome of the collisions of different rhythms is complex; the urban is constituted by constantly changing plurality of rhythms. Lefebvre offers a very basic framework from which to begin. Even though his project was far from complete (Meyer, 2008, Karidas, 2006), it serves as basis for my attempt at a

rhythmanalysis. Bearing in mind the limited nature of the concept, I do not follow the “elements of a theory” (Meyer, 2008: 150) rigidly, especially as there was little to learn from in terms of practical examples as to how the theory could be applied. Though often I used the theory as a conceptual tool through which to think through the ‘conventionally’ gathered material, I also attempted the more ‘untested’ elements of theory, all of which I will detail below. First however I will explain what I was looking, listening, feeling, smelling and tasting for.

I started with the previously outlined position that there is a difference between cyclical and linear rhythms. With this in mind, I began to identify these different types of rhythm and search for: a) repetition (movements, gestures, actions, situations and differences); b) interference of linear processes and cyclical processes; and c) the birth, growth, peak, decline, end of rhythms (Lefebvre, 2004:15). Lefebvre goes on to suggest that the rhythmanalysist should then be able to identify a) the isorhythmic, b) the eurhythmic and c) the arrhythmic (Lefebvre, 2004:67). However I found these categories vague and confusing. The main problem was that I had no clear way in which to define these categories (which are not necessarily mutually exclusive). I realise that a more advanced theory of rhythms may well be able to start to offer a way to categorise and conceptualise what is, for example, ‘eurhythmic’ – or at least point the researcher in the right direction before undertaking a rhythmanalysis. However, the goal of my research is not prove or disprove the usefulness of rhythmanalysis and I was venturing out into ‘virgin territory’. Thus, I took what I thought could be best applied to the research question. Essentially, I found the basic cyclical/linear division, employed alongside the search for repetition, interference and lifespan a beautifully simple analytical tool with which to unpick the

complex interplay of urban rhythms. One way I attempted to capture these, was through the use of my body.

“[The rhythm analyst] listens – and first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome.” (Lefebvre, 2004: 19). It was then my body as a metronome, which was the backbone of all my research. I went and I sat (or stood) and attempted to compare the rhythms of the street around me to my body’s internal rhythms, to unpick the cyclical and linear around me. “In a ‘normal’ body the innumerable rhythms form an astonishing harmony” (Meyer, 2008:150) and so, hoping my body was at least relatively normal, I attempted to compare the “garland of rhythms” that is my body (Lefebvre, 2004: 19) with urban rhythms around me. As my ethnography deepened I always returned to the chosen public places and utilised my body as best I could. I did not leave a minute uncovered in Népszínház; I spent the full 24 hours in the street (not continually), which later served as the basis for ‘day and night’ chapter. Though a majority of the research consisted of attempts at becoming a metronome, I also undertook interviews, attended public meetings and took walking tours.

In total I made 21 interviews across the two streets. Initially, I categorised the interviewees into “lives and works”, “lives but does not work” and “works but does not live”. During the course of the research I developed a division of “has been ‘using’ the street for more than one year” and “has been ‘using’ the street for less than one year” as initial interviews revealed a significant change in attitude depending upon how long the informant had been using the street. The focus on the collision of rhythms in public space dictated the line of questioning during the interviews. I was interested in how the informant related to the public place (how often they used it? why? what was their opinion of it? how much time

they spent in it?) and how it compared with a) the same place in the past and b) other places in different parts of the city. In most cases I first chose a location (square, shop, pub) from which to start and interviewed the owner or staff (if applicable). I then ‘hung out’ and then met, for example, those who came to the shop to buy little bottles of rum. This is how I gained more informants and conducted further interviews, based on my selection criteria. Though I understand Hungarian to a moderate degree it was far from sufficient for some of the interviews. Sometimes I used an interpreter, sometimes I conducted the interview in English (i.e. with migrants who spoke English as well or better than Hungarian, with hotel staff or those from institutions) and sometimes in Hungarian depending upon circumstance.

Apart from using my body as an instrument in space and time and interviewing informants who utilise the place, I also used other methods to gather material. I attended two public forums, one organised by a political party, the other by the company responsible for urban rejuvenation in Józsefváros. I also was present at one meeting between the residents of a condominium and the company they employ for the maintenance of the building. I contacted an estate agent about buying a flat in the district and went for a ‘viewing’. I considered this ethically dubious, as I was only there for research purposes with no intention of buying the flat, but after being refused interviews by various real estate companies, I decided it was the best way to research given the time constraints. I also made two interviews with informants who worked for institutions (an NGO and urban development company) to complement the wider contextual frame.

Finally, I also took two walking tours. The first was an organised tour of the district. At the time I attended the organised tour as a journalist reviewing it for a magazine, though I later

informed the company I was subsequently researching the district for academic purposes. The second walking tour was a much longer affair and done alone, though not without meeting various characters along the way, which I will repeat for you, indeed with you, in the following chapter.

Measuring, Walking, Thinking

Space is produced dialectically; it is conceived, lived and perceived (Lefebvre, 1996). We cannot understand it from maps or statistics alone; we should walk the streets. To separate this triad would be to pull apart the very essence of the production, yet *Józsefváros*, every city, is quantified and abstracted. What follows is not a true separation, but a device to attempt to understand some of those who measure the district and those measured by it. To escape the mindset of those who abstract space, it first needs to be explored. Moreover, conceptions of space will make themselves felt throughout the walking tour of the district, when exploring housing, deindustrialisation, socially-orientated development and demolition-orientated development. Thus before the tour, it is fruitful to look through the eyes of the conceivers and explore the different scales of the state, the division of the district and the application of CCTV.

Measuring

One of the most significant features of the state in Budapest is the two-tier system of local government, which has resulted in extremely autonomous governance at a district level. The 1990 Act of Local Governments gave economic, administrative and political responsibilities to the district municipalities, including control over financial management, local taxes and building permits. The Municipality of Józsefváros consists of a 28-member

general assembly, with 10 different committees, including a Committee on Urbanism and the Environment as well as three delegated councillors specialising in urbanism, sport and youth and minorities to help the running of the council. The Municipality of the City of Budapest has 67 members and fifteen committees, including the Committee on Urban Development and Urban Image and the Committee on Large Development Projects. Sitting somewhere between the two tiers of government, is the R v8, a publicly owned company responsible for the rejuvenation of the district.

R v8 was set up in 1997 and is owned partly by the Municipality of J zsefv ros (60.9 per cent) and partly by the Municipality of the City of Budapest (39.1 per cent). Though a separate company, the independence of R v8 is limited with major decisions requiring the agreement of the elected local governments. The initial work of the company concerned for the most part the physical upgrading of buildings in the Palace Quarter, however after research revealed that the work had done little to change the image of the district, a modification in concept in 1998 led to a focus on the most deprived part of the district from 2000 onwards; the office was moved from the Palace Quarter to *Pr ter utca* close to what was then ‘poor quality’ housing, the staff increased from two to twenty five (to include urban planners, social workers and architects) and a ‘different tools for different quarters’ approach was adopted, which will be discussed below. As well as the work in the Palace Quarter, which after a nine-year break started again in 2009, R v8 directly works on the Magdolna Quarter Project, a socially-orientated urban rejuvenation project, and negotiates with and selected the developers for the Corvin Promenade project, which involved the demolition and rebuilding of part of the district. The last two of these projects will be stops on the walking tour.

The relationship between the different scales of governance is continually in flux (cf. Brenner, 2004), as the publicly owned company, the two local governments, the national state and the European Union all struggle to gain influence in the district. The changing profile of Rév8 is the perfect example of how the continual flux between the different scales plays out. Rév8 at first began renovating beautiful Eclectic-Secessionist style buildings in a nice part of town, before helping negotiate the demolition of poor quality working class housing to make way for the Corvin Promenade development and then finally undertaking social urban development in the Magdolna Quarter. György Alföldi, the CEO of Rév8, believes that the difference between the projects is a question of the state's belief in their ability, "we started [Corvin] in 2000 and Magdolna in 2005 and in between the image of the district had started to change and the trust between the local government and Rév8 is stronger and stronger." Or to put it another way, once Rév8 had successfully overseen straight forward rehabilitation of widely revered buildings and the comparably brutal solution to poor quality housing (which displaced hundreds of families on low income and brought in massive investment) they were better supported in their efforts of social rehabilitation and the preservation of social housing.

The inclusion of socially orientated urban policies is also dependent upon the relative power of the different scales of governance, which is constantly being renegotiated. Research from the end of 2001 shows that the policy of the district government at the time was to sell social housing as quickly as possible, whilst the Budapest city government wanted to delay privatisation in order to maintain a sustainable social housing stock (NEHOM, 2004). However the adoption of the Urban Development Strategy in 2003 at the state level, which pushed for integrated sustainable urban and social development aspects,

represents a citywide attempt to include socially minded policies. It must be noted however, that the strategy was designed with the looming integration into the European Union in mind (ANAH, 2009: 16) and that the document was not legally binding. Though social aspects of urban rejuvenation were relatively unimportant for some local municipalities, their inclusion has now become paramount if they wish to receive funds from the EU's upcoming Regional Operative Programme.

Hung, Drawn, Quartered and Filmed

Józsefváros was divided into eleven different quarters in 2000 by the local government and Rév8. “We did this because different parts of the district have very different data. The Palace Quarter and the Magdolna Quarter are very different in terms of unemployment, flats without amenities and flat ownership,” stated György Alföldi (see Table One in Appendix). So different approaches for the different parts of the district? “No, the same approach but different tools.” Móni Bálint, coordinator of work of the Young Greens (ZöFi), an NGO who have recently opened an office in the district, puts it another way, “they decided which bits they could make money out of by selling and with which parts it was impossible to do so.”

The Palace Quarter aside, most people who are not directly involved in administering rejuvenation projects, do not know the name of the quarter in which they live, however this does not mean there are not ramifications. The original demarcation sets different districts on different trajectories, putting areas into categories based on data that has resulted in demolition, social rejuvenation and historical preservation. There are also secondary effects. For instance, the Magdolna Quarter was demarcated as a ‘ghetto’ and a development programme worked out specifically for this part of the district. As part of this

programme, Rév8 aims to involve civilians as well as NGOs in the development process. This is how ZöFi appeared; taking the chance offered by the local government for free office space for NGOs. They then set up a newspaper called *Magdi* to start a different type of debate on the ongoing rejuvenation, giving local residents a voice and space to be critical about the projects. In doing so however, they also reaffirm the original demarcation, with Móni Bálint admitting that the Magdolna Quarter “is a fiction, but it’s a funny situation that we support this fiction by using the name and making the newspaper.”

The top down quartering of the district based on statistical data, marking out zones with different problems in need of different remedies, is akin to the top down deployment of CCTV cameras, marking out problematic crime zones and remedying the problem through surveillance (see Photographs 1-3 in Appendix). Video cameras first started to appear on the sides of the district’s buildings in 2000. “[The local government] decided to introduce CCTV due to the large amount of crime that took place in the streets and since then, I think around 80 per cent of crime has been removed from the street,” György Alföldi states. However, others have questioned the effectiveness of CCTV in crime prevention in Budapest (see Molnár, 2002). There are now at least 96 cameras in operation in *Józsefváros*³ and most of other districts have also introduced their own CCTV systems, which for the most part have public support (Urbaneye, 2006: 44). Social dislocation and a ‘culture of suspicion’ resultant from the economic difficulties following transition, along with weak regulations pertaining to civil liberties have been offered as explanations for why CCTV has become so widespread in Budapest (Norris, McCahill and Wood, 2004: 121). Even if residents are suspicious of the police – with comparative research in Budapest showing that there is a stronger desire for restricted police access to CCTV than

³ www.corvinsetany.hu

in all other surveyed cities (Urbaneye, 2006: 47) – the cameras so no sign of disappearing and indeed more are promised with the completion of the Corvin Promenade.

Quartering and surveillance are of course only two ways in which the changing scales of the state make themselves felt in Józsefváros, but they are two ways that are important in regards to gentrification. This will become clear during the walking tour, which starts now.

Walking

From One Impossible Case to Another

Saint Rita was born in Spoleto, Italy in 1381 to elderly parents, who praised God for such a gift so late in their lives. The young Rita often visited the local convent and dreamed of becoming a nun. However, her parents planned a different life for her and married her off to the wife-beating Paolo, a watchman in the town. She bore him two sons who quickly learned their father's evil ways. In spite of this Rita always tried to perform her duties faithfully and regularly prayed. One day Paulo was stabbed and died, her sons yearned for revenge, Rita prayed for their souls and, hallowed be His name, God rewarded her by whisking her two sons off to heaven before they had the chance to commit the sin of revenge. Alone in the world, Rita applied to join the Augustinian convent at Cascia but was refused because she was a widow. Eventually, after many requests and some divine intervention, she was admitted. Not content with her suffering so far, she asked for and received a permanent thorn in her head after begging Christ to "suffer like he did" and thus continued to suffer for the rest of her life. She died on May 22nd, 1457 and went on to become the Patron Saint of Impossible Cases.

Around 600 years later, a chapel to Saint Rita was built on the ruins of an old tyre repair workshop destroyed in World War Two, on *Kun utca* in Budapest's VIII District (see Photograph Four In Appendix). It was first used by a now demolished hospital but despite the loss of patients praying for their impossible cases to be solved, the chapel has lived on, becoming a mini-pilgrimage site in the district. It also serves as the starting point for the walking tour. It is a good place to start because, firstly, during a real tour in the real world, the guides from the tour company BeyondBudapest enthusiastically told me about the chapel and the impossible nature of it all. I was then told about it even more enthusiastically by I., a strudel seller based just round the corner from the chapel, she even went on to send me the tale of Saint Rita that she had written herself, compiled from various sources. The second reason, which was pointed out to me by the tour company but not the strudel seller, was that it is a brilliant metaphor for the district: The Patron Saint of Impossible Cases in the District of Impossible Cases. If this all sounds a little bit too perfect, then the start of this walking tour can be soured by reflecting on the notion that BeyondBudapest's socio-economic walking tour round "the notorious slum in the heart of the city" probably contributes to the gentrification process as they, like tour guides in old neighbourhoods the world over, 'discover' the cultural value of the district, opening it up to a wider base of consumers before the uniqueness of Józsefváros is abstracted into its market value through, at least in part, their cultural mediation (cf. Zukin, 1991: 205).

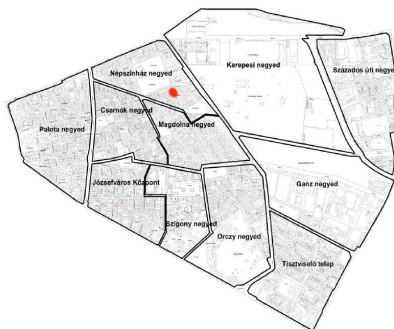
The 'impossible case' metaphor is appropriate to use because, at least according to a report commissioned by the European Union, the district is regarded as the most problematic in the city, "the name 'Józsefváros' has several negative implications for the outsiders: it means prostitution, crime, violence, Romas, homeless shelters, poverty and after all the

living place of the worst off social groups.” (NEHOM, 2000) Or to be more blunt as G., a young rich woman from the nice part of Buda, puts it, “it’s where civilisation ends.” However, *Józsefváros* is far from homogenous. The district touches the downtown on one end and stretches away from the city centre touching suburbia at its other extremity, covering 685 hectares (See Map Two in Appendix.). The tour will consist of four sites and cover the effects of deindustrialisation, a ‘pioneering’ urban development schemes and a building site that is the ‘New Downtown of Europe’. But to begin the tour: flat hunting.

Playing in Time?

Housing

Location: Erkel House, Kun utca



“We decided to invest in the area” the real estate agent R. reports happily, “because we are sure the area will get much better in the future.” She is responding to the suggestion that *Józsefváros* does not have such a good reputation. “We’re very close to Rákóczi út, which borders the VII District and that’s a very good business zone. And...” she pauses, “Rákóczi út also leads down to the V District, which is the ‘official downtown’ of the city. So we’re hoping that these other districts will lift the area up. We are sure that house prices are going to increase.” Erkel House takes its name from the nearby Erkel Theatre, giving *Józsefváros* another building named after the composer Ferenc Erkel. The house was

completed in 2008, built after the hospital (for whom Saint Rita's chapel was set up) was pulled down. The building echoes emptily with the footsteps of the estate agent and in spite of R.'s claim that the silence is because "it's a working day so nobody is home" the empty names on the buzzers downstairs, the vacant retail spaces on the ground floor and unkempt gardens, suggest that the apartments are not so popular amongst the flat-buying public.

Erkel House is just a few hundred metres from the *körút*, the ring road that signals the start of the downtown, and it is this inner part of the city that has seen the most of the real estate development in the last few decades. Although the long slow rhythms of investment, valorisation and reinvestment did not follow the same logic in socialist Budapest as in cities in the West, there was a cycle of investment that, though driven by different causes, followed some strikingly similar trajectories. The Stalinist period (from 1948 to the early sixties) delayed new housing production, whilst the liberalisation process from the 1960's onwards created conditions that put pressure on politicians to construct new housing estates on the edge of the city which became populated with the middle classes (Bodnar, 2001: 72). Meanwhile, the upper and middle classes began to move out from Józsefváros and other inner districts (V, VI, VII, IX) where the housing stock was gradually deteriorating and Roma (along with other marginalized groups) were settled in the area, which in turn accelerated the out migration (Csefalvay, 1995: 53). The process of reinvestment in inner city areas, although not on the scale of that was seen in western Europe, did start to take place before the system change despite being constrained by lack of resources (Bodnar, 2001: 73). The lifespan of individual buildings was also important, with physical maintenance and popularity among Budapest's residents playing a factor in how a building changed in both physical condition and desirability over time. A case in

point is the suburban housing blocks built in the 1960's, whose initial popularity waned, driven in part by the relatively quick deterioration of the buildings, leading the middle class to return from the suburbs to the city centre and the 'socialist gentrification' mentioned in the previous chapter.

The building opposite Erkel House is a strikingly different case. A shabby three-storey structure, it was most probably built sometime towards the end of the nineteenth century like much the central part of the district's housing stock. The building, like others, others has become an 'impossible case' since it was privatised in 1994. Though limited privatisation took place from 1969 onwards, it was the 1993 Act on Housing, which obliged the local governments to sell if the residents wanted to buy, leading to wide scale privatisation of public rental flats in Hungary. Flats in the district were sold at a price much lower than their market value – available for only 7-15 per cent of their total market price – which although advantageous for a great number of new owners, left poorer residents without the means to pay for the upkeep of their newly owned flats, much like in other deprived parts of the city (NEHOM, 2004). *Józsefváros* retained a far higher than average number of flats as of 2001, owning 26.6% of the flats in the district compared to a city average of 8.5% (see Table One in Appendix). As with many of the changes at this time, it was those who were already in an advantageous position during socialism who benefited most from the sales (Bodnar, 2001).

The crumbling flat is not the only building one in difficulty however, as Erkel House appears unpopular with potential buyers. We can presume that the real estate company EuroIngatlan calculated a profit based on a number of factors including an increase in flat prices in the area and during the flat viewing R. revealed as much. However, as critiques of

the rent gap theory often point out, people do not blindly move into an area where the potentiality of future rent over current rent is highest, but rather gentrification is a contingent phenomenon based on individual tastes and preferences (Hamnet, 1991: 10). Erkel House is one street away from a homeless shelter and in axe-throwing distance from a park where two off duty policemen were beaten with axes during the night only a few weeks before. Even though house prices are expected to rise, certain people would not choose to live in such area. It is also possible that EuroIngatlan's investment pays off and it was just a case of being ahead of the game. Erkel House's website was constructed years before the building, and it still claims that the nearby Metro 4 stop, which is expected to raise house prices, will be ready by 2008. Insiders report that the metro will now be completed in 2011 or 2012 or 2013, depending upon how optimistic a forecaster they are. Price per square metre data shows that the VIII district is still amongst the cheapest close to the city centre (see Table Two in Appendix), however even with dramatic increases in prices, a 53 square metre flat in Erkel House costs around 19 million Forint⁴ (66 thousand Euro) making each square metre 363 thousand Forint (1270 Euro), far more than the district average of HUF 247 thousand forint (864 Euro).⁵

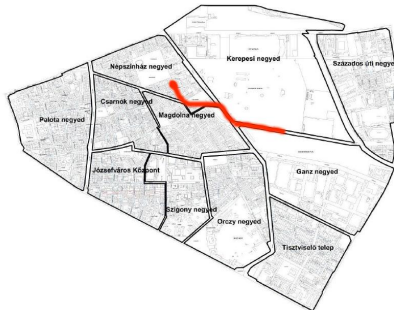
⁴ Excluding the 2 250 000 for a parking space and other fees.

⁵ This is a very crude analysis; it does not factor in the fact the flat is new or that the flat comes semi-decorated, potentially adding to the costs if the colour of the tiles are not right etc.

The Industrious and the not so Industrious

Deindustrialisation and Orientalisation

Location: Four Tigers Market/Kőbányai út



The Four Tigers Market has been wedged on the strip of land between the railway lines and Kőbányai út since November 1992, when a group of Hungarian businessmen and expolicemen utilised the social capital the Chinese migrants did not possess, to set up a market and start a burgeoning business (Szabo, 2008: 3). It is the best place in the city if you want brightly coloured shorts for the summer or sparkly gold high-heeled shoes for the disco. The stalls are crammed tightly together, piled high with clothes, electronics, vegetables, livestock and household items.

Despite being known locally as a Chinese Market, nowadays many of the market stallholders are in fact from Vietnam, the Middle East or the counties surrounding Budapest, with the Chinese stallholders migrating across the road and using the disused buildings of the former Ganz Works opposite for wholesale storage businesses (Szabo, 2008: 10), reusing the discarding shells of Budapest's industrial past. The Ganz Works used to employ tens of thousands of people and had prestigious contracts with NASA and German clients before it shut down, a victim of Hungary's integration into international markets. Though some factories are still in industrial use, it is a far cry from the heavily industrial 19th Century or the 1950s when a programme of reindustrialisation was centrally

planned and administrated (ANAH, 2009). The Hungarian company that owned the former Ganz Works buildings went bust during the 2008-09 financial crisis and, in a final twist to the tale, was quickly purchased by a Chinese entrepreneur (Szabo, 2008: 11).

As noted earlier, it has long been argued that deindustrialisation is an important factor in the gentrification process (see: Ley, 1986) with the shift to office work producing a professional class, whose particular demand for housing can shape the particularities of the process, whilst not being the root cause. The loss of industry and with it industrial jobs has certainly had its effect on the district. According to M. “many people who moved here in the 80s moved here because of the work. Many of the people now travel outside the district but many don’t have work here, so they stay in the neighbourhood all day long.” Whether the new professional class chooses the VIII district remains to be seen. The last stop in the tour will be at the site of the construction of thousands of expensive flats, being built on the rubble of working class housing. The restructuring of the economy and subsequent spatial reorganising of the district has certainly put pressure on the inhabitants of the district but, as examined below, it has required the drive of capital accumulation mediated by the state, to provide the housing for the professional classes who succeed in Budapest’s reshaped economy.

Development in da 'Hood

An Innovative Urban Rejuvenation Programme

Location: Mátyás tér

The Magdolna Quarter Project aims to empower the local population through employment, education and community building as well as to renovate government owned blocks of flats in cooperation with the tenants. The first phase of the project ran from 2005-2007 with a budget of 821 million Forints (2.9 million Euro) and the second phase started in 2008 and has funding of 2.2 billion Forints (7.7 million Euro) until 2010. Though the project is part of a 15-year plan, funding is only secured up until the end of the second phase. The housing rehabilitation is, on paper at least, undertaken in cooperation with the inhabitants and involves the improvement of the building infrastructure, with on average

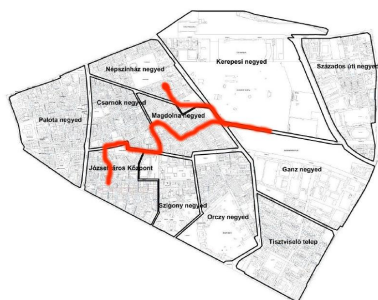
80 million Forints (280 thousand Euro) spent per house. Four houses in the first phase and sixteen houses in the second phase have been part of the project, encompassing around 400 individual flats, roughly 10 per cent of all the flats in the quarter. *Matyas ter* has also been rejuvenated and there are also numerous programmes aimed at preventing youth crime, finding gainful employment and receiving a rounded education.

The most problematic part of the project has been the cooperation between the local residents and Rév8. “In the beginning it was like when a boy and a girl first meet,” explains Rév8 CEO György Alföldi, “after the wedding, people had a lot of hope for the future.” Since then there have been numerous problems between the two lovers. György Alföldi puts down the legacy of hierarchical relations in Hungary, claiming that people are not used to cooperation and are distrustful of the government. Though the project is only designed for the renovation of the building structure outside the flats such as stairwells, courtyards and basements, many residents have wanted more thorough renovations, including work on the inside of the apartments. There have also been problems with the individual companies hired to carry out the work. As the contracts were put up for public tender, Rév8 were duty bound to accept the cheapest offer, which has not always meant the highest quality of work, which has angered some residents. One informant claimed that it is Rév8 that does not understand cooperation and often misleads the residents. Participation is certainly a difficult subject, as György Alföldi argues, “social scientists like to claim they know how to make participation work, but in reality it is much harder.” Having said this, it is hard to see the source of people’s motivation to give time and labour for free on a house that they do not own.

An Aquarium for Capitalism

The New Downtown of Europe

Location: The Future/Corvin Promenade



“The New Downtown of Europe” – the Corvin Promenade! Spread over 22 hectares, upon the projects completion in 2012, there will be 500,000 square metres of residential, commercial and office space and 20,000 square metres of “new public space”⁶. The project is funded by 125 billion Forint (437 million Euro) of private investment and 18 billion Forint (63 million Euro) of public money. To make way for Corvin, 1100 flats were demolished, many of which were reportedly in poor condition and lacking in certain amenities such as private bathrooms. Of the total demolished flats, 300 were in private ownership and were bought by the local government and 800 were already owned by the state. According to Rév⁸, half of the residents from these flats opted to live elsewhere in the district and were moved into empty flats or into newly built flats close by, whilst half opted to take money and live elsewhere. I would have liked to compliment my with interviews with those who were displaced, to track how many remained in the district and how many left and what they thought of the whole process but sadly time constraints made it impossible and there are no studies of which I know.

⁶ www.corvinpromenade.hu retrieved May 24

The real estate company Futurreal, who signed a ten-year tripartite agreement with the local government and Rév8, undertakes a majority of the work. Everyone involved in the project is certain it will be completed on time and that the flats and office spaces are already selling well. Everyone involved in the project is also keen on repeating the mantra that the promenade is “longer than Váci utca and wider than Liszt Ferenc tér.” If unfamiliar with Budapest, then look at the picture (see Photograph Five in Appendix) and try to imagine how big it must be to house around 3,000 apartments, a shopping centre with 150 stores as well as a wellness centre, offices, caterers, and a research and development park. Though it is dangerous to speculate too much on what the promenade/aquarium will be like, it is interesting to ruminate upon the conception of the ‘new’ public space that will be created.

According the promotional material, “Corvin Promenade will be the manifestation of a new kind of thinking regarding the utility of public spaces within the urban framework. Open, foliage-infused spaces with progressive design approaches will be most characteristic of these new places.” The ‘foliage-infused spaces’ will be manned by a team of private security personnel and monitored by security cameras, adding to the 96 currently watching the district. A public meeting was held by the local Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) to promote and discuss the developments in the district in December 2008. During the meeting a local resident remarked, “I’ve just come back from living in London for two years and what it has, that I am very much missing from your plan for the rejuvenation program, is big parks. Where is the real green in these plans? All of the areas seem very constructed.” The chair of the meeting, responded instantly crying out “What!? That would only produce more areas that need to be *cleaned!*” before the local politician reiterated the

creation of the foliage-infused spaces, going as far as to point out that even the pamphlet they had been handing out to promote the development was green and not red, though it is a project of the socialists. According to the György Alföldi, they have an agreement with Futureal that gates will not be put on the development so the ‘foliage-infused spaces with progressive design approaches’ will be available to all.

Thinking

The chapter has only covered fragments of the district. There has been no time or space to discuss the historical preservation underway in the upmarket Palace Quarter, where a proposed partial pedestrian zone and beautification has enraged local residents because they will have nowhere to park their cars. There was also no time to discuss the roles of the various NGOs working in the district, or the different cultural Roma organisations, or the growing numbers of migrants from Africa, the Middle East and the West who have made *Józsefváros* their home.

Measuring and walking *Józsefváros* has, however, painted a picture of a diverse and rapidly changing district, which is being pulled in different directions by the state, investors and residents as it comes to terms with its place within flows of capital. The different scales of the state compete with one another in an attempt to mould themselves into the new geography of capitalism, with no coherent citywide policy to address urban problems. Local attempts to address housing problems have led to an abstract division of the district, forcing specification onto an ever smaller scale in a drive to attract EU money for rejuvenation or capital investment for real estate development. The result is an increase in measuring and quantifying, along with attempts at controlling through CCTV.

Attempts at sanitising and ordering are not always as clear cut as the demolition of working class houses and the creation of ‘foliage infused spaces’ on their ruins however. The process is much more insidious, quiet and almost polite. To see how an area is cleansed, requires an in depth examination of the various different processes and their effect on the everyday. An investigation into the clash of linear and cyclical rhythms, alongside the search for repetition, interference and the lifespan of these rhythms will reveal just this.

A Day and A Night in the People's Theatre.

Political power dominates or rather seeks to dominate space; whence the importance of monuments and squares, but if palaces and churches have a political meaning and goal, the townsfolk-citizens divert them from it; they appropriate space in a non-political manner. Through a certain use of time the citizen resists the state. A struggle for appropriation is therefore unleashed, in which rhythms play a major role. Through them civil, therefore social, time seeks to and succeeds in withdrawing itself from linear, unrhythmic, measuring/measured state time. Thus public space, the space of representation, becomes ‘spontaneously’ a place for walks and encounters, intrigues, diplomacy, deals and negotiations – it theatralises itself.

Lefebvre (2004: 96)

Kiss me where the sun don't shine,
The past was yours but the future's mine.
You're all out of time.

The Stone Roses, She Bangs the Drums

Early Morning

Dawn breaks on a sunny spring day in *Népszínház utca*. As the sun casts its first warming rays over the tops of buildings, the ‘Beer Corner’ pub responds to its call, whisking up its metal shutters with a clatter, disturbing the slumber of a sleeping homeless man on the bench close by, but ready and open for those who need a drink at **6 a.m.** Street cleaners begin to arrive, sweeping away the debris from the day before, their metal dustpans

scraping on the floor, as they steadily work. The homeless man awakes, stretches and heads over to the sunny side of the street, appreciative of the sun's warmth after a long night in the open. A handful of elderly gentlemen make their way out of the homeless shelter on the adjoining *Alföldi utca* and take up their regular place on the corner, some roll cigarettes whilst others pass comment on passers by to pass the time.

“You can learn all you need to know about *Népszínház utca*,” says B. a shop assistant who has worked on the street for six months but lives elsewhere in Budapest, “through the fact it's next to a homeless shelter.” She complains that they urinate on the street. The sun supports her argument, heating up the stale urine, so it momentarily twitches the nostril hairs before the smell of freshly baked strudels overpowers it. “Of course I've never had any trouble,” B. admits.

Istvan⁷ walks past chatting before stopping at a rubbish bin and rummaging through the contents. He is looking for, among other things, empty bottles of alcohol that can be redeemed for money. There is nothing on *Népszínház utca* this morning, like most mornings, so he heads away from the street towards another part of the city in search of bottles. He crosses the street, past the front of the Atlantic Hotel and out of sight. A manager from the hotel, who has been working in the street for a little over a year is far more sympathetic towards them, “they are not really bad people, just a bit strange” she says. Some guests from the hotel have decided to start the day early and quickly make their way to the tram stop that will take them to the ‘city centre’ in only two stops. It is a weekday, so a tram clatters by every few minutes. They do not wait long.

⁷ Name has been changed

There are two hotels on *Népszínház utca*, the Atlantic and the Atlas, and they both arrived within a few months of each other in 2005. Before both the hotels, the land was flat, two empty spaces in the middle of the street utilised as car parks. Before the cars there were structures, “one or two storey buildings in really bad condition,” remembers an elderly resident “but they started to fall down by themselves. The people moved out when it became dangerous.” The receptionist at Hotel Atlas, the more upmarket of the two reports, “it’s not a nice street and we don’t want to talk about it” before kindly pointing to the door and out onto part of the street with a well-cleaned pavement and no benches upon which to sit, unlike to on other parts of *Népszínház utca*.

The cyclical rhythm of the sun is still the final arbitrator of the start of the day for many, no matter how tram times, shop opening hours or work schedules might timetable the street’s life and eat into the night. This is especially the case for those who spend the night in the street. The lack of paid work or permanent home does not mean the lack of repetition of daily cycles however; many begin the daily hunt for bottles, whilst others meet friends at the same corner round about the same time everyday. The body gets tired, thirsty and hungry; bodily rhythms drive the pursuit of rest, drink and food. Sometimes there is a need to empty a bladder. In amongst the repetitions of the life of the homeless community, two buildings came to the end of their linear life. The rhythm died and in its place, first two small scale entrepreneurs organised car parks, before large-scale capital investment came, in the case of *Hotel Atlas* from the Jordanian *Mellow Mood Group*, to start new linear rhythms on the street. Hotel guests pay in allotted time, but also for an allotted space close to the city centre, the balance between location and cost leaving them at the far end of *Népszínház utca*. There are no benches outside the hotel; the image of the

three star establishment does not sit easily with the street life, people do not ‘hang about’ in front of its windows though there is nothing to stop them doing so; its rhythm is uncomfortable for killing time, apart from for groups of tourists waiting for their air-conditioned bus to take them home.

Late Morning

Back across the road, one of the workers from the Chinese clothing store is busy washing away the urine from the front of her shop. Another little patch of clean at **9 a.m.** each morning. It looks like it will be another hot day and, if as usual, she decides to sit out the front of the shop chatting to her colleagues it is better if the ground is clean. A young couple pass her by on the way to work, saying hello to their elderly neighbour who is already returning home from a morning trip. As the shop owner brushes vigorously, water splashing around her trainers, the CCTV camera directly opposite her swivels inside its protective casing, making a sharp mechanical noise barely audible over the growing din of the morning street.

But audible nonetheless. Three minutes walk down the street, and under three different CCTV cameras, the elderly M. relays her experiences with surveillance. “A few years ago,” she starts, “somebody stole the door from the front of our building. The ones that lead to the courtyard.”

Why?

“To sell them, they were very good wood. It happened round the corner as well, but those doors were returned after a few days. Ours were never returned.”

Is there not a CCTV camera right by your house though?

“Yes, and we reported it to the police, but they claim that they delete all the tapes within 24 hours so had no record of it,” replies M. The police are the only people allowed access to the tape.

György Alföldi, the CEO of Rév8, believes people should try to change their negative attitude of the police.

But can we really trust them?

“Well, we’re working in the district on a new neighbourhood police programme. We lecture the police on social skills and conflict management. The police captain told me that they even got a thank you letter from the public.”

Inside one of the small shops that sell soft drinks, snacks and bread but mostly alcohol, a shopkeeper has first hand experience of the social skills and conflict management offered by the police. “About 2 weeks ago I had a problem here. I beat someone.”

You beat someone?

“Yes, yes, yes. I never did it before in my life; I’ve never beat anybody. But he was a drunkard, very drunk and he came in here and I told him, ‘man I have work, yes’ and he said ‘what do you want you son of a bitch!’ He told me very, very, very bad things. So I told him, ‘okay, go away!’ And he beat me, you know? Yes, because I didn’t realise what he was doing. So I gave him to box, one here and one there. He was very small you know?” The shopkeeper winks over the top of the *tic tac* rack. “I called the police and the policeman who came was a very, very, very good man. Yes. Very, good man. We knew the drunkard that beat me was in the pub next door and so he told me, ‘you have a big shop here, close the door bring him in and we’ll beat him together.’”

And did you?

“No, I’d beat him already, so I told them to forget it. But the policeman was a very good man.”

It is not the police but the Community Wardens that patrol *Teleki tér*. It is **11 a.m.** and one such warden quickly crosses the square to stop a fight between two men. One is wielding a hammer; he has already hit the other man once on the arm and is trying to hit him again in a fight over money. The warden skilfully diffuses the situation and, almost like a teacher admonishing naughty children, sends one man off in one direction and one in the other. Job done, he looks to borrow a cigarette of someone and sits down on a bench. It is actually one of the few available benches on the square. Most have no seat, no back or, more often than not, no seat nor back. The numerous broken benches give the square a forlorn feel, further added to by the dark patches of earth that mark where bushes once were before they were pulled up. “All sorts of things were going on in the bushes,” says local resident M. with raised eyebrows and a look that says she will leave to your imagination what those things were, “so they took them away.”

“People are afraid of the CCTV cameras,” claims one shop owner, “people don’t do silly things under them any more.” There is a world where wild bushes and wild people can be trimmed, when rhythms that are considered a problem that can be solved with a few quick snips, but this world only exists in the abstract. A square is not for sitting during the day, otherwise the benches would be replaced. A square is not a place for ‘hiding’ in bushes, otherwise the bushes would not be taken away. In his daily rounds around the square, the Community Warden perceives space in a way much closer to the ‘bushless’, ‘benchless’ ground; shrugging at the ‘unacceptable’ behaviour as part of life, yet he still politely tames the rhythms of the wild flowers of the street.

Midday

As it approaches **12 p.m.**, the sun rises still higher in the sky and the light catches the enormous cranes that swing to a different rhythm, high above the hole in the ground that was once *Köztársaság tér* and will one day be a station on the new line of the Metro. They are busy “Building a New World.” Or so claim the billboards that surround it, as well as the other ten stops of the 195 billion Forint (680 million Euro) project. The billboards and the website, also provide the obligatory computer designed graphic representation of what the station will look like when completed. Spacious, clean, modern and positively sparkling, the vision is noticeably different from the reality in the closest Metro station *Blaha Lujza tér*.

Although a new warmer place to sleep for the district’s homeless residents was probably not on the list of possible benefits of the new Metro station, some at least have predicted the expansion of the homeless hotels, printing out a picture of a sleeping homeless man and sticking it on top of the conceived image. This subverted vision may be read as an anti-homeless protest, but it could also be read as someone or group taking issue with the overly sterile vision and deciding to insert a piece of reality back into the picture (see Photographs Six and Seven in the Appendix).

On *Népszínház utca* the ‘new world’ of the metro will be especially beneficial because, at least according to the project’s website, the “metro can play a significant role in the development of the region... The internal part of Józsefváros can get an unprecedented

chance of integration. Property and apartment prices will increase, and the region can finally take part in the development of Budapest.”⁸

It is getting on for **2 p.m.** and D. moves with speed through space from one shop to another. D. is interested in the movement of people and the predicted increase in property prices, as he owns a number of shops on the street as well as living on *Népszínház utca*. “I came in April 2000 to look at the street. I came in the morning and came again the next day. Right away I realised that street had good movement,” the businessman says. “Lots of people were moving about the street, lots of walking. The people were not snobby, but normal people.” Nine years later he owns two small shops and a larger discount store with a pizza/gyros fast food counter attached. Why has the formula been successful?

“People don’t have cars so they buy things in small shops.” And there is a rumour that one day even those with cars will be walking, at least at the far end of the street because, “the local government were talking about making a pedestrian area from *Köztársaság tér* to the *körút*” claims D. Of course, he goes on to add, they are keeping it quiet because if people find out then investors will start to look differently at the area.

D. also owns an empty ex-clothing store but does not know what to open there. “Maybe now is the time to consolidate and not expand,” he ponders. “Now it is really hard work. Everyday from seven until ten and then sometimes at home I’m watching videos of the new employees, or someone is calling me.” He is late-middle aged, so maybe it is time to sell up and retire?

⁸ Retrieved on May 22, 2009 from www.metro4.hu

“For people who invest in small capital like me, then we hope the business will be worth more over time. People with more money can arrive, buy the lot and I would be happy.”

So that is the plan?

“No, no. I just want to rest a bit.”

But there is no rest for the bottle collectors. Istvan enters the shop with a handful of empty bottles, which are duly traded in for (less) full bottles.

The space of a transport hub is overtly abstracted and timetabled. By its very nature those who use it expect it to be so. Of course the space can be subverted – it could become a warm place to sleep – but a metro station is one of the most tightly timetabled (semi-) public places in the city. It is cyclical, yet attempts at exact repetition, something unheard of in nature, as the metro arrives at .07 .10 .13 .16 .19 .21. The timetabled space expands outwards however, as people rush towards it to catch the metro at .13 so they do not miss their connection. The quantified rhythms emanate from the timetabled space. The daily rhythms of metros and trams are influenced by the working schedules of the labour force – early starting builders, or latter latte sipping managers. And the house prices respond to the increased transport options and with it the rhythm of capital investment. A place that was a cheap investment when it was at the wrong end of uneven development in 2000, becomes increasingly expensive when it is on the up, waiting for the metro to arrive around 2012. And so why not sell? The life span of an individual plays its role too. The body starts to give suggestions to the mind when it is time to work less and rest more and to cash in on the long daily grind of the last ten years.

Afternoon

Across the road from the shop, all is not well, angry voices can be heard from the

courtyard inside one of the aging houses. Though it is getting on for **3 p.m.** heat and space dictate that this meeting of the residents of the house is being held in the terrace on the first floor. Like most similar buildings in the street, the house is run as a condominium. Thus, agreements on issues relating to the commonly owned space require an eighty percent agreement of residents. It used to be one hundred percent, as per the 1997 Act on Condominiums, but modifications in 2003 were introduced to make things easier. The residents are debating selling off the top part of the building to an investor who would in turn pay for renovation of the water pipes and the stairwell. Many of the residents are complaining because they feel they were rushed into signing the agreement without getting the chance to read it properly. A landlord who has bought four flats in the building is one of only two people who have not signed. He has consulted his lawyer and has been advised not to proceed, as the contract with the potential buyers does not insure the residents in case the redevelopments cause structural damage or the investor quits during the renovation due to lack of financial resources. Moreover, it seems that the replacement of water pipes will not affect all of the flats. People shout. People accuse others of accusing them and no solution is reached on how to solve the problem of renovating an aging building.

Around the corner from the building, in the 'At Home' pub the same people that came by for a drink yesterday at **4 p.m.** come again at the same time and greet the friendly bar lady. She looks a little tired of the constant chatter of the pub's big mouth who, after boring her with his tales, turns to a young guy who tries in vain to fill out his betting slip as he is dragged into a long conversation. A married couple sit in the corner. The husband sits clutching the shopping bags, as if to make for a quick exit, his attention solely on his beer whilst his wife talks at him through the cigarette smoke.

Back out in on the street two real drinkers sit on the doorstep of the flower shop, sharing a plastic bottle of white wine. “Sometimes the drunk guys come in here to buy flowers for the ladies who work in the bar, if they’ve done something to annoy them,” laughs the shop assistant who lives and works in the area. So there is never any trouble? “It gets me really angry when people say the VIII district is bad,” the owner of the shop joins in. “I live in Buda and it is exactly the same there. I’ve had this shop for fifteen years and have never had any trouble. It is a really nice place.” Shouting outside looks to contradict her because, although a bowl of petunias obscures the view, it seems as if there are five men dressed as knights singing “on the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me...”

The ‘knights’ march on however, failing to trouble the flower shop, their destination is the hotel. On closer inspection they are not real knights, but rather five English tourists in town for a five-day holiday of partying and sightseeing. Dressed as knights. They were unsure at where they had just been drinking, the depths of the VIII and a tourist ‘no go zone’ certainly. But they are safe, as knights rarely have trouble, even if their swords are plastic. They disappear inside the Atlas Hotel. Even before the doors have swung shut two Danish men come out onto the street, themselves looking a little worse for wear, and make their way to the ‘Texas Pub’ only a short stagger down the street. “The hotel guests don’t spend anytime in the district. They are hear to see the city centre,” reports the manager of the Atlantic Hotel. Apart from the occasional use of the small shops on the street she is mostly right, although groups of young male tourists often go, like the Danes, to the Texas Pub, a brightly lit establishment that attracts a young crowd with cheap drink offers.

Inside the pub the Danes have already been accosted by F., who works on the street but lives a few blocks away. F. is telling them a joke about a beggar asking a one-armed man for change whilst the one-armed man is urinating. The joke requires the use of small change which, despite the fact F. knows the joke in English, Spanish, French, Italian, German and Hungarian, he never has any of. The ‘loaned’ prop always ends up in his pocket.

Passing the window, with bags laden with food, are the young couple returning from a days work in the city centre. O. works as a P.A. in an international firm and together with her boyfriend moved to the district six months ago when they decided to live together. They have just been to the delicatessen on *Rákóczi út* because, “the shops around *Népszínház* have really bad quality food. We like to eat well, and the delicatessen has a really good selection.”

And do they like the area?

“Of course. The area actually has a very interesting history, all these streets around here do,” joins in G. “We like it here.”

The amount of time a building has stood, is proportionate to how urgently it needs to be renovated. The amount of time an individual has lived in a flat, is proportionate to how much weight their voice carries in a condominium meeting. “The newcomers don’t understand,” claims one resident, directing her comments at a young guy who has *only* been in the building for four years. The long, slow rhythm of a building’s life may, if the residents can agree, find the optimal moment in the undulations of the rhythm of capital and catch a profitable wave. Or maybe the building will speak first, as one did only two streets away, literally crumbling into the street below, forcing the police to close of the

street and send fire-fighters up on pneumatic ladder to pull away the loose bricks. Falling brick by brick until eventually it cascades, like the increase of house prices, arrival of young middle class couples and the interest of investors in the conversion options in people's lofts. Or like the light collision of the tourist's holidaying rhythms against the daily rhythms of pub regulars. The sort of people who want to see the same people everyday, change their choice of place to drink as they become irked with the tourists who come once and never again.

Evening

The sun is starting to go down on the street, shops start locking up for the night and Istvan has returned from his long trek around the city collecting bottles. He has come to cash them in at one of the small shops. He has two black eyes and other bruising around his face, but is in a good mood to sit down and pen poetry:

And one calm evening,

Two of us, an ancient Hungarian,

And a young English observer,

Read what is reflected on the wall,

In the light, what the evening mood is,

Us two,

And what is life,

I know,

O Istvan

Life,

*An observer and a long night*⁹

A fierce intelligence burns underneath his grubby exterior as he offers up further pearls of wisdom, “Moscow didn’t just steal Hungary’s money, but it’s brain and heart too,” “the communist system broke up society into lots of little parts so everyone has to fight each other, this is the problem now,” “sociology is a waste of time, you’ll never get a job with it. Cultural anthropology is much better.” Istvan does not live or work in the street, he works begging in Astoria Metro station and lives a long tram ride away in the X district.

At the top of a hill Istvan has a room in a detached house. Broken objects lie in the garden and piles of salvaged material are stacked high inside. The house is divided in two, with a 2.4 children family on one side and Istvan and K. sharing rooms on the other. The area has cycle lanes that people use for recreational purposes, large gardens and is a peaceful and relaxing place. K., complains that Istvan, “never usually spends time at home, he will be hanging around the centre.” K. is lonely and bored, owner of a failed carpet-beating business he barely survives on the 3000 Forints a month he has left after paying his rent. “I’m alone,” he repeats over and over. Meanwhile, Istvan is drawn to *Népszínház utca*.

Back on *Népszínház* many shops and pubs are shutting up sharp at **10 p.m.** but one is staying open later. “We used to have a 24 hour shop,” explains D. “but then the local government made a law banning the selling of alcohol after 11 in the evening, so we now close at 12.” As he says so, a 30-something man in a suit pops into the shop just before the alcohol ban kicks in, making his way home from a long day in the office. There used to be a bench outside the front of the shop, but D. asked the local government to remove it.

⁹ As far as I am aware, the poem was written spontaneously by Istvan.

“When we were 24 hours a lot of the people from the homeless shelter used to sit here all night and drink. If they are drunk they are not allowed inside the shelter. So they would sometimes stay all night and it was dirty in the morning. So I asked and they took it away.”

Népszínház utca is an animated and animating street, a street that still draws characters such as Istvan, who despite quieter more relaxing options – free from black eyes – chooses the street as part of his daily rhythm. The different types of rhythms, the mix of different characters creating the polyrhythmic, draws certain characters, such as Istvan. Yet here is the perfect example of how the lively, animating rhythms of a person are slowly pushed in a certain direction, measured and tamed. The day is spent, among other activities, collecting bottles to exchange, if he so wishes, for alcohol. As the day draws to a close he is faced with a choice because if he continues to get drunk, he will not be allowed into the homeless shelter. It is a balance between how drunk and at what time, if he wants a bed for the night. If not, he stays in the street directly outside a shop, which, apart from the hotel, is the only place that is open on the street; he relaxes on a bench close to light, drink and coffee. But the behaviour is not acceptable behaviour, the bench is removed and the problem is brushed elsewhere. The problem of unacceptable behaviour has not gone away however and action is taken. Alcohol is banned after 11 p.m. in the district.

The Night

The light of the moon adds to the dim streetlights as a shiny new tram that operates along the *körút* makes its way down *Népszínház utca* towards the depot where it will spend the night, momentarily looking out of place with its air conditioning unit and polite notices in . +English. Three cars pull up on the corner of *Népszínház* and *Alföldi*, playing bawdy dance music on state of the art speakers, until they get restless and leave to find another corner to

hang out on. A police car pulls up and asks to see the ID of a young Roma guy. He wearily hands it over and waits whilst they check with the station if he has any outstanding issues. The bored look on his face shows that he is far from worried and this has happened more than once before.

The night rolls on. It is **2 a.m.** and one man cannot make it home in time and decides to urinate in the street. Unluckily for the owners of the Chinese shop their door provides the perfect spot again, just hidden from the street but not too far away from it either. It is getting on for **3 a.m.** and the faint singing of “on the first day of Christmas” pierces the quiet of this April evening as the English tourists find their way home. It is **4 a.m.** and a homeless man who was too drunk for the hostel stirs on his bench as a cyclist whizzes past. It is **5 a.m.** and the anthropologist is cold and sleepy as he sits on an empty bench, waiting for something to write in his field diary or at least for the sun to rise again and put some warmth back in his bones, ready for another day in the People’s Theatre.

Reflections on the Day

The state is the agent of the market (Smith, 2002) and part of its job is inculcating the behavioural rhythms that are commensurate with the free flow of capital (MacLeod, 2002: 257) The bench is removed, a bush is destroyed, alcohol sales are banned after 11 p.m. from shops. Taken individually, they might not appear too malicious or abnormal. However, for the guy whose daily rhythms saw him rest on the bench, relax under the shade of the bush or buy a nightcap to help him sleep better in stuffy dorm bed, they are the continual clashes that slowly, insidiously exert control over the way he uses his time in the urban space. Compare with Palace Quarter, the ‘nice’ part of the district. More and more space is rented out to cafés and restaurants to erect their bright red parasols to shade

their guests. Flowers arrive on the back of a truck and workmen plant them in flowerbeds for the start of spring. The cafés and restaurants have late licences to continue selling cocktails and expensive beer into the early morning. The state helps to sooth the rhythms of the middle classes with one hand, whilst taking petty actions against the poor with another. Re-regulating the urban, homogenising rhythms.

Neoliberalism involves mobilising space as an arena for economic growth and elite consumption patterns, the destruction of the ‘liberal city’ and the introduction of discriminatory forms of social control (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: 21-25). CCTV cameras and other forms of surveillance are used to help to define the normal and the abnormal in accordance with the neoliberal state’s conceptions, to align behaviour with an overarching social ordering policy (Coleman and Sim, 2000: 637) and has intensified the criminalisation of poverty (Coleman, 2004: 306). Moreover, this order is increasingly engineered through the purification of urban space and ‘polite’ social spatial cleansing practices (MacLeod, 2002: 270). Essentially, urban neoliberalism re-regulates everyday life (Keil, 2002: 253).

Yet it is not always successful. Through daily practices, social time manages to reassert itself from the measuring state (Lefebvre, 2004: 96). The benches meant for beautification become beds on the street, the vision of the future of the Metro is subverted, drunk English tourists do not go into the city centre but rather explore the district’s more ‘authentic’ pubs. The refusal to comply with the measuring state results in a theatrical confrontation between the organic and the mechanical.

Conclusion: The State as the Street Sweeper of the Market?

The importance of the state in ordering the district has cropped up continually throughout. As it competes vertically and horizontally, its spatial struggle has seen it remoulding itself around the flow of capital, putting the importance of an ever-localising place at the fore. The district divided itself, one slice for EU money, one slice for capital investment, one slice for historical preservation... and so on. However, even if capital is invested in a district's housing stock, it does not necessarily mean people will follow as gentrification is a contingent process as reputations, crime rates and quality of transport infrastructure, just to mention a few, can make the difference in how an area is conceived in the minds of those outside it. Thus we have seen the importance of the state once again, introducing CCTV across *Józsefváros* to control those who act unacceptably in the streets. The state mediates the linear rhythm of capital by sanitising space, helping brush aside impossible cases.

It all sounds very grand and exciting but, as was shown on the day and the night in *Népszínház utca* it is, in fact, petty, tiresome and mundane. It is the talking away of bushes, the noise of the CCTV camera swivelling as you walk home late at night alerting you to the fact that someone is watching he who dares be on the streets at 4 a.m. and the regulation of shopping for alcohol. In the daily repetitions of the everyday, it is easy to miss the little collisions when the organic knocks up against the mechanical. The state as the market's agent is seen demolishing thousands of flats and part-privatising public space, but on *Népszínház utca* the state appeared in a different form. Sinister and insidious maybe

– but it takes its role mediating capital flows right down to the tiniest little details; it is street sweeper of the market.

Yet all these little details, the attempted homogenisation of the everyday, might have been missed were it not for rhythmanalysis; the ability to witness the cyclical nature of everyday life colliding with the linear nature of the macro forces behind gentrification. Capital “constructs and erects itself on contempt for life and from this foundation: the body, the time of living” (Lefebvre, 2004) and it does so daily as we go about our lives. The street is changing slowly, at the speed of the everyday. The change might speed up with the eventual completion of the metro or slow down, but apart large-scale demolitions like Corvin Promenade, gentrification is about the slow move towards the ‘tipping point’; the moment when a district is over the edge and down a path to be gentrified.

Is it then possible to talk of a general rhythm of gentrification? It might well be possible to do so through comparing the process in different cities. The rhythms of capital accumulation, with the usual location specific provisos, reveal certain similarities across the globe. The actions of states, though more or less severe in different countries, help cleanse an area also along strikingly similar paths. Moreover, because rhythmanalysis is so close to the ground, so heavily immersed in the everyday, it allows for the full elaboration of the specificities of gentrification, the actions of individuals displaced or arriving.

This paper however, is focused on the very specific: on one street in one part of a district of Budapest. Yet despite the tight focus, it was possible to observe the effects of macro forces and how they made themselves felt on the local level. How they affect the everyday. The analysis of the rhythms of *Népszínház utca* has allowed a window into the continual

and often unnoticed pitter-patter of urban change, the soft footsteps of the onward march of gentrification.

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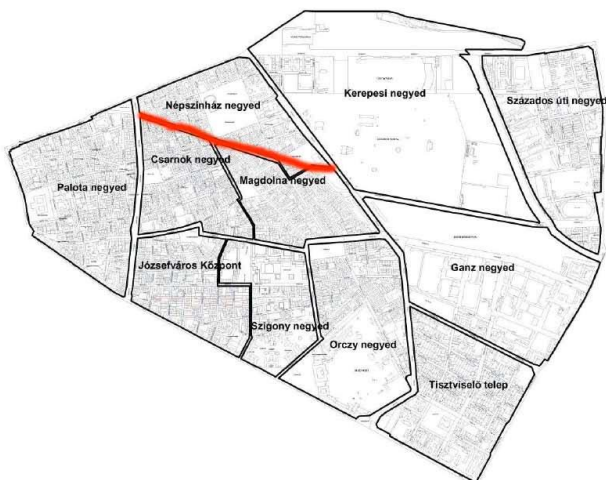
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Appendix

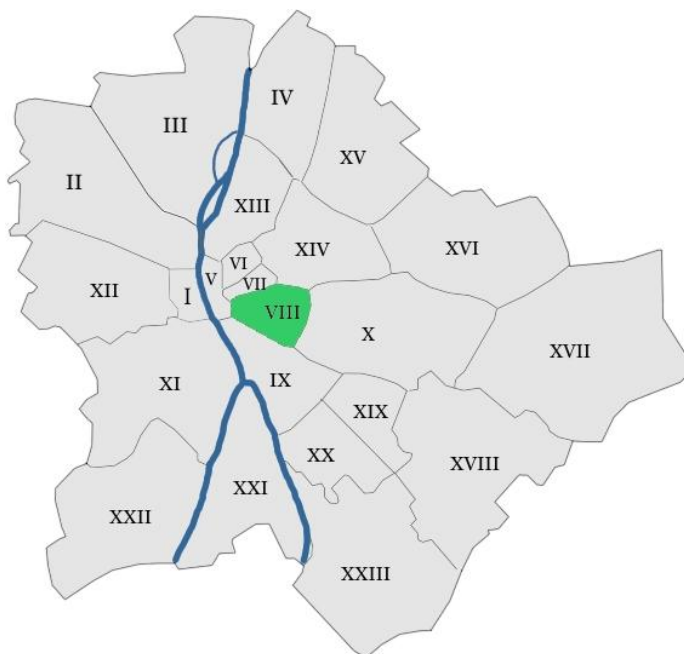
Map One: Népszínház utca

Original Map, Rev8



Map Two: Location of VIII District in Budapest

Author: Benutzer:Devil_m25



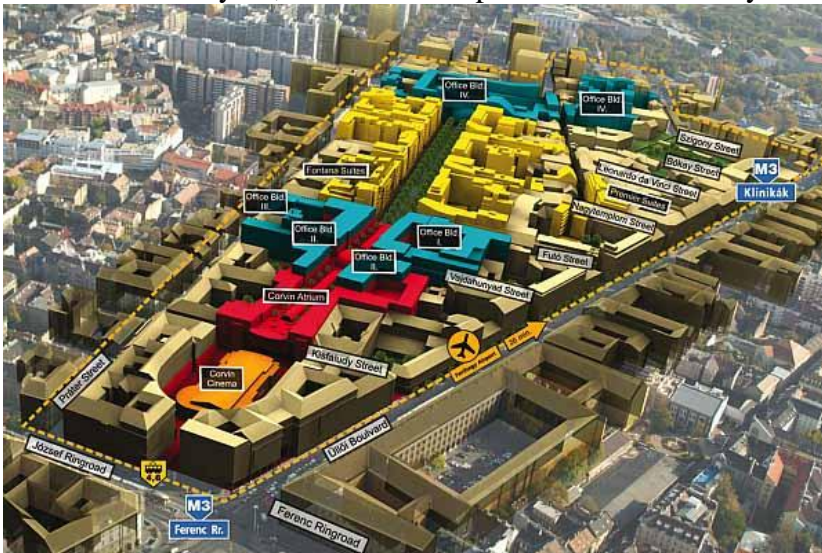
Photographs One to Three: A selection of CCTV cameras in Józsefváros



Photograph Four: Saint Rita on Kun utca

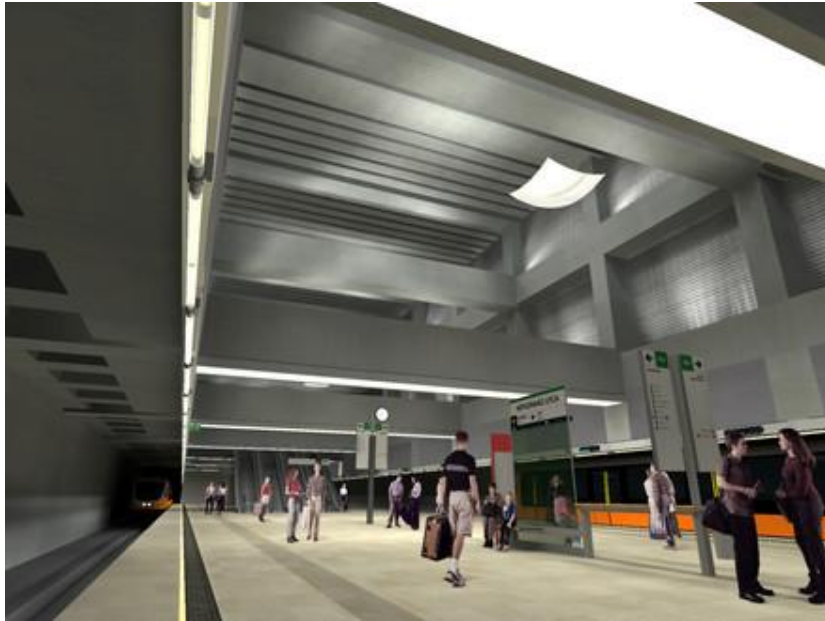


Photograph Five: How the Corvin Promenade will be
Retrieved on May 22, 2009 from: <https://www.corvinsetany.hu>



Photograph Six: Népszínház utca Metro Graphic

Retrieved on May 22, 2009: from www.metro4.hu



Photograph Seven: Népszínház utca Metro Graphic on board outside the construction

Note the homeless man asleep on the platform in the bottom left.



Table One: Government Owned Flats

Source: KSH, 2001 Retrieved on May 22, 2009 from ww.ksh.hu

Quarter	Percentage of flats owned by local government
Palota Quarter	13,3%
Népszínház Quarter	15,0%
Csarnok Quarter	25,8%
Józsefváros Central	38,9%
Magdolna Quarter	42,0%
Orczy Quarter	43,3%
Tisztviselőtelep	6,8%
Ganz Quarter	28,7%
Kerepesi Quarter	2,3%
Százados úti Quarter	14,4%
Szigony Quarter	13,1%
Józsefváros	26,6%
Budapest	8,5%

Table Two: Apartment prices Budapest by District (housing block not panel building)

Retrieved on May 22, 2009:

<http://realestatehungary.hu/index.php?page=statisztika&lang=en>**Apartments In Block Of Flats (not Panel Building)**

total:	average price m ² (t HUF)	average m ² (m ²)	average price (M HUF)	lowest price m ² (t HUF)	highest price m ² (t HUF)	lowest price (M HUF)	highest price (M HUF)	number of samples
	369	72.9	26.9	84.6	1 200.0	3.9	250.2	58 304

By districts:

District	average price m ² (t HUF)	average m ² (m ²)	average price (M HUF)	lowest price m ² (t HUF)	highest price m ² (t HUF)	lowest price (M HUF)	highest price (M HUF)	number of samples
1.	469	83.0	39.0	187.5	1 122.5	8.0	189.0	2 179
2.	488	88.6	43.2	135.2	1 167.0	5.2	187.0	5 703
3.	431	76.5	33.0	92.3	797.3	4.9	85.0	2 242
4.	285	65.8	18.7	92.9	541.7	5.7	47.6	1 132
5.	486	80.6	39.2	93.8	1 200.0	6.3	250.2	4 819
6.	363	71.9	26.1	100.0	800.0	5.0	81.7	5 038
7.	286	70.3	20.1	85.0	755.6	5.3	65.0	5 675
8.	249	68.2	17.0	85.7	600.0	3.9	54.0	4 361
9.	311	70.0	21.8	87.2	750.0	5.0	69.0	3 595
10.	249	55.5	13.8	95.9	546.9	4.4	33.9	1 082
11.	375	74.4	27.9	84.6	791.2	5.0	120.0	4 411
12.	438	77.0	33.8	117.7	800.0	6.2	130.0	2 771
13.	348	66.5	23.2	111.7	798.0	8.0	65.0	6 088
14.	318	66.6	21.1	100.0	696.5	4.7	70.0	4 710
15.	277	64.0	17.7	162.5	537.5	6.0	55.0	674
16.	296	75.7	22.4	118.3	558.8	7.7	69.0	885
17.	275	74.1	20.4	109.3	451.3	5.9	42.0	404
18.	267	63.1	16.9	155.6	497.5	5.0	48.5	901
19.	279	61.1	17.0	136.8	513.5	6.8	38.6	380
20.	247	56.3	13.9	138.9	450.0	4.2	35.9	583
21.	229	57.8	13.3	111.1	404.3	5.5	31.9	243
22.	327	82.5	27.0	101.9	565.1	5.5	75.0	376
23.	244	72.9	17.8	175.8	349.2	7.4	29.6	52