

**Interpretations and clashes around a participatory design project**

The renovation of the Teleki Square Community Park

by

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*Thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology  
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the Master of Arts degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology.*

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Budapest  
June 2017

# Abstract

This thesis explores the renovation of a park and the surrounding discourses in the most stigmatized area of Budapest, the 8<sup>th</sup> district (Józsefváros), arguing for a relational approach. Since the local people were involved in the design phase of the renovation, the project is hailed as a success by the local municipality, the media and the field of architects. Critical voices, however, draw attention to the fact that the project did not involve the marginalized groups of the neighbourhood, and the project supports the implicit gentrifying attempts of the local municipality. In these attempts the municipality seems to be supported by the association of local lower-middle class participants of the design workshops that manages the park and controls its accessibility. The case study examines four groups – the local municipality, the designers, the critics and the association – with utterly different but equally universalized interpretations on the participatory design of the park, and the relations between them. By means of the field analysis of Bourdieu the study sheds light on the emerging and disappearing circumstantial coalitions of the different actors in the urban transformation. The analysis draws on empirical data collected from various sources: semi-structured interviews, casual conversations, direct observation, video records of the design workshops, media and documents of the municipality.

# Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Violetta Zentai for being a motivating supervisor and for steering me in the right direction whenever I felt I needed it. I would also like to thank Judit Bodnar and Daniel Monterescu for their insightful advises for improving my drafts. Besides my advisors, I would like to thank to Andreas Dafinger for his inspiring courses and for encouraging me to share my ideas on the classes.

A very special gratitude goes out to all my fellow master students for their feedback, cooperation and friendship, and for Mirjam Sági with whom I could share my doubts and whose company made the thesis writing period as relaxing as it was possible.

I would like to thank my parents, who never questioned my decision and who supported me in fulfilling my crazy ambition to study sociology instead of starting working as an architect. I am grateful to my brother, Daniel, for his feedback on my application package and for accepting nothing less but excellence from me, and to my friend, Anna, who I can always count on. Finally I would like to thank Andris for his unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout the two years of my studies.

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# Introduction

The Teleki Square Community Park of the 8th district of Budapest is popular with the locals and well-known in architects' circles. It is one of the few public spaces of Budapest with a landscape that was redesigned with the involvement of 'laymen' locals. It is a green oasis protected by a guard and a massive fence, located in the most stigmatized area of the capital associated with crime, prostitution, poverty and ethnic minorities. The contrast is astonishing between the park and its surroundings. Inside the park one can find a neat lawn, flowerbeds, comfortable park furniture, toddlers playing with their mums, and retired couples reading and playing chess. Outside the park there is the asphalt, crowds waiting for the tram, African migrants gathering in front of Lagos buffet, Roma youths hanging out on benches and homeless people sleeping under the few trees in the paved area next to the park. This physical contrast is a materialized memento of social struggles over the meaning of participatory landscape design and over the public space itself.

The project, which was one of the first attempts for a participatory landscape design<sup>1</sup> in an urban setting in Hungary, is considered a great success by the media, the local government, the designers, and the majority of the local participants of the design. According to the liberal media it was “an exemplary project of social architecture” (Zöldi 2015), and it was not simply a “symbolic, PR-rubbish, but the designers several times sat down [with the locals] for brainstorming-discussing” (Dobó 2014). For the designers the project was “one great common experience” (Majorné 2014), while the local government considers it as an “exemplary community planning” (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2013). The majority of the lay participants talks about the design process and the features of the park

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<sup>1</sup> In the literature there are various names for the practice,, such as collaborative design, community design and participatory design. In accordance with the Hungarian terminology, I use community design and participatory design interchangeably.

with great enthusiasm. “Finally the park is ours” they say. They even established an organization called as ‘Társak a Teleki térért Egyesület’ [Partners for the Teleki Square] that provides the layman locals a legal framework for taking care of the park – and to control its accessibility. They set up strict rules how to use the park; for instance it is not allowed to enter after sunset, eat, smoke, or consume alcohol there, and it is forbidden to play football since the grass would be frayed.

At the same time, some lay participants and activists have also voiced their critique concerning the project. They highlight that the park is designed by and for the lower middle class Hungarians, and neither the design process nor the functioning of the park take into consideration the needs and interests of the marginalized groups, such as the poor Roma families in the neighbourhood. Their critique is well summarized in a blog post by Ivan Tosics<sup>2</sup>, a Hungarian sociologist:

The result, as the pictures show, is a nice green area for different age groups, developed in a participative planning process which, however, excluded all groups which were considered as deviant by the majority population. This has led in practice to a new exclusion: the hated groups have even less access to green space as they had before the improvement of the public square started. (Tosics 2015)

The common characteristic of these ‘critical intellectuals’ is that either they are sociologists and social workers or they are leftist intellectuals informed by social sciences. For a while most of them were members of the association but as interviews revealed when the intolerant attitude of their peers toward homeless people, migrants and everyone who they define as deviant had become apparent, they left the association.

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<sup>2</sup> Ivan Tosics did not participate in the project and he criticized the project from outside. However, his approach resonates with the approach of the groups of intellectual criticizing as insiders.

The diverging understanding on the aims of the project and the accessibility of the park led to tensions and at times heated conflict between the critical intellectuals and the association. At the same time, an alliance emerged between the local government known for its revanchist politics and gentrifying attempts and the association. In my thesis I argue that these conflicts and alliances have to be understood in a broader context of the ongoing gentrification of the neighbourhood and the struggles over the social control of public spaces.

In the research four analytic groups have been identified – the local government, the landscape architects, the association and the critical intellectuals who left the association – that are characterized by their utterly different understanding on the aim of the project and the accessibility of the park. I show that the gap between the different narratives of the participatory design is a result of the different filters – structured by their long lasting experience of the social positions – through which the four groups look at participatory design and the park. Therefore, the more or less heated argument between them is also leading to nowhere, and thus a consensus cannot be reached. By analysing the case in terms of symbolic struggles in which different forms of capital are mobilized by the different groups, the thesis argues that the multiplicity of interpretations is inherent to the participatory design practice.

Taking the broadest definition, participatory design in the field of architecture means that the users are involved in some stage of a (re)design own environment (Blundell Jones, Petrescu and Till 2005, 1) that can happened in the completion and the post-completion stage as well (Jenkins and Forsyth 2005). Therefore, in a participatory landscape design, besides the design professionals and the client who commissioned the project, another stakeholder appears, namely the general public who use the public space (ibid. 13). The participatory practice dates back to the 1960s, when US urban planners and architects – as a reaction to

the public critique of the alienating modernist architecture and its rigid master plans – started experimenting with participatory design and planning (Hall 1988). It emerged parallel to the growing interests of various fields in public participation, like political science (Pateman 2012), development studies (Cornwall 2007), policy-making discourses.

Since then, a great volume of literature has been produced on the topic in the context of the built environment, mostly by social scientists, and theorists of urban planning and design involving architects as well as landscape architects. Even though many theorists use participatory planning and design interchangeably, in my thesis I deliberately distinguish the two. The former is practiced by planners, the latter by designers. In many countries there is some overlap between planning and design professions, however, in Hungary due to the rigid disciplinary boundaries, these two fields are clearly distinct. They are characterized by different aims, tools, rationales and dependencies. Spatial planning is concerned with the ways in which people shape and govern places, and takes into consideration the viewpoint of social sciences. As opposed to this, design (architecture, landscape architecture and urban design) prioritizes aestheticism and functionality, and it refrains from incorporating sociological insights into its discipline (Van Assche et al. 2015).

By tracing the theoretical history of participatory architectural design, one can find diverging understanding on participatory practice. Architects and urban designers understand participatory design as a means to produce a good design, arguing that “the social motivation behind community design does not and should not preclude good design” (Comerio cited in Jenkins and Forsyth. 2010, 27). As opposed to this, social scientists often consider it as a way of empowerment, and see participation as “the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately



included in the future” (Arnstein 1969)<sup>3</sup>. In accordance with this, design theorists mostly deal with methodological questions of participation (Sanoff 1973; Luck 2003), the possibilities of technical development (Rényi 2011), and the negative effects of laymen participation on the aesthetical quality of the design (Garde 2013). As opposed to this, social scientists and planning theorists critically approach the practice by discussing the degree of public involvement (Arnstein 1969; Drijver 1991), the selectivity and the unintended consequences of participation (Turnhout, Van Bommel and Aarts 2010; Hansson et al. 2013), the ways economic and class antagonisms shape participatory planning processes (Holgerson and Haarstad 2009), and the political formation of participatory projects (Legacy 2016). Considering the vast amount of studies on public participation and the fragmentation of participatory experiences in an urban setting, Brownill and Parker (2010) argues that participation is always context dependent. In accordance with their call for a more nuanced analysis about the contradictions and conflicting rationales on a micro level, this thesis looks at the interpretations and clashes around the participatory design project of the Teleki Square.

There have already been examples for participatory public space design and management that contribute to the gentrification of an area. The renovation of run-down Bryant Park in New York that was initiated by a local association obtaining the management of the park and whose aesthetic program was once labelled as the “domestication by cappuccino” by Sharon Zukin (1998) has set up a model of privatization of public spaces through consumption spaces and private management. The New York’s High Line being renovated by a group of local elite political, economic and cultural actors to be an “archetypical neoliberal public space” (Loughran 2014) has become a number one tourist attraction of New York and the anchor for the gentrification of the area. Not only did these parks mark a new direction of gentrification for social scientists but they also became a

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<sup>3</sup> Even though Arnstein did not have formal education in social sciences, her understanding on participatory planning and design made a strong impact on the sociological critique of the participatory practice.

model to follow for planners and design professionals, including the landscape architects of the Teleki Square.

The purpose of the current research is twofold. First of all, there have not been any studies on participatory design in the Hungarian context from a sociological point of view. Even though the participatory approach in design and planning is popular and widely studied in the Western part of the world (Brownill and Parker 2010), it is a relatively new practice in Hungary. Nonetheless, it seems that the local governments have been inspired by the participatory design of the Teleki Square and have begun to use it as a political tool that can be seen in the numerous participatory urban design projects being announced by the local municipalities in the last years in Budapest. Therefore, the objective of this case study is to provide a critical analysis of the discourses around one of the first Hungarian participatory design project.

Secondly, by discussing the gap between the understanding of sociology and architecture, this research enables me to reflect on my multidisciplinary position and the barriers as well as benefits of an interdisciplinary approach in architecture. By studying sociology and anthropology as a graduated architect, I had to develop an analytical diplopia that enabled me to see things either through the lens of an architect or a social scientist. In this sense, on a meta-level the research can be seen as a self-ethnography (Anderson 2006), since through the diverging interpretations of a participatory landscape architecture project I explore my personal experience and connect it to a wider social and political context (Ellis et al. 2011).

Being an insider – both for the designers due to my background in architecture and for the critical intellectuals due to my study in sociology and my middle-class background – had positive and negative effects on conducting the research. On the one hand, it helped in

accessing the field and in the preparation of interviews. On the other hand, my internalized architectural knowledge sometimes resulted in taking things for granted when I spoke with the designers. Furthermore, with the aim of keeping the objective position of the researcher, I had to overcome my prejudice toward the designers and toward the association.

The research is a qualitative case study. In accordance with the recommendations of Yin (2003), the empirical data were gained from various sources, including ethnographic fieldwork in the form of participant observation, conducting interviews and the analysis of documents and visual data. In the summer of 2016 a preliminary fieldwork was conducted that enabled me to identify the analytical categories for the second phase in 2017 winter. In order to contextualize the case, this study is built on direct observation in the park and its surroundings, on the information gained from social workers, on casual conversations with the users of the park and on online media accounts. The analysis of local municipal documents and records of the local municipal council's meetings, an interview with a planner and blog entries of a local representative of the neighbourhood all contributed to defining the position of the local government. Similarly, in order to form an understanding of the interpretation of the landscape architects, videos of the design workshops and semi-structured interviews were used, while in the case of the critical intellectuals, aside from interviews, an analysis of conversations on online forums and blog entries were examined. In the case of the association direct and participatory observation and semi-structured interviews were used. The direct and participatory observations of their weekly meetings and of their meeting with the vice mayor of the district helped me to design the questions of the semi-structured interviews for all the four groups. For the interviews with the association I chose members who participated in the design workshops and were still active members of the association. In the case of the critical intellectuals, I used snow-ball sampling.

There are certain limitations to the study. Due to practical constraints it cannot give a deeper insight into the motivations of ‘non-participation.’ It is remarkable that only a quasi-homogeneous group of lower middle class Hungarians participated in the project, even though in theory the workshops were accessible for everyone. The ‘non-participants’ – people who did not attend in the meetings – is a broad and ill-defined group of people involving different social and ethnic groups. Nevertheless, it was the underrepresentation of Roma people that the critical intellectuals considered as the most striking, given their relatively large share in the local society. According to the estimation of Roma community leaders, the share of Roma population in the neighbourhood in 2004 was approximately 30 % (RÉV8, 2004). Most of these people are highly discriminated in many fields of their life (György 2011). During the fieldwork, on a sunny Saturday afternoon randomly chosen people in the park were asked, whether they had heard about the participatory opportunity. In this way I could talk to many Roma families and thus I could learn about their attitude toward the design workshops and the renovation of the park. Nevertheless, with this method I could reach only a few people and thus in their case I have to rely on assumptions building on secondary data.

The first chapter introduces a relational frame of analysis for approaching the case that enables one to grasp the dynamism of social relations behind the interpretations of the participatory design and their connection to the park physical space. The second chapter gives an overview on the gentrification of Budapest and the close neighbourhood of the park that provides the social-economic context of the case study. The following two chapters build on the empirical data being collected during the ethnographic fieldwork of the research. The third chapter introduces one by one the stakeholders of the participatory design project as analytic groups of the study and discusses their dynamic relations in time and space. The fourth chapter takes a closer look at the interpretations of the four groups and the clashes they

triggered, and at the same time examines the ways the social struggles imprinted in the physical space.

# Chapter 1 – Theoretical Frame

In the core of the interpretation and clashes of the different stakeholders on the park stands the way the public space has been produced. “(Social) space is a (social) product”, as Lefebvre (1991) famously put it, and in this view, the park ceases to be a pure physical entity, a neutral medium that can be filled with fragmentary content of things and people. Rather it is a social construction, being constantly produced and reproduced through the everyday practices, mentally and materially. In this sense, space cannot be grasped as an objective reality and thus there cannot be a single understanding of it.

The participatory design project of Teleki square means an intervention in the socio-spatial conditions of the neighbourhood, carried out by the local government and supported by planners and landscape architects (Lefebvre 1991, 375). This intervention, however, had an impact on the dynamism of social relations, triggering interactions and conflicts. Considering this, as opposed to looking at the stakeholders of the participatory design project as pre-given and fixed social units – like individuals and classes – or as an ultimate starting point of the sociological analysis, the shift to a relational framework of analysis makes it possible to grasp the dynamic relationships of the stakeholders. According to Emirbayer, “[w]hat is distinct about the transactional approach is that it sees relations between social units and actors as pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substances or structures” (1997).

This relational or transactional sociology is present in urban studies as well. Lefebvre (1991) argues that for understanding a space one has to go beyond the apparent and see how the space is actively produced. Doreen Massey recognizes space as “a product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny” (2005, 9). These interrelations are embedded in material processes and thus

the space is constantly under construction. Considering these, Savage proposes to turn to the ‘lost urban sociology of Bourdieu’ by arguing that the field analysis offers adequate ways for the operationalization of relational strategies in urban studies (Savage 2011; Hanquenet, Savage and Callier 2012). He argues that even though Bourdieu in the 1970s coined a concept of social space that was abstracted from the actual physical space, his later works (Bourdieu 1999; Bourdieu 2000) suggests that social space is being projected to physical space. In accordance with this, this thesis takes Bourdieu’s theory of field as a point of departure.

Enjoying the arbitrariness that the concept of Bourdieu allows for the social scientific observer in drawing analytical boundaries (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), this thesis sees the participatory design project of the Teleki square as “field” (Bourdieu 1985), being nested in a broader network of relations of gentrification. Social space can be seen as a “field of forces, i.e. as a set of objective power relations which impose themselves on all who enter the field and which are irreducible to the intentions of the individual agents or even to the direct *interactions* among the agents” (ibid., 196, original emphasis).

The social agents (individual or a group of individuals) are defined by their relative position in the field, by the sum and the composition of the different kinds of capital – economic, social, cultural and symbolic – they possess. Economic capital is the only one that can be directly converted into money, cultural capital can be understood for instance in terms of educational qualifications, while social capital is the actual and potential networks of relations that the social agents can mobilize (Bourdieu 1986). Symbolic capital is the form what the capitals of various sources take when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate (Bourdieu 1989, 17). By entering the field, the social agents (individuals or groups

of individuals) accept the explicit and implicit rules of the game (like the legally or socially guaranteed hierarchy of positions), however, they have the possibility to change them.

The social scientific observer can distinguish “classes” (Bourdieu 1986) as sets of agents in the field of forces. Members of an analytical class are characterized by their similar positions in the field of forces and thus they are more likely to possess similar habitus (sets of dispositions), practices and lifestyles. Habitus can be seen as schemes of production and schemes classification of practices, which can be acquired through upbringing and education. As a result, social agents and groups of agents can be classified by the classification they make, by making distinction between high and low culture, between decent fellows and deviants, between us and them.

In accordance with this, the current thesis proposes an argument in which the four groups can be seen as four classes from the analytic point of view. Some of them only a “probable class” – people who based on their position in the field are more likely to ally for achieving their goals – and others as “actual class” that members recognise themselves and are recognized by the other agents as a group (Bourdieu 1985). The four groups, by means of capitals they collected in other fields and in the power field of the participatory design project, struggle over the production of the legitimate vision on the world (Bourdieu 1989, 21), and over transforming the categories of perception and evaluation of the participatory renovation of the park. In these struggles, however, neither the boundaries of the group nor the alliances between them are fixed; the relations are fluid and are in constant change.

At the same time, social space is translated into the physical space, finding symbolic materialization in it. In the Pascalian Meditations, Bourdieu writes:

Social space tends to be translated with more or less distortion, into physical space, in a form of certain arrangements and properties. It follows that all the divisions and



distinctions of social space (high/low, left/right, etc.) are really and symbolically expressed in physical space appropriated as reified social space (Bourdieu 2000, 134).

Therefore, social struggles appear in the physical space as struggles for space, where the position in the social field becomes an appropriation of a place.

This turn to the “lost urban sociology of Bourdieu” (Savage 2011) has two implications for the recent analysis. First, it enables one to look at social struggles over producing the legitimate interpretations of the world as being translated into the physical space. For example, the distinction between decent fellows, who deserve to use the park, and people with deviant behaviour, from whom the park has to be protected, materializes in the design features of the park aiming to attract people with decent behaviour and serves the naturalization of the dominant discourse. Second, it makes possible to situate the participatory renovation of the park in the ongoing gentrification of the neighbourhood, marked by the physical renewal of the residential buildings and public spaces.

While originally gentrification was described as a marginal phenomenon of the working class districts in London (Glass 1964), today it is understood globally as strategy of the cities for urban redevelopment (Smith 2002). By Slater, gentrification is defined as “the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of a city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use” (Slater 2009, 294). Nevertheless, the transformation is not free from social tensions. As a result of the capital reinvestment, the change of the landscape and the social upgrading of an area due to the arrival of high-income groups, the less affluent groups are directly or indirectly replaced (Davidson and Lees 2005).

The explanation of the phenomenon was highly debated within urban geography and sociology. The two radically different and conflicting explanations that made strong effect on the academic field were on the one hand the liberal humanist, on the other hand the structural

Marxist interpretations. The former emphasized the role of choice, human agency, culture and consumer demand, and argued that the driven force behind phenomenon was the housing demand of the ‘gentrifiers’, a newly emerged ‘new class’ that was characterized by secure economic base, a distinct taste and lifestyle (Hamnett 1991, 176-177). The producer-side explanations stressed the importance of capital, class, production and supply, and emphasized the role of producers (builders, developers and real estate agents) and their need for profit. For example ‘rent-gap theory’ of Neil Smith explained the locality of gentrification in the context of long-term shifts in investment and disinvestment. According to this, gentrification possibly happens where and when the rent-gap – that is the difference between the potential ground rent and the actual capitalized ground rent – is high enough to ensure profit for the producers (ibid., 178-179).

According to David Harvey, gentrification as urban strategy has to be understood in the context of the entrepreneurial shift in urban governance and the increasing inter-urban competition (Harvey 1989, 9). The entrepreneurial urban governance emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to the widespread erosion of the fiscal and economic basis of large cities in the advanced capitalism. Making a shift from the managerial attitude that characterized the 1960s, the entrepreneurial urban governance aimed to improve its competitive power and involved increasingly in economic development. In this sense, gentrification – that is the upgrading of the built environment – can be seen as one of the various ways to attract investors and consumers. “Above all, the city has to appear as an innovative, exciting, creative, and safe place to live or to visit, to play and consume in” (ibid., 9).

At the same time, Chris Hamnett (1991) argues that neither the consumption-side explanation nor the production-side explanation is sufficient per se. Cutting the Gordian knot he states that both the existence of rent gap and the production of the ‘new class’ – that is

both the structure and the individual agency – are necessary conditions for the gentrification process (ibid., 187-188). Nowadays, this approach is accepted by the wider academic field as well (Smith 2002).

Taking this standpoint, this thesis argues that the gentrification of the Magdolna Quarter is being built in power fields like the participatory design. The relational dynamics of the participatory project stands in the core of the urban transformation, and the outcome of the process is far from being evident. From this point of view, neither the relations of the actors, nor their role in the gentrification are fixed. Between the four otherwise conflicting groups “circumstantial coalitions” (Monterescu 2015) emerge. At the same time, in the dynamics of the field of forces the beneficiaries and supporters of gentrification could easily turn to be the opponents and subalterns of gentrification.

## Chapter 2 – Gentrification of Budapest and Józsefváros

The Teleki square is located in the edge of the so-called Magdolna Quarter of the highly stigmatized 8<sup>th</sup> district of Budapest. It is green wedge staved in the dense urban structure, an estuary of the Népszínház Street that stretches between the city centre and the old Kerepesi cemetery. From three sides tenement houses built in the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century look down on the square. Some of their facades have already been renovated in the third phase of the Magdolna Quarter Programme, the ‘socially sensitive urban rehabilitation programme’ of the neighbourhood. Others with their mouldering plaster are still waiting for better times to come. In the other side of the Népszínház Street the newly renovated Teleki Square Market stands, which is an important place in the history and the identity of the neighbourhood and a disgrace for the local government for a long time.

This section provides a historical overview on the social and economic context in which the renovation of the park emerged. First, it gives an overview on the ongoing gentrification of Budapest in general and Magdolna Quarter in particular. Then it introduces, the ‘socially sensitive urban rehabilitation programme’ of the area, the Magdolna Quarter Programme I-III , which is embedded in gentrification of the neighbourhood and within the idea of the participatory design emerged.

### 2.1 Gentrification of Budapest

While the large percentage of the social scientific descriptions about gentrification emerged in the context of Anglo-Saxon cities, the phenomenon is known in post-socialist countries. According to Smith, even though gentrification is context dependent and thus it shows local

peculiarities in the post-socialist cities, a general set of conditions and causes behind the phenomenon are still common (Smith 1996, 183).

The current studies on the gentrification of Budapest to a great extent agree that the main factors behind the gentrifying processes are the capitalization of the land and housing markets, the appearance of international investors and property developers, the ambitious urban rehabilitation policies of the local governments with EU or state funds, the expanding middle-class with the preference of inner-city housing and life-style, and the willingness of the residents to invest in the renovations of their dwellings (Kovács, Wiessner and Zischner 2013, 14; Czirfusz et al. 2015).

The gentrification of Budapest often goes hand in hand with the regeneration of public spaces. While originally gentrification is understood in the context of the housing stock and its renovation or reconstruction, the regeneration of public spaces can contribute to the revalorization of a neighbourhood. Accordingly, local governments often regenerate a strategically chosen square or a park in a deprived neighbourhood, hoping that a local renewal can cause further developments in a wider area. These projects serve as ‘message’ for the local people and private investors (Tomay 2008, 78). Nevertheless, it can also bring about a change in the social composition of an area and set gentrifying processes in motion, like in case of the Ráday Street in the 9<sup>th</sup> district of Budapest (ibid., 123-124).

## **2.2 Gentrification of Józsefváros**

While there are numerous studies on how the physical renewal of the inner-city neighbourhoods led to gentrification in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> districts and in the inner parts of the 8<sup>th</sup> district, only a few deals with the urban transformation of middle-Józsefváros where the Teleki square is located. Nevertheless, Czirfusz et al. (2015) give a historical overview on

how the rent-gap has been produced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the area, and discuss the urban rehabilitation programmes through which the local government seeks to close it.

The socialist state paid little attention to the rehabilitation of middle-Józsefváros and thus the conditions of the housing stock became critical by the 1980s. Following the regime change in 1989 the situation even worsened. The decentralization in the '90s several tasks were delegated from the state to the local municipality without the necessary financial resources. Therefore, the regeneration of the Magdolna Quarter – and that of the Teleki square – became possible only after the EU accession thanks to the newly available EU funds. The EU funded Magdolna Quarter Programme is promoted as a 'socially sensitive urban regeneration programme' putting emphasis on the social aspects of the urban regeneration and the participation of the local people.

Even though the program inevitably has positive effects on certain groups of the area, Czirfusz et al. (2015) argue that there are signs that the local government aims to close the rent gap under the veil of 'socially sensitive regeneration', which would lead to the displacement of the current less affluent dwellers. According to them, the privatization of the market on the Teleki Square next to the park being the object of this study, and tax allowances for selected retail activities could easily lead to a commercial-led gentrification. They state that the rental prices started to increase parallel to the changing image of the area, and a 'spontaneous' gentrification began.

These gentrifying attempts of the local government are supported by selective social policies that tend to racialize and criminalize poverty (Keresztély, Scott and Virág 2017). These revanchist policies supported by an increased number of local police, force homeless people, prostitutes and drug users in the dilapidated industrial buildings in the edge of the district – that is displace people seen as deviant from the inner areas.

In 2017 it sounds almost as a commonplace that Magdolna Quarter stepped on the path of third wave gentrification (Hackworth and Smith 2001). During my fieldwork I had the chance to go to a public forum that was concerned with the renewal of the Népszínház Street that connects the Teleki square to the city centre. The Népszínház Street is one of the most multi-cultural streets of Budapest, where one finds side by side an Arab grocery, an African fast food restaurant and a Chinese store. Similar to the other parts of the district, the street suffers from disinvestment; however, recently the redevelopment of it appeared on the agenda of the local municipality. For the meeting, the vice mayor of the district, his staff and asserted professionals invited the association of the Teleki square – and out of the local entrepreneurs the Hungarian ones. The discourse was about the plans of the local government aiming at creating a ‘design street’ or rather a ‘craftsman street’ out of Népszínház Street. This plan, however, involves the exclusion of shops that cannot serve as a magnet for further private investment and tourists: the Arab call shops, the African hairdresser and so forth. As way of legitimizing the project – even though everyone seems to agree in the meeting that they have to leave – Vice Mayor suggests that in the owners of these shops are selling drugs. The local government argues that “these people feel well where a ghetto and dirt is” and thus with the redevelopment they will decide to leave.

## **2.3 Three phases of the Magdolna Quarter Programme**

The first step of the regeneration of the 8<sup>th</sup> district was to get rid of the stigmatized image of the area. The name of the neighbourhood, Magdolna Quarter, is actually a result of the rebranding process of the 8<sup>th</sup> district. In 2004, the local government decided to divide the district to eleven neighbourhoods with different identities – so that “not all residents should wear the stigma of the district equally” as Tábori (2009) puts it. Magdolna Quarter, which is one of the most raffish neighbourhoods out of the eleven, was named after the curvy

cobblestoned Magdolna Street “pointed with sunflower seed shells” (Tábori 2009). As the representative of the neighbourhood explained, “[w]e tried to find something that does not suggest its ghetto-like character, and have some charm, because it is a female name after all” (cited in Tábori 2009).

The first phase of the Magdolna Quarter Programme [MQP I] was in progress between 2004 and 2008 and was financed with the help of the Municipality of Budapest (Czirfusz et al. 2015). The program among others aimed at providing affordable good quality dwellings for the 80% of the local people, the increase of social cohesion by setting up forums and involving the local people in the programme, the decrease of segregation and the improvement of the general quality of environment by renovating public spaces (RÉV8 2005, 8). The second phase happened between 2008 and 2010 and was financed mostly by the European Regional Development Fund the European Social Fund (Czirfusz et al. 2015, 67). The agenda was similar to the first phase, including community development with sustaining the multi-cultural character of the neighbourhood and improving the conditions of employment. Nevertheless, as a new element, crime-prevention appeared, being considered as a token of sustainability (RÉV8 2008, 14).

At the same time, it became a common view of local politicians, activists and NGOs that the first two phases of the MQP could not fulfil its promises in terms of social upgrading and the involvement of local people. Therefore, in the third phase the local government intended to follow a different strategy. After the right-wing change of the local and the national government, the MQP III began in 2013. It contained similar elements as the first two phases, and in accordance with the requirements of the European Regional Development Fund, it put a great emphasis on the establishment of local supportive groups. The plans of MQP were supported by all the representatives of all the different parties. Finally, with the



aim of answering the growing dissatisfaction of the local people and the local politicians, the renovation of the Teleki square market and its surroundings appeared on the agenda of MQP III.

## Chapter 3 – Setting the scene

Before the third phase of the Magdolna Quarter Programme began, the conditions of the Teleki Square and the market had already been a recurring topic of the local municipal council. The general feeling toward the area can be well illustrated by the way a conservative representative described her experiences about the area on a meeting of the local municipal council:

I was shocked. It was felt like being back in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. To be honest, I saw such shameful, disgusting, sickening, inhuman environment, Honourable Council, probably only in the Mexican district of the US, there was the quality the same [...]. One can't even buy an apple without being sick of the view. Not to mention the people in the surroundings, it is frightening [...]. There are such people with such an appearance out of whom the 90 % have tuberculosis, I think. [...] In the portals, in the stores, everywhere is 'grovelling'. They lie in everything including their own faeces (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2009a, own translation<sup>4</sup>).

Similar to the records of the local municipal council's meetings, the yearly public forum of the district indicate an increasing dissatisfaction of residents with the social conditions of the area of the square (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2008; 2010b). The discourses of the time are marked by the recurring topics of homeless people, the illegal traders of the market, the pubs, and a great amount of used needles in the grass. For instance, a resident living in the district for 65 years said,

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<sup>4</sup> In this chapter all the quotations are the author's own translation unless indicated otherwise.

I have lived the heyday of the square and the maximal deprivation of it, [which] is a result of the establishment of numerous homeless shelters here [...]. They use the Teleki square as public toilette, they are grovelling on the street [...] I would like to get back [the square] where my daughter could swing when she was born in 1981 (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2011b, 11).

This opinion that the conditions of the park are intolerable seemed to be shared view of people with different social and cultural background. Nevertheless, a Roma grandmother expressed in an interview that personally they would have made a better use of a financial help for renovating their flat instead of creating a flower garden out of the Teleki square. Similarly, a university professor expressed that he preferred more the previous conditions of the market, since it had a unique atmosphere. Nevertheless, when finally the participatory design project was announced it seemed to be welcomed by the people of the neighbourhood irrespective of their social background. Even the conflicts being the object of the following analysis were concentrated on how the park was renovated instead of why.

This section, building on the empirical data collected during fieldwork, takes a closer look at the dynamic relations of the various stakeholders of the participatory design project. It introduces the four groups in the chronological order they entered the field of forces of participatory design, beginning with the local government and the landscape architects, and continuing with the members of the association and the critical intellectuals. Besides discussing the power relations between the groups, it also explains their group-forming practices with the help of the field theory of Bourdieu (1985). It also highlights that these groups are not fixed entities but are in constant change both in terms of recognized groups and analytical groups.

### 3.1. Local government and planners securing the investment

The participatory design project began on a warm summer afternoon in late May 2013. The workshops took off with the introduction of a grey-haired and grey-bearded man in his late fifties:

The local government decided to share the decisions with you, Ladies and Gentlemen. During the process as you make the decisions together with the local government, the government will accept these decisions, so it's not such a formal interview of the opinions but a real decision-making process including the final decision.

The man speaks frontally to an audience of approximately thirty people, adults and pensioners, in the local community house of the district. He is György Alföldi, a chairman of RÉV8, a shared company of the Municipality of Budapest and the Local Municipality of Józsefváros that is in charge of the development projects of the 8<sup>th</sup> district. He is a planner of the MQP III and the main initiator of the participatory design project. Looking back to the project, Alföldi considers himself as a mediator between the local municipality and the class of the designers, who ensured the background of the participatory design project. "We had attempts with community design before and it became apparent that if the conditions aren't clear, if we can't clear out the conditions, the outcome can be very bad. And thus in this case I tried to clear out the conditions in the background" he explains.

The purpose of the institute of RÉV8 is to serve the interest of the local government and its actions are restricted by the local municipal council. However, their interests are not completely overlap. For example it was Alföldi and the RÉV8 who convinced the local municipality to accept the idea of the participatory design project. "Initially both the mayor's office and the local municipal council had a kick against it, but at the end everyone liked it" as Alföldi remembers. The quasi-independent position of the RÉV8 is also reflected by the

“circumstantial coalition” (Monterescu 2015) against the local municipality emerging between the RÉV8 and the landscape designers with whom they bears resemblance in terms of “habitus” (Bourdieu 1985) due to their professional background. “The truth is” says G. one of the landscape architects with soften voice “that the local government was a bit tricked, so it was the achievement of Gyuri Alföldi. The thing was that our contract said that we should meet the locals five times. And then the local government thought that it would be like this »You like it? Or not?« public forum or something. And then we did this 12-week-workshop from which the politics really got frightened”.

Even though Alföldi and the RÉV8 tend to think of themselves as being independent from the local municipality, in the power field of the participatory design they are considered as the representatives of the local government from the point of view of the internal observer, like the lay participants. In accordance with this, the analysis looks at the local municipality and the planners as one analytic class. The social position of Alföldi was determined by his symbolic capital he possessed as the main person of RÉV8 and by the fact that he had to represent the interests of the local government. Even though the planners of the RÉV8 appeared rarely on the meetings and preferred to remain observers, the interests of the local government were present throughout the design process in the explicit rules of the game. “It was a clear case. Perhaps in my praxis the clearest case, were all the rules of the game was accepted in advance” says Alföldi. These rules ranged from the ultimate viewpoint that the redevelopment of the park is a necessary good (Abrams 2000) to the financial, spatial and time limits of the project and the initial determinacy of the power relations of the field. For instance the participatory design limited the possible decisions to be made about the future of the neighbourhood to the aesthetical and functional features of the park. In a similar way, the budget of the project and the borders of the site limited the potential decisions to be made.

Finally, assigning different responsibilities to the landscape architects and the lay participants the local municipality influenced the initial systems of relations.

The municipal rules are also embedded in a broader power field that is the rule of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund that financed the redevelopment project and required the involvement of the locals in urban regeneration (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2010a). Nevertheless, the participatory design project could happen in Teleki square because the RÉV8 wanted it. “Then again the Teleki is a very complicated square. Because its *cultural notoriety* is quite big, you know, the deterioration was very serious, and still quite a lot so to say quasi-white-collar people live there, it was likely that if anybody designs anything, it won’t be good” explains Alföldi (emphasis added). To put it in another way, the participatory design method served to make more socially acceptable the renovation of the park amongst the lower middle class residents of the square and later it was used to gain a better position in the field of forces of the regeneration programme.

Besides setting up the rules, Alföldi and the RÉV8 had another impact on the formation of the power field of the participatory design in a sense that they chose an important player in the game, namely the landscape architects. In 2012 the local government launched a restricted tendering and invited three landscape architect groups including the Ujirany Group that won the project:

We deliberately invited studios that had experience in community design. To be precise the emphasis was not on how the green surface would look like but whether they could deal with people [...]. In fact, we wanted D.’s<sup>5</sup> group. So it was a directed selecting. So we would like to.... so I saw it in the city that they could do such things.

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<sup>5</sup> D. is one of the landscape architects of the Ujirany Group.

After the construction work was finished, the role of Alföldi and the RÉV8 become less significant in the field of forces of the participatory design and the representation of the municipal interests was taken by the mayor's office. They keep a friendly relationship with the association and as the study later shows they often use it for political purposes.

### **3.2. Idealistic landscape architects: the Ujirany Group**

The Ujirany Group is a landscape architect studio that was established by a company of university friends right after their graduation with the aim of working out the design of the Millenáris Park in the 2<sup>nd</sup> district of Budapest. With this design they become noted amongst the professionals dealing with the built environment, due to their unusual artistic ideas and creativity, which often targeted the more educated social groups requiring certain cultural competence to understand the design intervention (Bourdieu 1984, 2). For instance as a way of reflecting on the contrast between the Nature and the Urban they designed a piece of wheat land, being cut through with a glass corridor with a narrow opening in the middle.

Their position in the power field was characterized by the symbolic capital they possessed as licensed landscape architects being charged with the conduction of the participatory design project, the preparation of the final design and the working drawings and the site supervision. This position caused their dependency of a powerful player in the game – the local government – that they had to take into consideration when contacted with local groups in the preparation phase of the participatory design process. For instance G. told:

There was this group in the district that organized programs [...] and protested for free busking, but they were very oppositionist and offensive but we had to be cautious, since the local government commissioned the work and we are kind of local government-dependent so we did not dare to... at the very beginning with such a people... who are against it, who attack.

At the same time, their position ensured them greater power over the field as opposed to other players. In the organization of the workshops, apart from accepting the rules of the game set up by the local government they got free hand. By setting up the sequences of the workshops, by explicitly and implicitly determining the freedom of decision-making of the local participants, and by moderating the discourse they could impose another set of rules of the game being embedded in the rules of the local government. As one of the landscape architects explained, “we told them the rules of the game, it was projected on the wall, that we were aiming to reach a consensus, we were listening to each other, we were respecting each other’s opinion, and things like that and of course we had to draw their attention to these from time to time.” With these rules they already initiated a direction of participatory design process has to take – that is reaching consensus as an ultimate goal – being a recurring critique of participatory practice. Abrams (2000) argues that as opposed to looking at participatory practice as a device to achieve consensus and balance power it should be seen as a clear articulation of conflicts over resources.

The Ujirany Group, similar to the local government, stepped in the field an “actual class” in terms of Bourdieu (1985). They thought of themselves and were recognized by the others as real group, due to their educational background, their common professional and personal history and their socially and legally guaranteed status in the participatory design. With their education and their common works they acquired a “culture of practices”, a system of embodied and self-evident actions being hard to explain for a layman (Cuff 1991). Through its internalized practices, shared meanings and values the Ujirany Group explicitly and implicitly legitimizes, reproduces and distinguishes itself from the other groups. For instance it can be seen in the practice of using metaphors as a means of design thinking characterizing the architectural habitus (Caballero 2013) and the special terminology the

landscape architects used in the advertisement of the workshops and during the participatory design process.

The 13 workshops were advertised on flyers and in the local newspaper of Józsefváros. The advertisements on the one hand were characterized by the symbols of the dominant groups of the power field setting up the rules of the game and on the other hand were overloaded by architectural terminology. They contained the logo of the local government, of the EU program that financed the project, and of EU and the local municipality's renewed slogan ("Józsefváros is being rebuilt") and the slogan of the governing party ("Hungary is renewing"). The other side of the poster listed the topics of the workshops. These were the following:

1. Introduction, discussing the conditions of the park: setting up the design groups, history, plants
2. Picnic on the site and board games: the interactive exploration of the design field
3. Forum: lessons to be learnt from the history of Teleki square, setting up the program
4. Forum: Community design and conception-making: spatial organization and defining the characters of the spaces
5. Creating the program and designing: the spatial representation of the functional schema
6. Entering the field: checking the schema of functions on the spot
7. Forum: Designing the details, situating spatially the elements
8. Picnic on the site: the introduction of the design in the real space, defining the place of the hardscape elements
9. Forum: Use of softscapes and park furniture, entering the field
10. Forum: Finalizing the design
11. Presentation of the outcome of the community design

The use of such words as "spatial organization", "functional schema" and "design program" on the poster and during the workshops served not only the direct reproduction of



the group of the designers and indirect reproduction of the field of landscape architecture but also it helped them dominating the discourse and addressing problems from their point of view (Jenkins and Forsyth 2005). It involved giving priority their embodied normative values gained in the field of architecture, especially the “judgement of taste” (Bourdieu 1984). For instance, as D. explained:

It happened often that M. [one of the lay participants] came up with very... I can say such things that she brought kind of kitschy ideas, can't I? [...] and in these cases it have to be told them that “OK it is good in some context but our concept is this neutral style and all the chosen elements have to be fit in this so that there won't be dissonance” [...] And there were two people who had superb taste, so funnily we named them as “Design Team”.

Their habit to prioritize aesthetics and to universalize their measure of aesthetic quality was also reflected in the debate around the sculptures of the park. From the very beginning of the design process, three sculptures were planned to be placed in the park that commemorate the history of the neighbourhood and Earl László Teleki after whom the square was named. The artefacts being chosen by the people of the neighbourhood did not fit to the refined aesthetics that the designers preferred, being naturalist “genre sculptures”<sup>6</sup> instead of the abstract ones they recommended. Therefore they disavowed these sculptures in every possible forum, denying their responsibility or support in the choice and arguing that it was a decision made by the broader public other than the participants of the workshop (Somlyódi 2015). This disavowal reflects not only their architectural habitus – that they had to develop for being accepted by the professional field – but also their middle class taste for high culture by which they distinguish themselves from the lower classes (Bourdieu 1984). The

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<sup>6</sup> In the last few years numerous so-called “genre sculptures” appeared in Budapest being supported by the local governments. They are characterized by a naturalist style and they depict famous or average figures being engaged in everyday activity, like Ronald Reagan in the Liberty Square or a girl with a dog on the river side. While there are amiable and easily understandable compositions, it is a common middle class critique determining the hegemonic discourse that they are clichés and have no underlying meaning (Földes 2014).

distinction by taste became even more apparent during the fieldwork, when it turned out that the association in fact liked the genre sculptures.

Despite the habitus that distinguishes them from the locals, the landscape architects explicitly tried to demolish the symbolic barriers between them and the lay participants, as they put it “taking one’s ego off the table”. For example when one of the designers said too often during the presentation that “We wanted that...” and “We thought that” another designer drew him aside and reminded him not to say “everybody” instead of “we”. They even joined the association and one of them continued visiting the weekly meetings of it for a year after the implementation of the park. Nevertheless, as the intolerant attitude of the association came to the fore this “circumstantial coalition” (Monterescu 2015) of the middle class landscape architects and the lower middle class lay participants was broken. The denial of social distance did not demolish the difference between the two groups and can be seen as “strategy of condescension” of the landscape architects being in higher social position (Bourdieu 1989). Nevertheless, as the study will show the profits of this denial could be reaped by the landscape architects.

### **3.3. Lower middle class association and critical intellectuals**

The announcement and the opportunity of participating in the design project attracted approximately 50 people out of which 15-20 were active, based on the estimation of the landscape architects. Either they saw the announcement of the workshops in the local newspaper or were invited by their neighbours. Most of them had already known each other and many had already been active in the public sphere of the neighbourhood – as one of the critical intellectuals explained to me it was not the participatory design project that mobilized them as a group. Despite the heterogeneous social and ethnic composition of the

neighbourhood, all of them were non-Roma Hungarians and compared to the neighbourhood average they were more educated and relatively better-off people. This relative affluence, however, does not mean their existential security; as one of the designers said “in fact, these people are so fucking<sup>7</sup> poor, but in this country there is always somebody poorer”.

The idea of the association as a frame for organizing programs in the park after the renovation was brought in on the second workshop by one of the landscape architects, as a solution to the fears of the locals how the new park could be protected. The landscape architects brought the examples of the Bryant Park and the Highline in New York, which are taken care by non-governmental organizations, and argued that an association would help to sustain the park by taking over tasks from the local municipality being not able to meet the challenge of managing the public spaces in the district. The idea fell on fertile ground and the participants decided that they would name it as ‘Partners for the Teleki square Association’.

As opposed to the local government and the groups of the landscape architects who were perceived as real groups from the very beginning, the formation of the other two groups took longer time. For a while, the critical intellectuals were members of the association, however, as the intolerant attitude of some members intensified, they decided to leave. Nevertheless, the rupture between the two groups could have been predicted by their different interests and composition of capital in the power field of the participatory design (Bourdieu 1985). Their different positions can be best grasped by comparing and contrasting them as theoretical classes.

The critical intellectuals possess a great amount of cultural capital – all of them have a university degree and they work in the quarterly sector (teaching at university or working for NGOs). As opposed to them, most of the members of the association possess undergraduate

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<sup>7</sup> The excerpts from the interviews can be contained swear-words. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that these swear-words the interviewees used sound less rude in Hungarian than in English.

degree or have no qualification. They typically work in the service sector, they are retired or are on disability pension. Many of them live in their own flat; however, at least two of them recently lost their apartment as a mortgage.

Furthermore, the two groups can be characterized by their different motivations for participating in the design project. The members of the association – typically living in the buildings around the square – wanted to change the socially and physically downgrading park being full of homeless people, junkies and dogs. “Since I moved here, I have hoped that the park would be renovated. My flat was also promoted with the promise that something would happen with the park. It has been a recurring topic for 8 years or so” explains a man in his late thirties why he participated in the workshops. Furthermore, they hoped that participating in the design can ensure that the park would actually fit to their needs. “I thought what if it was actually as it was advertised that they would listen to the locals [...] I would also like to sit outside on a bench, play table tennis, if it was implemented in a way that they asked our opinion” remembered E. (53, on disability pension). Furthermore, an important aspect of the association is that they defined themselves as a community.

As opposed to them, the critical intellectuals live further from the park, in the nearby neighbourhoods or even outside the district. Even though from the insider’s point of view they were similarly lay participants as the members of the association, from the analytical viewpoint their motivations went beyond the actual renovation of the park and distinguished them from the others. They were concerned with working for a better society and intervening in the process of the participatory design, and their perception on the participatory design is structured by their knowledge about the revanchist politics of the local municipality. They interfered with the participatory design “as intellectuals, that is, with a specific authority grounded on their belonging to the relatively autonomous world of art, science, and literature

and on all the values that are associated with this autonomy- virtue, disinterestedness, competence, and so on”<sup>8</sup> (Bourdieu 1991, original emphasis).

For instance as L., an associate professor of sociology who has a history of civic activism in the neighbourhood explains: “My aim was not primarily to influence the physical appearance of the park or the renovation of it [...] I went there as a curious observer and an activist who seeks to intervene”. Since he knew the shortcomings of MQP II that misused its keyword of ‘participation’ unabashedly, he wanted to bring in the workshops a bit of scepticism and caution toward the local municipal practices and aimed to put pressure on the local government if necessary.

Both Sz., a recently graduated sociologist and Cs., a social worker worked that time for the Jakab Glaser Memorial Foundation [JGMF] of the apartment synagogue in the Teleki Square, aimed to help for the landscape architects on a voluntary base in the involvement of the locals. Ironically enough, before the project of the Ujirany Group began, Cs. had already been preparing a community organizing project in the square by means of “doing something with the park”. As part of a fellowship program for community organizers offered by the Great Lake City Consortium, he did interviews in 2012 in the neighbourhood for identifying three core local social problem – that were racism, gentrification, crimes – and then he participated in a six week long training in the US. When he arrived back to Hungary, he had to learn that a very similar project had already been in progress. Therefore, he decided to integrate his own project in the project of the Ujirany Group and offered them the help of the synagogue, especially after seeing their lack of experience in involving hard-to-reach people. From the very beginning, Sz. also helped him. “We thought that this thing that they were placarding that there would be a community design project, and they posted what the schedule of it, so... this method especially in the Teleki square would cut no ice... and in fact

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<sup>8</sup> Translated by Gisele Sapiro.

nowhere else, I think” she says. Therefore, she and Cs. went around the residential buildings in the square, knocking on all the doors and tried to address people who cannot be involved simply with a poster.

The work of the critical intellectuals for universal and moralistic values is often driven by a “guilty conscience” (Bourdieu 1985) for instance as the case of G. shows. She is an art historian and university teacher who moved to the neighbourhood in the time the construction works of the park were finished. She explained why she was motivated to join to the association:

After half a year one realizes that there are very tragic things happening. But presumably the most tragic is not that [someone tells me that] she inherited the cerebral tumour [...] but why the people start telling such things to each other. Anyway, I thought that something has to be done since compared to many people here I’m looked as bloody rich. [...] What is it to me to bake another two pans of cookies and I bring down for the children in the square? [...] Also it was my story of becoming leftist about what I always tell to my leftist friends that I will never be such a “real leftist” as they are because... shit, I am wearing a hundred-year-old ring for teaching what I inherited from my grandma. I can’t be that angry as they are. I am angry but not angry enough.

The motivations of the critical intellectuals in becoming a member of the association connect to their motivation of empowering the citizens and of intervening in the politics of the local government as public activist. In this sense they did not think of themselves as part of the community of the association. “It’s not the thing that it is my life to go down to the [club of] the association. Because for many of them [from the association] it is the life” says G.

In comparison with the other three classes, the groups of the critical intellectuals remained to be a “probable class” (Bourdieu 1985), in a sense that they did not mobilize

themselves for reaching their goals, even though they knew and like each other, and they possessed similar position in the field of forces (ibid. 198). Some of them simply decided to leave the field of forces when the conflicts of interests become apparent. Others, on online forums or on presentations of the project as a best practice aimed to change the hegemonic discourse around the park and the association (see for example his comments posted to Bardóczy 2015).

## Chapter 4 – Interpretations and Clashes

This section discusses the diverging interpretations on the participatory design and the park itself, and the clashes these interpretations caused as symbolic struggles drawing on different kind of capitals. Furthermore it shows the way the participatory design project, as a social space and the park as its physical projection, being embedded in the power field of the ongoing gentrification of the Magdolna Quarter.

The struggles of the four groups are focused on two main topics: (1) the aim of a participatory design (2) the social control over the park. These topics as frontlines of clashes brought to the surface the division between the critical intellectuals and the association, and brought about circumstantial coalitions between the otherwise conflicting groups. Furthermore, they also brought to the fore how the power field of the participatory design is nested in the field of forces of gentrification functioning along a political-economic logic.

### **4.1. “What should the Teleki Square look like?”— A simple question triggering multiple answers**

By analyzing the discourses around the participatory design, it is striking that all the four groups defined along different dimensions the aims and effect of the project. The following table summarizes these dimensions (Table 1).

Local municipality	sustainability, trust toward the local municipality
Designers	local knowledge, aesthetics, sustainability, community
Critical intellectuals	empowerment, selectivity, community
Participants	local knowledge, retaking the park, community

Table 1: The dimensions the four groups highlighted in connection with the participatory design



The aims of the local municipality with the participatory design project in the Teleki Square have to be understood in the broader context of the Magdolna Quarter Programme III. MQP III was a complex regeneration programme that aimed to invest in residential, community, urban and economic functions, hoping that their impact will mutually reinforce each other (MQP III 2012). According to the programme, such a synergy could be reached if the investments are concentrated on a relatively small territory and if the elements of the programme connect to each other. In accordance with this, the Teleki Square – including the market, the park and two other connecting public spaces – stands in the core of this integrative rehabilitation programme, and its regeneration is seen as an organic continuation of the redevelopment projects of MQP II spreading out of the Mátyás square. The documents of MQP III explained:

The redevelopment of the neighbourhood will bring about numerous positive environmental changes. Therefore, it will be a better, more attractive environment to live in. As a result of the changing image of the neighbourhood, positive changes can be anticipated in the local real-estate market in a medium-term and higher value added producing enterprises will appear (MQP III 2012, 21).

To put it another way, the local municipality aims at closing the rent gap (Smith 1979) by means of changing the landscape serving as a message for private investors (Tomay 2015). In this context, the involvement of the locals can be seen as a “bourgeois civilizing mission” (Monterescu 2015), where the aim of participatory design is to decrease the risk of the investment and to sustain the quality of the newly renovated public space by means of social engineering – by changing the locals’ attitude toward their environment and inducing the emergence of local networks of relation. As György Alföldi explains:

There is a strong municipal interest that they put in 170 million Forints [in the park] and it should be sustained as long as it is possible. Plus everyone far and wide pesters

the local municipality that it's deprived, broken down, broken away and fallen out again. Therefore it works at full blast [to protect it].

For the local municipality the redevelopment project was believed to foster individual responsibility for the environment and enhance trust between the lay participants and toward the local municipality (Kondor 2009). In accordance with this, the park in Teleki square planned to be placed into “community care” (RÉV8 2012). This community care means that it will become the responsibility of the emerging community to prevent vandalism and to take care of the park with the financial and practical support of the local government.

According to the interpretation of the local government that determined the dominant discourse on the project, the participatory design project was a best practice of urban redevelopment. It is considered to be unique since the locals could realize their dreams jointly with the local government and because the local residents undertook both the challenge of protecting the park and of guarding it. In the opening ceremony, Máté Kocsis, the mayor of the district expressed that the value of the square could be measured not only in the 170 million Forints that the investment had cost but also in its power of organizing a community. He highlighted that after this renovation, the park can be a meeting point that strengthens social cohesion. Furthermore, he expressed that with the exclusion of criminals finally the park can be used by people who deserve it (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2014).

The dimension of community seems to be a common reference point in the understanding of the four groups. “The substance of the participatory design is that the locals step by step retake the space that in fact belonged to them but somehow they forgot about it, they left it and gave away to people – who we exclude now” explains a local man in his late thirties, member of the association. Similarly, a middle-aged local woman argues that “it is worth to involve the local people, since in the future those people who will mainly use the

park will find more satisfaction in occupying the park and they will protect and will take care of what they themselves imagined together”. One of the designers also affirms in an interview:

Of course the biggest advantage of this collective work is that a common plan emerged. What can be highlighted too is that a community was created, which is also important in this kind of work so that after the park is implemented it shall continue to have life and for years and decades it can remain a self-sustaining public space.

In a similar way, critical intellectuals were concerned with community. However, as opposed to the other three groups that emphasized its importance in the sustainability of the park, the critical intellectuals rather considered it as a community for its own sake, as a precondition for the collective well-being of the society. They thought not only of the community of the actual participants but a broader community of the various ethnicities in the neighbourhood that can potentially represent its interests in opposition to the local government.

Apart from the importance of community, the understanding of the four groups on participatory design is very diverse. For the Ujirany Group the community is rather a welcomed side-effect and the participatory method means the utilization of local knowledge and a break with the traditional top-down design interventions driven by capital and the authoritarian image of the designer. D. explained that she started thinking about the involvement of laymen during her master thesis. “What bothered me was that people decide about a future of an area, people who are for example concerned with the viewpoint of investors. And at the same time they change a place and often create something that does not fit there”.

For her thesis she developed an intuitive system for conceiving a site that requires “time and space for understanding the sense of a place” as she puts it. In her mind this system

included the people who used a given place so that they could also feel and help to understand these “genius loci”<sup>9</sup>. The more people go out to a place and the more interpretations come up, the better the chance to create something good. From this point of view the involvement of people in a future of a public space has various and equally valid faces, ranging from a conceptual spatial art that makes people to think, such as the wheat land in the Millenáris Park, to an actual participatory design project, such as the Teleki square.

This point of view fits in the general understanding of the field of architecture and of the architectural theorists on participatory design. The designers tend to look at the participatory design method either as a means for a good design or as a fulfilment of the general right of users to design of their own environment (Jenkins and Forsyth 2005). In both cases, the idea of power is taken into consideration in the relations of the designer and users and neither allows for the different opportunities and interests of groups of users determined by their social position. Furthermore, designers also think of participation as a potential threat to the aesthetical quality of the design and thus they aim to teach people ‘good taste’. By this they not only secure the quality of the final design appealing to the middle class but also they ensure their position in the field of architecture and their position in a broader social space. Another aspect of the approach of architects is the need for reaching a consensus, that the Ujirany Group often emphasized during the workshops and when they interpreted the project.

As opposed to this, the critical intellectuals take into consideration utterly different dimensions and try to challenge the idealistic class- and ethnic-blind picture of community design. “What I really consider as problematic that the poor residents of the square and the neighbourhood were left out from the participatory project” writes L. on an online architect forum (in a comment posted to Bardóczi 2015). He refers to the fact that the project could only address and take into consideration the interests of a quasi-homogenous and relatively

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<sup>9</sup> Genius loci is a popular word in the field of architecture, meaning the character or the spirit of a place.

better-off group of non-Roma Hungarians, and the viewpoint of the powerless Roma and homeless people could appear only through the lens of the locals being in better social positions. He also highlights that even though the JGMF worked on the involvement of a more heterogeneous group of people, their effort did not bring significant change. By continuing, L. situates the project in the context of the ongoing gentrification saying that the local government seeks to sell with this 'best-practice project' the fact that they exclude the lower class people of the neighbourhood with the help of that of the EU funds they got for their integration.

Sz. from the JGMF also assumes that the local government did not mean to involve the lower classes. For her it could be seen for example in the fact that the local government did not assign social worker beside the landscape architects despite being aware of the deep social problems of the neighbourhood. In fact Sz. and Cs. by their voluntary work tried to counteract this weakness of the project and talk personally to all residents in the square, however, due to the lack of time their attempts were not successful. "Many of them invited us in the flat and listened to us, and of course everyone had an opinion about the square. Though it's another question how many of them came to the meeting at the end, because for this, one invitation is not enough" says Sz. Owing to the presumption of the disinterestedness of the local government in the involvement of the lower classes made her feeling bad as she tried to involve the locals:

For me it is always an inconvenient situation that I am standing there and want to sucker them into something, like »come and participate, how super it will be, we will design the park, what you probably can't use, because they will nicely arrange that you can't use it«, so I don't know it's like being the devil's advocate.

Considering these, it can be said that the critical intellectuals understand the aim of the project along the dimension of 'power' and 'exclusion', as opposed to the designers whose starting point was not the people but the precise understanding of a place, as a

precondition for good design, and the local government and the locals who look at it as the reoccupation of a place by people who deserve it. For the critical intellectuals a participatory project is inherently political and its final aim should be to include the ‘have-not citizens’ and their interests in the decisions about the future of their own environment. From this point of view, the lower middle class participants, due to their better existential position and education, had better chances in the participatory design to be heard as opposed to the marginalized groups, who due to their generally weak position in the social space would have needed extra support from the side of the local government.

In general, the critical intellectuals thought that the designers did their best despite the limits of the project determined by the local government and the RÉV8. Nevertheless, some of them accused the landscape architects of not making enough effort to involve a more heterogeneous group and of not being well-prepared for the job. G. argues that “I told it to G. that »Excuse me I live here, I read quite well and generally I notice that something is placarded for me but it’s sure that I don’t remember [that I saw something] so it was not that much placarded [...] I think they wanted to get over it quickly.” Even though Sz. argues that it should have been the task of the local municipality to assign social work besides the architects, she highlights the responsibility of the designers:

I think if a designer says that he or she can conduct a participatory design project, they should know how to do [...] I know that it isn’t easy, I know it from my own experience but if I wanted to do a community design, I would look for groups who are doing similar things and perhaps they are using a method what I can use.

The reactions of the landscape architects to these critiques reflect ambiguity. Even though the representation of the wider society is an indifferent factor in their theoretical model of participatory design, they seemed to understand the critique of the intellectuals. However, they highlighted the limits of time and of their professional background in

addressing hard-to reach groups. “We are landscape architects, our job is to design, we’re not sociologist, plus we didn’t really had time, because it was arranged that I think we signed the contract in spring and we had to hand in a fat volume of concept plans, so we didn’t really have time for heralding” explains one of the architects. At the same time, they considered the intervention of L. as nuisance in the process of design, arguing that “there was this oppositionist opinion leader, L., who initially came to the workshops, and his aims were good but then he went crazy because of it and practically he was trolling<sup>10</sup> the workshops”.

As opposed to this, György Alföldi the main person of RÉV8 does not think that the equal representation has to be the substance of a community design: “It seems that we should use different methods to involve Aunt Mari, and Uncle Pista, and Earl Józsi at the same time. And the question is, whether it would be a community design? Does it represent the will of the locals? Since in this case many elements appear in the design that reflect our middle-class value system.” He explains that “participatory design appears as a panacea for people, which purpose is to solve all the social problems in the neighbourhood [for] poor people, gipsies, petit bourgeoisie, and bourgeoisie. And during a sweet compotation and during planting two trees, every problem will be solved. I don’t think so”.

He is also sceptic that a real multi-cultural community could have emerged, highlighting the dependency of the local government: “Sometimes I tell the Mayor that I would be the happiest if the ›Józsefváros is being rebuilt‹ logo would be on a poster on which he shakes hand with a Nigerian, a Roma and a Turkish shopkeeper. But then he would be shot. Both by his own people, his party and the persons.”

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<sup>10</sup> By referring to Internet Trolls he means “trolling” as disrupting an ongoing conversation with bringing in topics that are out of the context, often only for the sake of the amusement of the troll.

## **4.2. “The Association’s Burden” – Social control over the park**

While not all groups gave equal importance to the involvement of people with different social backgrounds, none of them deny an apparent consequence of the selectivity of involvement. The homogeneous lower middle class value system of the members of the association is reflected both in the design features that aim to attract people with decent behaviour and in the strict rules of using the park being set up by the association. The different understandings of the aim of the participatory design traced out the potential alliances and conflicts between the groups, and the way the association control the park led to ruptures between them.

It was a common opinion that the park should be fenced and guarded so that the quality of the park can remain. Nevertheless, the park itself was dreamt to be an inclusive place. They were the idealist designers who initiated that the park should be an open, tolerant and multi-cultural place, by referring to the history of the area and to Earl László Teleki, Hungarian statesman, after whom the square was named and who was known to its tolerant politics towards different nationalities. Connecting the concept of the design on a mental level to the historically built identity of the neighbourhood is considered by the architects as a measure of a good design and reflects the internalized and shared values of the field of architects. At the same time, the lay participants irrespective of their composition of capital supported this idea.

While the starting point of the designers was again the *genious loci* and the philosophy behind the place, their idealist concept affected the image of the emerging association. As a result, the association was dreamt to be a tolerant, socially sensitive organization that takes care of the park and seeks to teach people the way to behave. For



instance a local woman in her forties, who is currently an active member of the association explained:

It isn't the question that who and against whom but that why we associate. And another important thing is that really it should not be this oppressive system, we can't solve the problem with violence for sure. Rather with love, rather with guide. And if such a value system lays behind [the association] where we are able to accept that a scruffy homeless people has a right to come in the park and probably he is dirty and scabby but we don't look at them with gimlet eyes. Then to my opinion a change can happen.

From the very beginning it was a common view of the four groups that some kind of a social order is a necessary precondition both for the management of the park. It was also a shared view that this social order – which in this context has to be understood as decreasing the rate of crimes and social conflicts – has to be maintained by the people of the neighbourhood. To put it another way, the White Man's Burden<sup>11</sup> turned to be the burden of the association. For example the Sz., one of the critical intellectuals, argued on one of the workshops that for preventing crime “it is not enough to have a guard, somehow it has to be organized that in every two hours or in the night two people go around [in the park], there are existing methods for this”. She added that currently they were working on fostering this social responsibility with Cs. By talking to people of the residential buildings in the square they tried to motivate them that it would be their task to teach social norms – like not to litter – to others. In a similar manner, one of the designers argued that “I think it is in fact this community consciousness that there will be this association and the more and more people join to it [...] and perhaps it can be educative in a way that people warn others not to throw away the cigarette stub on the ground”.

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<sup>11</sup> The White Man's Burden refers to a debated poem of Rudyard Kipling, about the Philippine-American war, that suggests that it is the moral obligation of the white man to civilize and rule the non-white people of the world. It is also a point of reference in the critical development studies.

Nevertheless, the social order involved the distinction between decent homeless people and criminals, between the lovely noise of a playground and the loud group of “Romanian Gipsies” around the corner, between “us” and “them”. As M., woman in her early sixties who is the owner of the nearby restaurant and who later became the leader of the association said on the workshop, “I don’t care what their skin colour is and where did they come from. Are they decent fellows or not?”. This categorization, however, seems to replicate the “vision of division” (Bourdieu 1989) the local municipality aimed to impose on the people of the neighbourhood, which appears both in the official communication of the mayor’s office and the local municipal council’s meetings. This dominant ideology is reflected in argument of Máté Kocsis, the mayor of the 8<sup>th</sup> district, in a municipal council’s meeting dealing with the criminalization of homelessness, saying that “the homelessness is not crime but the deviance is” (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2011a).

With the implementation of the design created in the workshops, this categorization was getting imprinted in the physical space and materialized in certain design features of the park that aimed to attract the decent fellows, and exclude homeless people, group of youths and marginalized Roma people (Balazs and Zein 2017). The locals thought of functions that appeal to people with similar habitus they possess. It can be seen in the fence around the park and park furniture that was designed to serve only individuals or companies of two or three people, a tiny playground for toddlers and the lack of features serving children older than 8 and teenagers. In accordance with the request of the locals, the plans of MQP III determined a separate park them, the so-called FiDo Park, in the other side of the Népszínház Street that is equipped with a caged area for doing sports, so that the Teleki Square Community Park could remain a place for quiet activities. Furthermore, the design features aiming to attract decent fellows are supported by the guard and strict rules and regulations set up by the association and accepted by the local municipality that determined the way people can use the park: it is

not allowed to eat, drink alcohol, smoke and enter after sunset to the park and it is even forbidden to ride bicycle and play football on the grass since it would fray it.

The idea that the selectivity of the lay participants determined the functionality of the park for people with different social background seems to be supported by empirical evidence being collected during the fieldwork. A casual conversation with a grandma in the FiDo Park revealed that she founded problematic the lack of features for children in the Teleki Square and the lack of features for toddlers in FiDo. “If we come to FiDo the 7-year-old is fine but what can the 2-year-old do? Kick the gravel? Then if we go to Teleki the 7-year-old is bored”. Similarly, the tiny playground seems to be dysfunctional for lower class big families preferring to go to the playground collectively, three generations and friends together. While having a conversation with each other, the adults could take care of the toddlers playing in the sand box. Even though the short single bench were not designed for their use of space, having no other options for toddlers in the close neighbourhood they do come to Teleki Square. This exclusion the design features and the rules implies does not target explicitly the lower class Roma people of the neighbourhood, and the association tend to refuse these critiques of the critical intellectuals. Nevertheless, since the local Roma people are more likely to have lower class background and to possess different habitus as the association, and they tend to have tight social bonds within families and communities, it can be assumed that they bear the loss of the renovation of the park.

The design features targeting people with decent behaviour were supported by the landscape architects as well, being in accordance with their middle class and architectural habitus. The strict rules and regulations, however, brought to the fore the different lifestyles of the members of the association and the designers. Being asked about his opinion regarding the rules and regulations, one of the designers, G. told me:

It bothered me, because we landscape architects imagine it as in the West that you sit outside with your friends with a blanket, a bottle of Beaujolait<sup>12</sup>, baguette and cheese and then the locals said that it is forbidden to smoke, how fucked up is that and I argued for a long time with the locals but the problem is that they are right and here not the sitting-on-checked-blanket-and-drink-Beaujolait kind of people come but three vagrant old men are sitting on a bench and the PET bottles are flying.

At the same time, the distinctions of the association forecasting their social control over the park seemed to be unacceptable for the critical intellectuals. Furthermore, as time passed, the intolerant attitude of some members of the association toward migrants, homeless people and other minority groups had become apparent, which led to the ruptures between them and the other groups. As Cs. remembers back the lay participants split to two groups, the group of Sz. and L. drawing attention to the interests of the minority groups and the marginalized, and the other group who argued that the mayor did not give the money to support criminal groups and who were characterized by open racism. S., the vice chairman of the association for a long time tried to mediate between these groups, however, his attempts remained unsuccessful. He stayed, while the critical intellectuals left.

Meanwhile Cs. also had to make a decision about the future of his own community organizing project. Being informed about the intolerant attitude of the association, his mentors from the GLC proposed him two options: either he could continue his work on the Teleki Square and step by step change the level of tolerance of the association or he starts over his project somewhere else. Finally, he gave up the project and moved to Berlin.

The idealist landscape architects seemed to co-opt the argument of the lower middle-class, suggesting that they were the legitimate users of the park from the architectural point of view. As G. says:

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<sup>12</sup> Beaujolait is a type of French wine named after the wine producing region of Province Beaujolait.

For the landscape architects the public space is for everyone [...] but it has to be acknowledged that if homeless people are lying here then there will be no change and the mothers and the pensioners won't come here again and then the park begin again going down on the slope. [...] It is a persistent debate that according to the local leftist intellectuals this is an exclusive park, but again for whom we design a park... because in one space they don't function together.

Nevertheless, the exclusive attitude of the association led to the dissolution of the circumstantial coalition between the landscape architects and the association. In the closing picnic of the workshops, which was imagined to be an inclusive event for everyone in the neighbourhood by the landscape architects, they began to realize that the association is not the tolerant and inclusive organization they initiated. As G. remembers:

And then these seedy people came that »Excuse me can I get a drink, a balloon or just a cake for my son?«, of course everyone was invited. But the problem was that the locals were like »Who are you? What did you bring for the picnic? Go away«. And then in the next meeting we discussed that the association should be open and inclusive. These people should be invited and integrated in the work. But the problem is that most people in the association who I left there are not like this, but in this the politics is also guilty.

While most of the critical intellectuals left the scene without any serious conflicts and they kept in touch with them and from time to time tried to educate them about tolerance, G., one of the critical intellectuals left the association with a heated conflict. She remembers:

In the end of February I had a heated argument. S. wasn't at home I remember and also G. wasn't there but all the super right-wing racist brutes who show up in this neighbourhood were, and they seriously attacked me... and I [attacked] back... so it became this screaming fight. [...] The leader of the association, poor M. tried to mediate, though I should have told her then that between *them* and *me* the mediation is impossible. And it became evident that many people would leave this small association [...] and they didn't really hide that if there would be such voices like me

then they have no place here. And then I told to M. that »You know what? It's easier if I leave«.

Even though she left the association, similar to L. she made attempts to change the dominant discourse of the participatory design project that the local municipality, the field of architecture, the association and the media suggested. There was an event in a leftist community pub about participatory design, where the designers and the association were invited to talk about the project as best practice. As G. remembers:

V. [the organizer of the event] introduced me that even though I was the member of the association but practically I would interpret the project a bit differently. In such a way that G. invited me for a beer to ask me what my aims were with this. [...] And to what extent I will represent this approach. [...] I told him that »Look, G. Please yourself, you can do a roadshow in the world with this project« and he told me that he knew that they would do a roadshow but I should have understood it that they were getting one by one the similar projects.

It can be said that the aim of the local government for protecting the investment and its “vision of division” (Bourdieu 1989) have been co-opted both by the association and the landscape architects as well. Even though the association does not agree with the politics of the governing party – that is with the party of the mayor and the majority of the local municipal council – and in their weekly meetings they tend to criticize it, they try to maintain good relationship with the local government. They do so with the aim of gaining better position in the power field of the neighbourhood. Their attempts are in accordance with the interests of the local government attempting to gain local support for their politics, and thus the association has become one of the few non-governmental organizations, which is accepted as legitimate by them. This circumstantial coalition of the otherwise conflicting groups can be traced in the attendance of the vice mayor in the events of the association and

the informal relations of the Vice Mayor and the chair of the association, finding expression in gestures like greeting each other by kissing on the cheek.

The landscape architects on the one hand find it problematic the tendency that the local government began to use participatory design as a political tool. On the other hand as being dependent from the local municipalities as their long-term clients, they cannot give up the circumstantial coalition with them. In an interview they admit that “the landscape architecture has always been the means of the politics” (Somlyódi 2015).

# Conclusion

On a late weekday afternoon in summer a toddler is playing in the sandbox, in the tiny playground of Teleki Square Community Park. The mother is sitting on the edge of the sandbox, taking care of her. While she is helping her to prepare mud-pies, she is talking to someone through the massive fence around the park. It is the father of the baby. “Come in” invites him the woman. “I can’t” says the man showing the beer can in his hand and nodding his head toward the guard. “He won’t say anything” the woman answers. Finally, the man slips into the park by hiding the beer with his arms.

This scene sheds light on the role the newly renovated park plays in the social transformation of the neighbourhood. By means of physical design elements and the rules and regulations being set up by the association, the project made change in the habitus of users of the park. Before the renovation, drinking beer in the park would have been an ordinary event. However, as the renovation occurred, consuming alcohol inside the fenced area has become a forbidden activity. The father of the baby, presumably due to his experience of being warned by the guard or a member of the association, adjusted his spatial dispositions to the changed circumstances in a creative way, not subjecting fully himself to the objective structural constraints. At the same time, this event also highlights a spatial aspect of habitus, by making difference between the acceptable behaviour inside and outside the park.

On a neighbourhood level, the appearance of spaces permitting different kinds of behaviour can be also seen as the transformation of “spatial habitus” (Chamber 2015) being understood as the spatial understanding of a community, structured historically and could be changed by training or education. The renovation of the Teleki Square transformed not only the ways of using the park but also it changed the ways of using the other public and semi-



public spaces. Being excluded from the Teleki Square, the homeless people, the youth gangs, the drug-users appeared in other less controlled squares and in the shadow of the doorways.

In this thesis I argued for a relational frame of analysis for looking at the participatory design project of the Teleki Square. On the one hand, it enabled one to understand the situational and episodic nature of participatory design (Brownill and Parker 2010) connecting to the post-socialist experience of urban transformation. On the other hand, looking at the renovation of the park as a field of forces seems to challenge the oversimplified picture of the local municipality-led gentrification of the area and its dichotomy of local municipality versus locals. By shedding light on the different interpretations of the project, the relational approach could provide a polychrome understanding of the transformation of the neighbourhood as opposed to the black-and-white picture of the top-down gentrification. The relational approach enabled one to grasp the fluidity of social relations in the neighbourhood marked by emerging and disappearing circumstantial coalitions. The understanding of the circumstantial coalitions between the association, the local government and the landscape architects showed a new face of the gentrification of the neighbourhood, in which it becomes the association's burden to civilize their neighbours while looking forward to the arrival of the gentrifiers.

Therefore the precondition of the transformative nature of the park was the transformation of the habitus of the members of the association. Being involved in the design process they started to consider the public space as their own place where they have the authority to determine the expected patterns of behaviour fitting to their own world view. Going around the park they warn people to use the park in a way they consider as normal – for example, where and where not to play with ball. They decided to protect with barricade tape the theatre stage made out of wood in the park so that children cannot climb on it. Their

dominant position in the control over the space is legitimized by the local government as well. For instance in the yearly public forum when being asked about the rule that forbid playing football on the grass, the Mayor handed the microphone to the representative of the association and asked her to explain the reasons behind the rules.

The principles the local municipality and the association impose on the people of the neighbourhood is nothing less but the “civilizing mission of gentrification” (Monterescu 2015), characterized by law, order and cleanness. As the redevelopment of landscape springs out of the cores like the Teleki square, one by one the public spaces are getting civilized and colonized. This urban transformation leads not only to the improvement of the quality of life of “people who deserve it” but also to the change of perceiving the neighbourhood as a place safe to live, consume and play in (Harvey 1989). The outcome of struggles being imprinted in the landscape serves as a message for the locals and the investors (Tomay 2009).

At the same time, the findings of this thesis allow us to infer the long term social effects of the urban transformation. The renovation of the public spaces will continue in the direction of Népszínház Street. The neighbourhood will witness an inflow of capital, the occupation of the empty or migrant-owned stores, and the appearance of tourists that will lead only the change of atmosphere of neighbourhood but also to the increase of costs of living in the area. Under these circumstances, the lower-middle class people of the association, now looking forward to the arrival of the gentrifiers, in some years will find themselves to be displaced by higher income groups having a desire for the tarnished charm of the area and inner-city housing.

The analysis of the interpretations from relational point of view embed the interpretations and clashes of the participatory design project in a broader political and economic field of relations marked by the entrepreneurial approach of city government, the

politics of othering and the nationalist ideology of the governing party (Isin 2002). For underlying this argument, an example can be the way the local government uses the image of the association for its own political goals. On the second anniversary of the renovated park, the Vice Mayor in his speech referred to the referendum about the migrants:

This celebration is not only about the anniversary of a public space renewal but also about a strengthened community. It has utmost importance to protect our values, the local identity. It is also one of the reasons why it is important to take side on October 2. The stake is high, since the referendum is about the security of Józsefváros and the future of our children (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2016).

As Bourdieu (1989) says, the power to make the implicit social divisions explicit is political power par excellence.

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