

PARKS AS SYMBOLS OF POLITICAL REGIMES’ APPROACHES TO THE ENVIRONMENT: A COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL STUDY OF BUDAPEST VÁROSLIGET AND BERLIN TIERGARTEN

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

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Budapest, Hungary
2017



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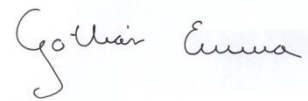
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gothár Emma". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue circular stamp behind it.

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of different political systems' approaches to the environment is essential, since they influence decisions about environmental issues. Urban public parks are indicators of the environment and hence, the approaches of diverse political regimes to these parks indicate their approaches to the environment in wider sense. The comparative historical study of Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten based on qualitative methods and secondary research has examined how these parks symbolize different political regimes' approaches to the environment, including environmental and broader political values in different periods of history under diverse political systems. Based on the Városliget example, it has been explored, how the approach of the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime to the environment differs from other political systems' approaches, and what its main characteristics are. Diverse environmental, political, social, cultural and historical values and functions of the Városliget and the Tiergarten have been interlinked over the parks' histories with multifaceted significances. Whereas during its history the Tiergarten's ecological values have been predominantly seen as privileged assets compared to any other values attached to the park, the Városliget has been several times overloaded by extra, often environmentally damaging functions. The Városliget's reconstruction to a Museum Quarter initiated by the current Hungarian government would make the final step towards the permanent urbanization of Europe's oldest public park. Based on the Városliget example, the Hungarian illiberal democracy has ecologically controversial priorities and its approach to the park is characterized by the domination of representative functions and symbolic power demonstration counterplotted with environmental values.

Keywords: public park, history, environment, political regimes, Budapest Városliget, Berlin Tiergarten, illiberal democracy, Museum Quarter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank to my supervisor Professor Dr Alexios Antypas of the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy at the Central European University for his support and valuable comments throughout my thesis research.

I offer my sincerest gratitude to Professor Dr Alan Watt of the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy at the Central European University who has encouraged me with his insightful suggestions and remarks. His guidance helped me to provide a clear structure and a logical flow of arguments for my thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr Borbála Faragó of the Center for Academic Writing at the Central European University and Dr Alan Watt for their valuable and useful guidance in academic writing.

I am grateful to all the participants of the Thesis Presentation Colloquium, to both professors and students of the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy, who gave me helpful comments and asked illuminating questions.

A special gratitude goes to the Central European University for supporting me with exceptional academic background and facilities over my studies at the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy, and to the Central European University Budapest Foundation for helping and providing the funding for my research.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Anikó B. Nagy for her invaluable support by discussing my thesis topic, for her constructive comments, enormous tolerance and warm encouragement. Without her persistent help this thesis would not have materialized.

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Broad Background.....	1
1.2	Research Questions.....	5
1.3	Aims and Objectives.....	5
1.3.1	Aims.....	5
1.3.2	Objectives	6
1.4	Methods and Thesis Outline	6
2	Literature Review	9
2.1	Parks as Symbols	9
2.1.1	The Nexus of Environment and Culture.....	10
2.1.2	Public Parks as Public Spheres	12
2.1.3	Relation to political systems.....	15
2.1.4	Reflection of Liberal and Democratic Values	17
2.2	History and Present of City Parks.....	20
2.2.1	Budapest Városliget.....	21
2.2.2	Berlin Tiergarten.....	23
3	Methods	27
4	History of Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten in the Context of Political Systems ..	31
4.1	Budapest Városliget.....	31
4.1.1	Establishment.....	31
4.1.2	Golden Age.....	33
4.1.3	Exhibitions in the Városliget	39

4.1.4	Turn of the Century and the World Wars	45
4.1.5	Stalinist Dictatorship, Socialist Era and Regime Change.....	48
4.2	Berlin Tiergarten.....	52
4.2.1	Establishment.....	52
4.2.2	Golden Age.....	54
4.2.3	Park in the Weimar Republic.....	57
4.2.4	The Nazi Regime: Reconstruction, Damage and Restoration	58
4.2.5	West Berlin and the Regime Change.....	64
4.3	Historical Comparison	68
5	Today's Approaches and Future Perspectives	72
5.1	The Case of Illiberalism.....	72
5.1.1	Illiberal Democracy in Hungary	72
5.1.2	The Liget Project	74
5.2	Whereas in Berlin	88
5.3	Future Perspectives	89
6	Conclusion	92
7	Reference List	99
8	Source of Figures	104

List of Figures

Figure 1: Wintertime amusement at Városliget Lake	3
Figure 2: Ice-skating in Tiergarten, ca. 1820	4
Figure 3: De Vieux: Fashion in Városliget	7
Figure 4: Women's fashion in Tiergarten, late 18 th century	8
Figure 5: Women playing ice hockey in Városliget	11
Figure 6: Ice-skating in Városliget	14
Figure 7: Ice-skating in Városliget	22
Figure 8: Tiergarten near to the Brandenburg Gate; Drawing of F.A. Calau, 1818	23
Figure 9: Amusement in Tiergarten at wintertime, ca. 1850	24
Figure 10: Map of Városliget, 1836.....	33
Figure 11: Omnibus to Városliget.....	34
Figure 12: Városliget Vurstli, early 20 th century	35
Figure 13: Beketow Circus in Városliget, 1904.....	37
Figure 14: Decrease of Városliget's territory as a consequence of the new Pest-Vác railway line, 1845-46	38
Figure 15: Decrease of Városliget's park area due to the construction of the Budapest Zoo, 1864-66.....	38
Figure 16: View of the National Fair, 1885	40
Figure 17: View of the Millennium Exhibition, 1896	41
Figure 18: Vajdahunyad Castle, early 20 th century.....	44
Figure 19: Millennium Monument covered by red carpet in 1919	46
Figure 20: Városliget after the Siege of Budapest	47
Figure 21: Decrease of the Városliget's territory as a consequence of the construction of Dózsa György Street and Felvonulási Square, 1950s	48
Figure 22: Budapest International Fair, 1950s.....	49
Figure 23: Budapest Industrial Fair, 1965	50
Figure 24: Map of Tiergarten, 1765.....	52
Figure 25: Plan of Tiergarten by Lenné, 1837	54
Figure 26: 'Zelten', around 1840; Drawing of E. Lütke.....	55

Figure 27: Siegestsäule at the Königsplatz; Drawing of E. Weiß, 1875.....	56
Figure 28: Siegesallee with statues of historical figures, 1903.....	57
Figure 29: Riding in Tiergarten, 1933	58
Figure 30: Plan of World Capital Germania	60
Figure 31: Berlin Zoo at home during World War II, 1943.....	61
Figure 32: Great Star after the Battle of Berlin.....	62
Figure 33: Crop cultivation in Tiergarten near to Siegestsäule, 1945	63
Figure 34: Mayor Ernst Reuter while planting the first tree near to the Great Star, 1949.....	64
Figure 35: Map of Tiergarten, 1988.....	67
Figure 36: Balloon ascent in Városliget at the time of the Millennium Exhibition.....	68
Figure 37: Agricultural works in Tiergarten at the Great Star, 1948.....	69
Figure 38: Balloon ascent in Tiergarten; Daniel Chodowiecki (1726-1801)	71
Figure 39: View of the planned Liget Project, 2017.....	74
Figure 40: Original plan of the Liget Project, 2013.....	76
Figure 41: View of the planned Biodom.....	82
Figure 42: View of the House of Hungarian Music; misleading scales	84
Figure 43: Postcard of the old Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport.....	87
Figure 44: Tiergarten today with horticultural monument	89
Figure 45: Tiergarten after World War II with the Amazon Statue.....	93
Figure 47: Ice-skating in Városliget	97
Cover image: Nebbien's plan for the Városliget's main entrance	

1 Introduction

1.1 Broad Background

Environmental issues and environmental related challenges have a highlighted role in today's political discourse. However, different political regimes (hereafter sometimes political systems) might have different approaches to the environment. To analyse the characteristics of a political system's approaches to the environment is vital, since they influence the given political regime's attitude towards the environment and therefore its decisions about it.

Recent constructions and construction plans related to many of Budapest's green areas initiated by the current Hungarian government¹ moot some scepticism regarding the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime's protective approach to the environment. One of the biggest operations, which are aiming to reframe city greens, is the reconstruction plan of the Budapest City Park (hereafter Városliget²). It has been forced by the present Hungarian regime regardless of controversies both in the professional field and in the society. The Városliget is one of the first public parks of its kind in the world to be designed and established, with its long history playing a symbolic role in Hungarian collective identities. The maintenance of the park has been truly neglected during the last decades. However, the recent reconstruction plan for the Városliget (called Liget Project) intends to justify the transformation of the world's first public park to a vast museum quarter, arguing with the necessity of park renovation.

As Kaspar (2012) points out, city parks are symbolizing nature in urban context. As small-scale symbols of nature they ensure the every-day linkage of urban citizens with the environment. Based on this linkages, the present study argues, that city parks as urban green

¹ E.g. József Nádor Square, Orczy Square, Római River Side, Népliget

² *Hungarian*

areas are indicators of the natural environment. However, unlike the term environment with its broad range of meanings, have urban parks many different functions and roles in a city's life. Parks are on one hand, indicators of the environment, on the other hand are man-made constructs with quite a few of cultural aspects attached to them. Furthermore, when it comes to public parks, they are public spheres, performing multiple missions in society while reflecting its values. Parks as public spheres contribute to the formatting of public opinion, parallel to Jürgen Habermas' (1989) argumentation. According to him, there is a strong correlation between the role of public spheres, public opinion and political systems. Moreover, since usually the state authority operates the urban public parks, they very often bear the sign of past and present political decisions. Therefore, urban public parks could be appropriate indicators of the relationship of political regimes and their approaches to the environment. Consequently, the examination of city parks is significant, not only in the field of natural sciences, but also from the perspective of social sciences (Kaspar 2012). As Lukovic (2009) emphasizes, they provide an area of interpretation for political, social, economic and cultural nexus.

To examine, whether and if, how the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime's approach to the environment differs from other political systems' approaches, this study focuses on the case of Városliget through its history in the context of different political systems and provides a comparison with the City Park of Berlin, Germany (hereafter Tiergarten³). Although history does not repeat itself, it might be possible to learn from it. Both the history of Városliget and Tiergarten are well-documented and well-studied topics. However, according to my knowledge, there has not yet been conducted any research comparing the two parks' history in the context of different political systems. This study argues, that the contextualization of

³ *German*

the case of Városliget historically and with a comparison, and the examination of the history with a special focus, might reveal new perspectives for a contemporary challenge.



Figure 1: Wintertime amusement at Városliget Lake

Both the Városliget and the Tiergarten are public parks with landscape gardens. It might not seem to have a huge significance for the first glance from a social scientists' perspective, but a closer examination of these ideas indicates, that public parks and landscape gardens are the symbols of liberal philosophy, social coherence and the enlightened way of thinking (Szilágyi 2011). The original idea of public parks at the time of their establishment was, to provide a public place as the symbol of freedom, which is open for every social stratum (Jámbor 2015). It offers a public space for free speech, for tolerant and integrative democratic participation (Kaspar 2012). Following these original ideas of the establishment of public parks and landscape gardens, it can be testified that public parks are also symbols of liberal and democratic values. If so, the question can be raised, whether the decline of these values in an

illiberal or non-democratic system has an impact on the parks and in a broader sense on the environment as well or it does not.

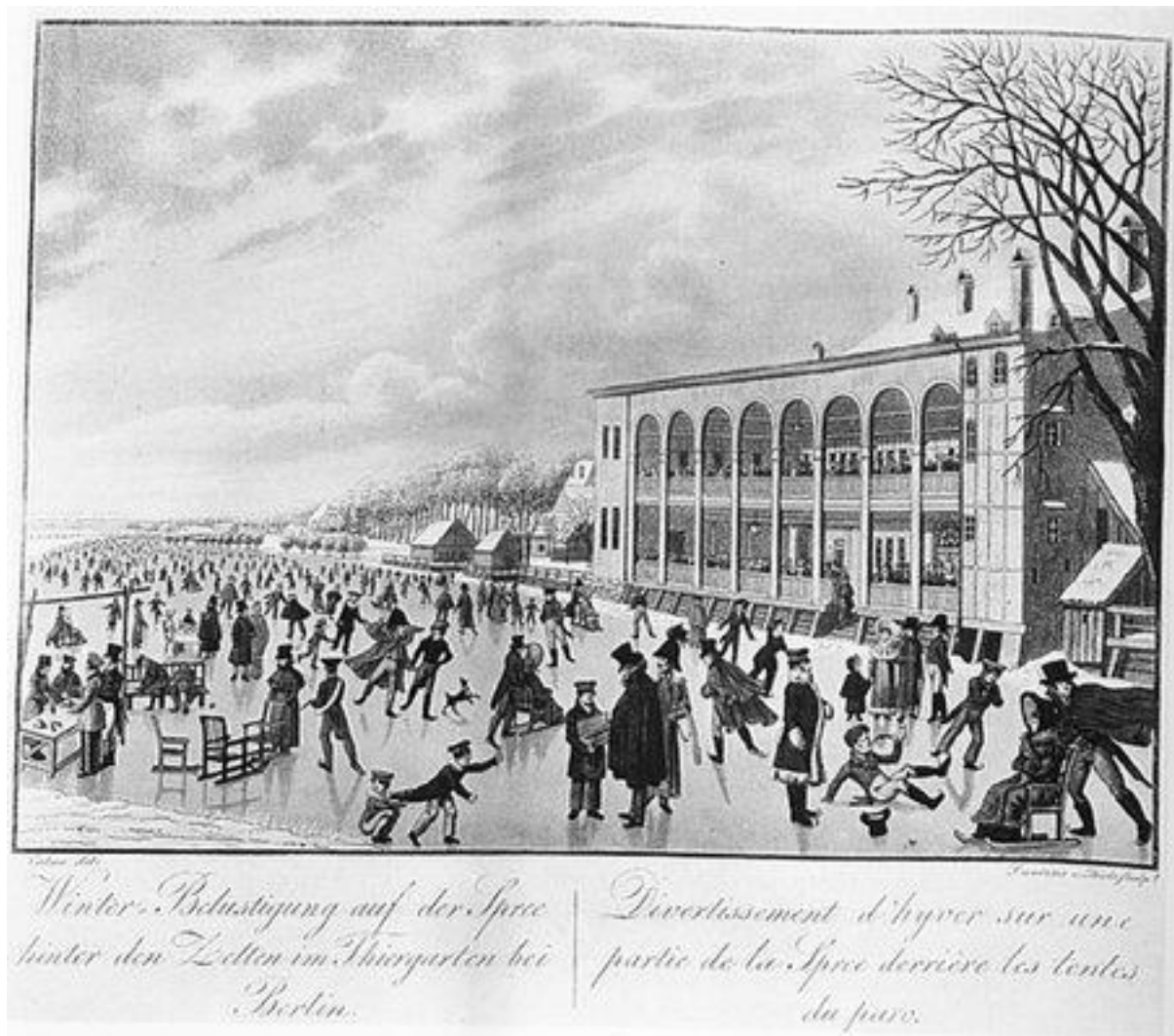


Figure 2: Ice-skating in Tiergarten, ca. 1820

Even though it would be improper to draw extensive conclusions from just one instance, the Hungarian case offers the possibility, that other, recently emerging illiberal regimes' approaches to the environment and to environmental issues may be similarly adverse. If so, the accumulation of these policies as a consequence of the spread of illiberal democracies (e.g. Poland, Russia, Turkey) could substantially influence the future discourse on the environment. Although the analysis of this question requires further research, exposing the

Hungarian illiberal democratic regime's approaches to the environment through the examples of parks might provide an initial step to the further analyses of this challenge.

1.2 Research Questions

How do Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten symbolize different political regimes' approaches to the environment, including different environmental and broader political values in different periods of their history under diverse political regimes?

How does the approach of the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime to the environment differ from other political systems' approaches, and what are the main characteristics of the current Hungarian approach based on the example of Városliget?

1.3 Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 Aims

The aim of this thesis is to examine how Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten symbolize different political regimes' approaches to the environment, including different environmental and broader political values in different periods of their history under diverse political regimes. It also intends to explore, based on the Városliget example, how the approach of the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime to the environment differs from other political systems' approaches, and what the main characteristics of the current Hungarian approach are.

1.3.2 Objectives

1. To examine the general possibility of using urban public parks as indicators of the relationship of political regimes and their approaches to the environment, and as symbols of environmental, social, cultural and broader political values
2. To examine the approaches of political regimes to the two selected urban public parks through the investigation of the parks' history in the context of different political systems
3. To introduce the issue of recent reconstruction plans of the Városliget initiated by the current Hungarian government and to explore how the approaches of the Hungarian illiberal system to the Városliget as public park and indicator of the environment differ from other political systems' approaches, in comparison with previous political systems of Budapest and Berlin
4. To develop propositions and researchable questions related to the main characteristics of the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime's approaches to the environment that are suggested by the case study of Városliget

1.4 Methods and Thesis Outline

The comparative historical study of parks as symbols of political regimes' approaches to the environment was conducted with qualitative methods, based on secondary research. Selected academic literature was examined to reveal the characteristics of the diverse approaches, through the analysis of the patterns of different political regimes' actions to the Városliget and the Tiergarten. A detailed exposition about the selection of methodology and the used methods is provided in the 'Methods' chapter of the thesis.



Figure 3: De Vieux: Fashion in Városliget

Following the Introduction, the study gives an overview about the academic literature in the ‘Literature Review’ to critically review what knowledge and ideas have been established in the field and how the research topic of the study contributes to the existing literature. The theoretical framework of the research has also been described in the ‘Literature Review’ chapter. The third chapter of the thesis focuses on the selected methods of the research. The main body of the thesis starts with the chapter entitled ‘History of Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten in the Context of Political Systems’. The first part of this chapter introduces the history of Városliget, whereas the second section focuses on the history of Tiergarten, followed by a ‘Historical Comparison’ of the two selected parks. The penultimate chapter concentrates on ‘Today’s Approaches and Future Perspectives’. The first section of this chapter presents ‘The Case of Illiberalism’ in Hungary and its reconstruction plans related to the Városliget. The following section provides a short overview about the current stance of the Tiergarten, whereas the last section gives a brief summary about the future perspectives of the two selected parks. Prior to the ‘Reference List’ the ‘Conclusion’ chapter answers the

research questions raised at the beginning of the thesis research, and summarizes the main findings of the thesis, prior to the concluding remarks.



Figure 4: Women's fashion in Tiergarten, late 18th century

2 Literature Review

This chapter of the thesis contextualizes the research problem in the field of existing academic literature and outlines, how this research contributes to knowledge in the area. First, it introduces the diverse symbols, values and functions attached to city parks in general. The first sub-section provides an overview about the nexus of environment and culture related to urban parks. It is followed by the demonstration of the theory of public parks and their roles as public spheres. After presenting the concept of the connection between urban public parks and political systems the next sub-section focuses on the relation of public parks to liberal and democratic values along with a brief outline about related thoughts analysing the linkage between environment and democracy. The second main section of the Literature Review concentrates on the past and present of city parks with primary focus on literature discussing the cases of Városliget and Tiergarten. Finally, in the last paragraph the main findings of the chapter are summarized.

2.1 Parks as Symbols

City parks, as green areas in urban environment have many different functions, from environmental through entertaining to educational and hence, a broad range of symbols and values is attached to them. As pointed out in the previous section of the thesis, on one hand, parks in urban context symbolize nature (Kaspar 2012). On the other hand, they have not only environmental and ecological importance, but social and psychological values as well (Kaspar 2012). Furthermore, old city parks, such as the Városliget and the Tiergarten, have a substantial historical significance. They do not only bear the trace and signs of the cities' history, but they also have a particular importance in cities' and peoples' lives symbolizing

the common past and present, just as beloved historic buildings. These functions and symbols of urban parks are in strong linkages and are not separable from each other. The academic literature focusing on city parks is following this multifunctional role of urban greens. They have been researched both from the perspectives of natural and social sciences (Kaspar 2012). However, neither can the literature of natural sciences deal with urban parks without mentioning its social values and usages, nor can the research of social sciences focus on parks without touching upon their environmental importance. Since the aim of this study is to examine political regimes' approaches, the analysis concentrates more on academic literature of social sciences. However, the changes in parks' infrastructure initiated by diverse political systems have ecological impacts as well. Therefore, some findings of the research of natural sciences are also introduced in this thesis.

2.1.1 The Nexus of Environment and Culture

City parks as small-scale emblems of nature ensure the every-day linkage of urban citizens with the natural environment. Therefore, the approaches to parks indicate the approaches to the environment. However, how a political system and a society manage their natural environment also bears their cultural values and aspects. Since parks from their formations on are the creation of humans and for the most part need human intervention to their survival, they symbolize these cultural values considerably. Accordingly, when it comes to political systems' approaches to public parks, they reflect upon these environmental, social, political and cultural values. As Lukovic (2009) points out, gardens as impaled and cultivated nature are one of the first cultural creations of humanity. He emphasizes, that the differentiation between gardens and parks is not clear, because parks are often gardens as well. Today, different landscape styles; garden and park constructions have become a distinct culture, a

separate cultural area (Lukovic 2009). In her research Kaspar (2012) focuses on the usage and perceptions related to urban green areas and gives a well-founded overview about the discussion on urban parks as created natural landscapes as opposed to cultural and art products. She comes to the conclusion that, since city parks are pervaded both by nature and culture, the characterization of parks solely with one of these two poles is incomprehensive. Consequently, she refers to urban parks as ‘hybrid existences’ (based on Zierhofer 2003, 211).

The cultural aspects of city parks are prominently meaningful in the mirror of recent projects related to the Városliget, because locating a museum quarter in the Városliget contrapositions the two complementary ideas of city parks. It exercises cultural policy in an urban park so that it sets against culture (art) to nature (environment). Moreover, Kaspar (2012) also says,



that based on interviews people usually assign culture or art products to urban areas and create an opposition to non-urban areas, whereas parks are usually assigned to non-city areas. Although she does not examine the Hungarian case, the trend she identifies might preview, that the creation of a museum quarter in the Városliget may transform the park to an urban area, based on peoples’ perceptions.

Figure 5: Women playing ice hockey in Városliget

2.1.2 Public Parks as Public Spheres

The first public parks origin from Europe, from the time of the modern era (Sisa 2014). They were established at around the turn of the 18th-19th century, parallel to the new trends of urbanization and the development of civil society and bourgeois (Sisa 2014). Cities became more and more densely populated and built-in, which induced an ever-growing need for urban green areas (Sisa 2014). Csepely-Knorr (2016) also points out, that the establishment of public parks was not simply a result of changing styles of the city landscape architecture, but a response for new social challenges emerged at the late 18th-early 19th century.

It was Hirschfeld (1779), who in his book *'Theorie der Gartenkunst'* first conceived the need for 'public gardens' (*'Volksgarten'*⁴) in increasing urban environments. He imagined parks, being open for everyone, for a big number of visitors for free (Jámbor 2015). His work set the stage for the evolution of public parks and provided the theoretical background for the development of both Városliget and Tiergarten (Csepely-Knorr 2016). As Csepely-Knorr (2016) summarizes, according to Hirschfeld the knowledge about nature and environment benefits the improvement of individual morality. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of the relationship of urban areas with the environment and stated, that every city has a need of public parks (Csepely-Knorr 2016). As Csepely-Knorr (2016) points out, according to Hirschfeld's theory, the importance of public parks is based on the following: they promote moral and aesthetic education; provide recreational and amusement opportunities; and play an important role in peoples' health at the time of the industrial revolution. He assigned a high significance to the educational role of public parks and thought, that public parks should be open for every stratum of the society, so that these different parts of society could meet and learn from each other (Csepely-Knorr 2016). As he emphasized, in order to broaden the knowledge of people visiting the parks, public parks should present special plants and also art

⁴ German

products, in two categories: art products, which increase historical knowledge and promote patriotism, such as paintings or memorials presenting the country's history and heroes; cultural products, which improve the aesthetic sense, such as music pavilions, paintings or statues of poets, presenting national and environmental values (Csepely-Knorr 2016).

Doubling back to the environmental-cultural nexus related to parks, the original idea of public parks promoted by Hirschfeld mirrors the linkages between environment and culture, complementing it with educational and patriotic functions and values. Bartels (1982) writing about the evolution of Tiergarten refers to the linkage of environment and culture and to Hirschfeld's theory. As she formulates (1982, 171),

“These two notions are obviously related in that the urban park, as a place of beauty where the purity of nature combines with the nobility of art, was meant to inspire the public and contribute to its moral and spiritual education. According to Hirschfeld, the 'Volksgarten' should refresh the urban population with its charming scenes and sensations and should, at the same time, promote virtuous behaviour by drawing people away from the costly and unrefined attractions of the city.”

Hirschfeld established not only the theory of public parks, but also the foundations of 'patriotic horticulture' (Csepely-Knorr 2016). It is not surprising, since the first public parks and the theory around them were established at the time of industrialization, urbanization, the development of bourgeois and national notions. The establishment of public parks was a response to new social challenges rising in the end of the 18th century and mirrored the social, cultural, political and environmental values of the society. Although different historical times and political systems impressed their own values upon these parks over their history, today, they still have the potential and importance as symbolizing environmental, social, political and cultural values. Accordingly, they are significant loci for the expression and also the interpretation of these values. Especially if the given political regime – such as the current

Hungarian one – considers of high importance on symbolic actions, public parks become the stages of their expressions.

Focusing on the area of usages and perceptions of urban green areas Kaspar (2012) points out the relevance of interpreting of the term ‘public’, particularly from the aspect of the planning, construction, perception and usage of city parks. It has both a formal legal and a social symbolic definition, which however are quite overlapping (Kaspar 2012). As common denominator Kaspar (2012, 44) identifies — quoting Klauser (2006, 137) and Wucherpfennig (2010, 48) — public as “general access to and/or common usage of a thing, a person, a dialogue or a room”⁵. However, as she adverts to the main difference between public parks and other public spheres she names two main characteristics of urban public parks which



might differ from other public spheres: multifunctionality and significance of public parks related to the quality of stay. Analysing the role of urban green areas Kaspar (2012) identifies three main functions: ecological (regulation of urban climate), economic (investment in urban green areas resulting in the upgrading of whole neighbourhoods), social (recreation, place of cultural diversity).

Figure 6: Ice-skating in Városliget

⁵ “Als kleinster gemeinsamer Nenner der unzähligen Definitionen des Begriffs Öffentlichkeit können die «Kriterien des allgemeinen Zugangs und/oder der allgemeinen Nutzung einer Sache, einer Person, eines Gesprächs oder auch eines Raumes» (Klauser 2006: 137) bezeichnet werden (s. auch Wucherpfennig 2010: 48).” (Kaspar 2012, 44); German

2.1.3 Relation to political systems

As the previous sub-section introduced, public parks are public spheres. Hirschfeld (1779), the founder of the theory of public parks argues, that they promote peoples' education and individual development. Parallel to this original idea regarding public parks Habermas (1989) states that public spheres contribute to the formatting of public opinion. Although in his work he does not refer specifically to urban parks and approaches to the environment, according to him there is a strong correlation between the role of public spheres, public opinion and political systems. Adopting his argumentation, the relationship between public parks and political regimes is justified.

By discussing France's urban policy, Dikec (2007) examines the relationship between urban space and politics in general. He argues, that space is the main object of urban politics, since it is a symbol of national common culture and identity and also the manner space has been imagined and manipulated over time by policy. He deems space not as given, but as produced through different ways of articulation. His considerations back up the ones introduced before, conceptualizing parks as symbols of national culture and identity. Furthermore, the administration of public parks as urban green areas and public spheres as integral part of urban policy. As Dikec (2007, 5) argues, each "policy discourse and programme is guided by particular ways of imagining space". However, he also emphasizes the importance of broader economic context as influential factor of managing public space. He states (2007, 5):

"I see urban policy as a particular regime of representation that consolidates a certain spatial order through descriptive names, spatial designations, categorisations, definitions, mappings and statistics. In this sense, it is a place-making practice that specially defines areas to be treated, associates problems with them, generates a certain discourse, and proposes solutions accordingly. I do not, therefore, see urban policy as a merely administrative and technical issue, and argue against such an approach that it is tightly linked to other issues, ranging from immigration politics to economic restructuring. Instead, I adopt an eclectic approach that carries some of the features of political

economy, social constructionist and governmentality approaches to urban policy.”

In accordance with Dikec (2007), this thesis also argues, that urban policy and hence political decisions related to urban green areas are mediums of expressing political representation. Accordingly, the political decisions related to city parks have not only administrative and technical characteristics. There are other influential factors besides policy, such as economic background, social constructivism and cultural aspects. However, different political systems with diverse policy discourse and program might have different approaches to urban greens. As Dikec (2007, 7) points out, “different ways of imagining space have different political implications”.

Habermas (1989) is focusing on the growth and decline of public sphere in relation of political, social, cultural and philosophical developments. Kaspar (2012), while referring to Habermas’ argumentation about the importance of political dimension of public spheres, adverts to the case of urban green areas. She points out, that there is a trend in which urban green areas might lose their importance. She lists some of the reasons of this phenomenon: increasing traffic, which takes up place from green areas and as a consequence of increasing emission damages their functioning; socio-spatial segregation and self-exclusion of elite communities. However, disagreeing with her, these trends might, on the reverse, have the potential to increase the significance of city parks. Yet, she is right when stating, that the planning and construction of public spheres and city greens define the legitimized users of the parks and create powerful structures of public spaces, reflecting the actual social power relations.

2.1.4 Reflection of Liberal and Democratic Values

The rise of public spheres emerged parallel with the rise of liberalism in the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century (Habermas 1989), parallel with the establishment of the first public parks in Europe. The English landscape garden movement became the dominant garden design style of the first public parks, symbolizing liberal philosophy and the enlightened way of thinking (Szilágyi 2011). The aim of this gardening style was to liberate nature from the restrictive and inflexible architectural forms of the baroque style. As Szilágyi (2011) points out, the culture of ideal landscapes reflects the notions of the French Revolutions and the Enlightenment. Humphry Repton landscape designer of English gardens considered the English landscape garden style as the second most important export product of England after parliamentarianism, because it expressed a society without social barriers (Lukovic 2009). As Lukovic (2009) emphasizes, the history of public parks is in strong correlation with the development of civil society and the increasing leisure time requirements of the society at the time of industrialization in Europe. Bartels (1982, 171-72) quotes J. B. Jackson by contextualizing the role of public parks and their meaning and value in America:

“To be sure the park designed for public enjoyment was of European origin, but it was certainly appropriate to the United States, for it was the democratic equivalent of the royal gardens and parks of Europe - amenities which the enfranchised Europeans were inheriting, but which a free and democratic society like the United States could create for itself.”

As Jámor (2015) points out, the original idea of public parks was to provide a public place as the symbol of freedom, which is open for every social stratum. Kaspar (2012, 22) enhances the role of public parks providing the base for “tolerant, integrative and democratic participation processes” and, for “socially just and equitable share of public spheres”⁶ promoting sustainable social development. Talking about urban green areas she also

⁶ “[...] städtischen Grünräumen [...] bieten eine gute Ausgangslage für tolerante, integrative und demokratische Partizipationsprozesse, für eine sozial gerechte Teilhabe an der Öffentlichkeit” (Kaspar 2012, 22); German

highlights, that public spheres are spheres of freedom of expression spheres of freedom to shape public opinion. These all are basic values in a liberal and democratic society. However, referring to the 20th century Habermas (1989) reviews commercialization and consumerization as symptoms having negative effects on public spheres. Also Harper (2006, 21-22) evaluates the “rise of the consumer society as an obstacle to the development of a democratic public sphere”.

In accordance with this short overview this study argues, that public parks are symbols of liberal and democratic values. Therefore, on one hand, different political systems might have different approaches to the parks depending on the political values they represent. On the other hand, new trends, challenges and changes in the society are also contributing factors, which might influence the tradition, present or perspectives of public parks. As Megyeri (2015) said, our parks embodied our political systems. According to him, it is possible only in a peaceful, reliable and predictable political, economic and social environment to grow big, leafy trees. As this thesis suggests, the example of the Liget Project shows, that the current Hungarian illiberal democratic regime does not fulfil these above mentioned criterions. It might indicate, that the decline of liberal and democratic values in an illiberal or non-democratic system has an impact not just on the parks, but in a broader sense also on a remodelled approach to the environment.

After the regime change and the environmental ruinations of the socialist era in Europe it was common belief, that democracy had positive concerns towards the environment (Midlarsky 1998). Accessing the relation of democracy and the environment Midlarsky (1998) analyses different environmental issues and cases, such as deforestation, soil erosion, carbon-dioxide emission and the case of protected areas. He comes to the conclusion, that there is no uniform relationship between democracy and the environment; consequently the remedial effect of

democracy on the environment needs to be re-examined. He rightly states, that other circumstances, such as economic development, agricultural density and European location are contributing factors as well. According to him, the connection of democracy and environment might differ in different environmental areas. He founds clearly positive correlation between democracy and the environment merely in case of protected areas. His findings related to protected areas are especially relevant from the aspect of the two selected public parks of this thesis and the political regimes' approaches to them, because the Tiergarten is a legally protected 'historical park', whereas the Városliget is not.

Additionally, city parks have a nature conservation role as well (Swanwick *et al.* 2003) and, as Shutkin (2000) emphasizes, there is an essential affinity between democracy and environmental conservation. He states that because of this vital relatedness democracy and the environment rise and fall together. Complementing Shutkin's argumentation, Dryzek (2013, 117) points out that countries, which favour democratic pragmatism, have made the most significant accomplishments in terms of environmental conservation and pollution control. He concludes that there is a positive correlation between democracy and the improvement of these fields of environmental protection. Although these theorists (Midlarsky 1998; Shutkin 2000; Dryzek 2013) do not focus on parks as symbols of political systems' approaches to the environment, they discuss the linkage between environment and democracy and therefore provide a relevant theoretical framework for this research. The academic literature about the relation of environment and democracy is very extensive and the review and consideration of it would exceed the frame of this master's thesis. Yet, a comparative historical analysis of Városliget and Tiergarten might reveal a trend in the approaches of different political regimes to the environment and show how the approaches of the Hungarian illiberal democracy to the Városliget differs from other political system's approaches.

2.2 History and Present of City Parks

Public parks have many different symbols, functions and values attached to them. Hence, the creation and design of such parks have been difficult tasks, requiring high expertise. Public parks on one hand have to provide varied landscapes, a range of facilities and functions, be able to receive a large number of visitors and, on the other hand, should remain the symbols of environment preserving space and nature (Conway 1996). As Conway (1996, 83-84) rightly points out, they are parts of the society and reflect its values, and they are significant elements of the urban environment socially, physically, psychologically and historically. In line with her, Lukovic (2009) argues, that the history of a city can be presented through the development of its urban greens, since they provide an area of interpretation for political, social, economic and cultural nexus. Referring to the historic significance of public parks and its importance in the present Conway (1996, 83-84) said:

“Public parks are of enormous historic significance, as significant as private parks and gardens of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They are not museums, for they have always responded to change and the historic layers evident in them add to their significance and interest. We need to ensure that they continue to respond to change, while still retaining their historical integrity. Above all we need to involve people in their park and its history, for it is part of their history, and we need to involve children, for parks can be wonderful places and it is they who will be looking after them in the future.”

She states, that public parks “are not museums” (Conway 1996, 83-84). Although she refers to museums in a different context, in a way it reflects to the relations of environment and culture in case of public parks and gives an interesting perspective for the planned Museum Quarter in the Városliget.

Parks play a highly significant role in cities’ life both historically and at the present. There is a broad range of academic literature introducing the history and/or present of urban public parks, inclusive of the well-studied, well-documented areas of the history and present of both

Városliget and Tiergarten. However, there seems to be a gap related to the links between the history and the present of these parks, especially in the context of political systems' approaches. A detailed introduction of the literature focusing on the two selected urban public parks will be presented mostly in the chapters concentrating on the history and present of these parks. The next two sub-sections of the Literature Review chapter aims to provide merely an overview about the academic literature dealing with Városliget and Tiergarten.

2.2.1 Budapest Városliget

As a consequence of recent reconstruction plans related to the Városliget the discussion of its history has come into prominence again. Studies evaluating the Liget Project have been referring not only to the ecological importance of the Városliget, but also to the cultural and historical values attached to them.

The first public park in Europe was the English Garden in Munich (Englischer Garten in German). It was established in 1789 and remained the biggest public park of the world up to this day (Jámbor 2015). Yet, its promotion was initiated by the Bavarian monarch at his own land and not by the city of Munich (Jámbor 2015). By contrast,

“Városliget was the first city park in the world designed through an international tender and assigned by the city, implemented in an urban area by the promotion of the citizens.” (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015, 446)

Since the international tender for the design of the Városliget was invited in 1813 (Leéb 2014), this year can be designated as the year of the establishment of Városliget as public park. As Jámbor (2015) emphasizes, the Városliget has had a prominent role in the European garden culture and urban history. However, whereas the English Garden has been renovated several times and still has its original size and garden structure, the territory of the Városliget

has been repeatedly diminished over its history (Ráday 2016a). Moreover, the park has been several times overwhelmed by extra, environmentally damaging functions (Ráday 2016a). Magyar (2008) points out, that the increasing scope of functions was a consequence of the strengthening national and civil society consciousness in the 19th century Austria-Hungary. In her dissertation she argues, that the political and state representation were among the most important functions of the analysed public parks of Austria-Hungary (and so the Városliget) in contrast to Western European examples, where the health aspects were more important compared to the public parks of Austria-Hungary. According to her, the relation of a city or country to its parks reflected the self-expression of that city or country. She states, that the symbolic occupation of parks with buildings, memorials or events was a way of this



Figure 7: Ice-skating in Városliget

representation.

Although the focus of her analysis is on the time of Austrian-Hungary, her findings might show valid perspectives also for today.

2.2.2 Berlin Tiergarten

Compared to the Városliget the history of the Tiergarten goes further back in the past. It is difficult to determine the exact origin of the park, but its name first appeared at the beginning of the 16th century (Bartels 1982). At that time the Tiergarten was a baronial hunting ground, which was later in the 1840s fundamentally redesigned as public garden with landscape elements by gardener and landscape architect Peter Joseph Lenné (Pahl 2006). It was a historian, Professor Georg Wilhelm von Raumer who first wrote about the history of Tiergarten in 1840 (Verein für die Geschichte Berlins 2017).

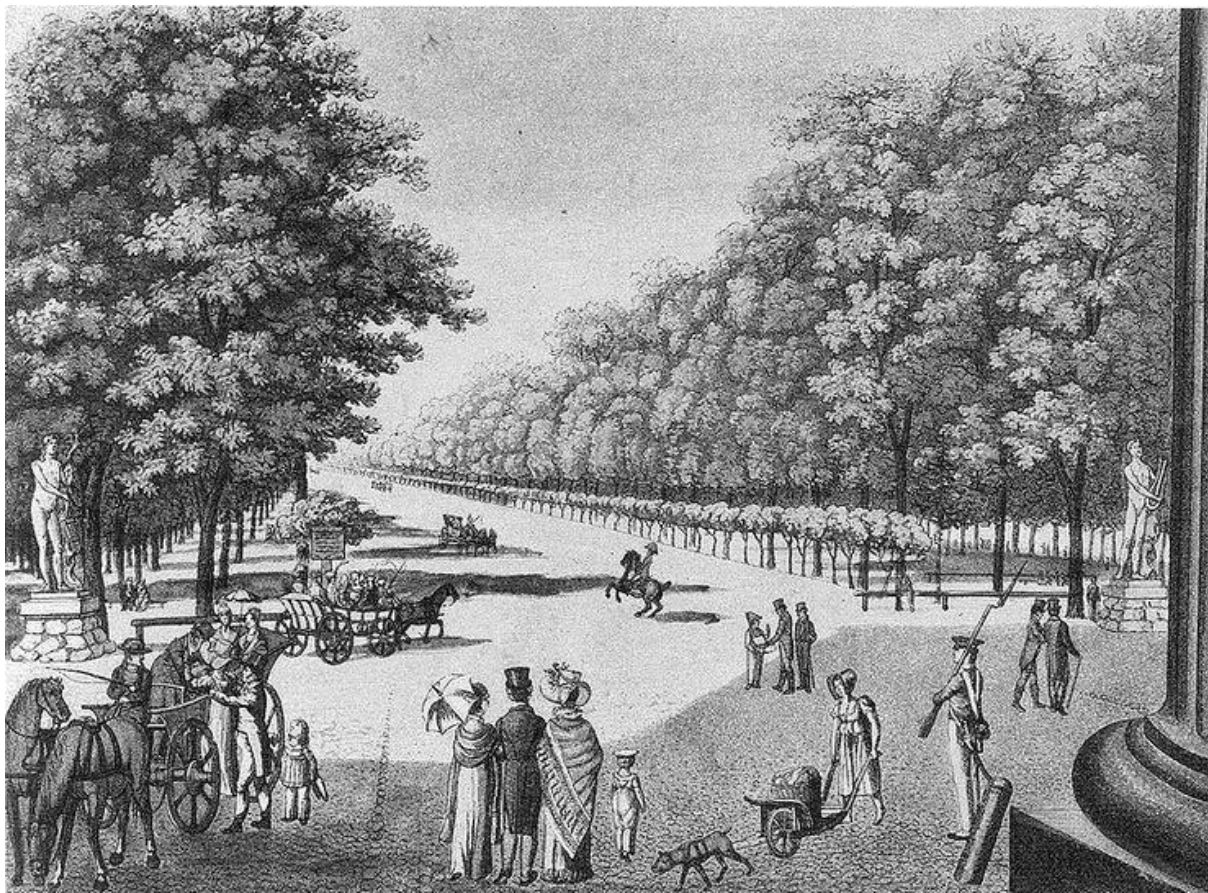


Figure 8: Tiergarten near to the Brandenburg Gate; Drawing of F.A. Calau, 1818

At the time of the creation of Tiergarten as public park, Lenné's aim was to embellish both society and nature (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne

(1985) in their book from the '80s introduce the history and present of the Tiergarten. They argue, that the Tiergarten has been a symbol of the creation of national identity of all societal strata and in this sense also a symbol of the process of democratisation. This argumentation is like Bartels (1982, 171) who said:

“[...] the Tiergarten formed part of an overall scheme, which aimed not only at meeting the functional requirements of the expanding city, but also at enhancing the cultural value of Berlin. The urban park, as part of the 'Gesamtkunstwerk' [synthesis of many individual pieces of art], contributed to the aesthetic image of the city, and, as a 'Volksgarten', it improved the quality of life for its citizens.”

According to Bartels (1982) Lenné considered Tiergarten as a public institution, a national monument with memorials to Prussia's glorious past. Brogi's book (2009) is focusing on the importance of the park from the aspects of cultural history. She argues, that the Tiergarten is a 'place of history'. According to her, it is a significant space of national identity and common cultural memory and has a substantial socio-political meaning. She concludes, that Tiergarten is a park, which not only experienced the history of Berlin, but also constituted it. She identifies a nexus between culture, environment, landscape architecture and political functions related to the park.



Figure 9: Amusement in Tiergarten at wintertime, ca. 1850

From the aspect of the ecological significance of the park the climatic importance of the green area in the middle of the German capital has been highlighted (Senatsverwaltung für Umwelt, Verkehr und Klimaschutz 2017b). Underlining the role of the public park in past, present and future Berlin Amir *et al.* (2015) emphasize its unique character of transgressing heritage, ecology, urbanism and humanism, a place which bears the signs of the history of Berlin. According to Amir *et al.* (2015, 8) the “true heritage [of Tiergarten] may lie in the consideration and representation of all times at once”. They believe, that the Tiergarten might be the most public space in Berlin and argue, that the Tiergarten could provide a model for future environments particularly in the context of increasing urbanization.

As this short overview shows, the Tiergarten has similar functions, attached values and representative symbols as the Városliget. Bartels (1982) highlights, that the study of Berlin’s Tiergarten is especially representative of other European urban parks’ history. Although she does not mention Városliget as an example for other European parks, this thesis argues, that the comparison of the two parks’ history and present is reasonable and might provide new perspectives in the academic literature.

In conclusion, the aim of this chapter was on one hand, to locate the research problem in the context of existing academic literature and to outline the contributions of this study to knowledge in the research area. On the other hand, the theoretical framework of this thesis has also been introduced in the ‘Literature Review’. It demonstrated the theory of public parks and how diverse symbols; functions and values are attached to these public spaces. Furthermore, it introduced the historical and present importance of urban public parks with particular focus on Városliget and Tiergarten. As pointed out before, they are significant elements of the urban environment environmentally, socially, culturally, historically, and in the context of political systems. Urban public parks reflect the challenges of the society and

represent political dimensions as well. This thesis argues, that there is a correlation between political system's approaches to urban public parks and to the environment. The analysis of the history and present of Városliget and Tiergarten and the comparison of these two, selected parks from the aspects of political systems' approaches to the environment promise to show new perspectives for the existing literature. Furthermore, it might fill a gap in it by linking the history and present of the two parks and by examining how the approaches of the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime to the environment differ from other political systems' approaches, based on the examples of the past and present of Városliget and Tiergarten.

3 Methods

The comparative historical analysis of parks as symbols of political systems' approaches to the environment was conducted with qualitative methods, based on secondary research. Selected academic literature was examined to expose the characteristics of the diverse approaches, through the analysis of the patterns of different political regimes' actions to the Városliget and the Tiergarten.

The historical longitudinal study provides the main research design of the thesis. The analysis of the selected parks in the context of political systems focused on the most important stages of the parks' history from their establishment as public parks until recently. The reason of focusing on the parks' history and not on the history of political systems and the changes of political regimes is, that not all different political systems had plans related to the selected public parks. Furthermore, the history of parks does not exactly follow, stop or change parallel to the history of political systems. Since the aim of this thesis is, however, not to reconstruct the history of Városliget and Tiergarten, but to contextualize recent challenges, this study does not seek to provide a full analysis of the history of the two selected parks. Instead, the thesis intends to highlight the main changes in the parks, such as: substantial increase and/or decrease of green areas; significant changes of the parks' infrastructure, design or cultural heritage; symbolic political decisions related to the parks or events organized in their territories.

The thesis compares the history and present of Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten from their establishment as public parks until the early summer of 2017. One of the reasons of choosing comparative layout for the analysis was, that a comparative study is a well-trusted way to look at existing data from a new perspective. Although the data used in the examination of the research problem was not original but secondary, the comparative analysis

could, on one hand, show originality to the study and on the other hand contribute to knowledge in the research area in innovative ways. The comparative historical study of Városliget and Tiergarten is creative in the sense that it could make connections that previously not had been made between already existing facts and could provide new prospects for the further study of the research problem.

Since the thesis aims, *inter alia*, to explore, based on the Városliget example, how the approaches of the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime to the environment differ from other political systems' approaches, and what the main characteristics of the current Hungarian approach are, it was the Budapest City Park to which a comparative example had to be selected. The decision to compare Városliget with Tiergarten was made based on several reasons:

- Both selected parks are public parks and landscape gardens in European capitals, but whereas the Városliget is in Eastern Europe, the Tiergarten is in the Western part of the continent, which made a comparison from cultural and political aspects particularly interesting.
- There have been several similar environmental, social, cultural and political symbols, functions and values attached to the selected parks.
- There have been connections and cultural interactions between Budapest and Berlin from the establishment of the public parks on (interplay between the cities also related to urban development and the significance of city green areas⁷), which might have been changing since then, but there still is an essential cultural drift between the two cities.

⁷ According to Magyar (2013) the population number of Budapest tripled between 1875 and 1900 and compared to other European cities only Berlin had similar developments. Csepely-Knorr (216) also emphasizes the Berliner impact on Budapest related to city architecture and the importance of urban green areas.

- Both Városliget and Tiergarten have had high importance in the urban environment as greens areas, historically and in the present as well.
- Both parks have a long history with almost parallel stages, but significantly different present and diverse political context, which might expose new perspectives related to the discourse about the illiberal democratic regime, compared to other political systems.

Qualitative methods based on secondary research were used to analyse the research problem. Even though a quantitative study might have shown e.g. geographical changes, the changes of green area or the fluctuating number of visitors, it would not have revealed the symbolic meanings, functions, values and political decisions related to the selected parks. Moreover, this study aims to expose main trends, patterns and so the approaches related to Városliget and Tiergarten, which required broader historical overview. The approaches of different political systems to parks have been changing over time, depending on which functions and values of the Városliget and Tiergarten have been prioritized by particular political systems. Therefore, the prioritization of the parks' particular values and functions characterize the approaches of different political systems to their public parks and to the environment as well. Since both the history and present of the two parks are well-researched and well-documented topics, it indicated that the information needed to the overview about the past and present of the parks is, although in different context, but available. One could argue that interviews would have been adequate to the analysis of the research problem. Indeed, interviews might have revealed attitudes towards the present situation of the parks, but probably they might have provided less information about long-term trends and discourses compared to secondary sources. This thesis argues, that the parks' history have a high significance from the aspect of the research questions and therefore focuses not only on the present, but also on the bygone times of the parks. Hence, due to the limitations of time and stresses on a long-term study the

research of this thesis concentrated merely on secondary sources provided by existing academic literature (except reviewing of a few original maps and maquettes of the parks during the research period).

For the analysis of the theoretical and historical parts of the thesis the academic literature was selected mostly in historical and thematic order, based on the writings of main researchers of the topics. However, due to the recentness of the research problem, particularly in the case of the Liget Project, the study of the present stance of the parks and of the approaches to them is based mostly on academic papers, newspaper articles and online resources, with the exception of a few recently published books.

As probably every study, also this thesis has limitations. As a historical longitudinal study it does not cover all aspects of the parks' history, which could involve the possibility of incompleteness. Similarly, a comparative historical analysis is associated with the difficulty of comparing across systems and times. Furthermore, despite of the ambition to be exhaustive, the selection of secondary literature could be biased or incomplete. Finally, even though it was possible to reveal trends from the historical context, the prospects to draw broad conclusions from the study of one or two cases are limited.

4 History of Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten in the Context of Political Systems

This chapter concentrates on the history of Városliget, followed by the history of Tiergarten in the context of different political systems. It focuses on the most significant changes related to the parks and the approaches to them, without seeking to present every single stages of the past events related to the two introduced parks. The last concluding section of the chapter gives an overview about the most important trends and patterns exposed through the historical analyses.

4.1 Budapest Városliget

4.1.1 Establishment

During the Medieval the area of today's Városliget was a royal hunting field, which later became abandoned (Szilágyi 2011) and remained a neglected forest at the edge of the city of Pest⁸ until the 1750s. The systematic afforestation of the area was a command of Maria Theresa⁹ in 1751 (Radó 1985). Later in 1752 the forest became the property of the Municipality of Pest (Lovas 2013a) and the city continued the plantation mostly with acacias and mulberry trees (Szilágyi 2011). The idea to establish a public park in the territory of the 'New City Forest' (*Újvároserdő*¹⁰), as it was called at that time, came from János Boráros city magistrate in 1794 (Csepely-Knorr 2016). At the end of the 18th century the city rented out the territory to Archbishop Joseph Batthyány, who started the transformation of the forest to a park by the drainage of the swamps and by constructing roads and planting new trees

⁸ Buda, Pest and Óbuda were unified to one city (Budapest) in 1873.

⁹ Ruler of the Habsburg Monarchy and sovereign of Hungary (1740-1780)

¹⁰ *Hungarian*

(Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). However, in 1805, after the death of the Archbishop the Municipality of Pest regained the ownership of the territory (Jámbor 2015). In 1809 the newly reformed Royal Beautifying Commission (*Királyi Szépítő Bizottság*¹¹) under the leadership of Joseph Palatine initiated the development of an urban public park (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). The Commission invited an international tender for the design of the first public park of the world in 1813, which was won by Heinrich Nebbien (Jámbor 2015). Nebbien laid out a plan for the formation of Városliget as a public park in landscape garden style, an art product, symbolizing environmental, social, political and cultural values (Csepely-Knorr 2016). By the design of the park he followed the theory of Hirschfeld (1779) and created a public park, which was appropriate for recreation, education, sports and provided space for national memorials (Csepely-Knorr 2016). Although, because of limitedness of available financial sources for the development of the park, not everything he planned came to realization, the new public park opened its doors in 1832 and the Városliget became a national symbol (Leéb 2014). Since the creation of the park was quite expensive, Nebbien encouraged the wealthy and famous families of Budapest to make their names endured and honourable for the next generations by donating trees to the park (Radó 1985). The first plane trees planted in the 1820s came from Joseph Palatine's land in Alcsút and referring to their age were called 'Napoleonic trees' (Radó 1985). However, the buildings planned by Nebbien, such as the representative classicistic entrance or the open-air theatre, have never been built (Csepely-Knorr 2016). Yet, the Városliget, at that time officially called '*Stadtwäldchen*'¹², became the first public park of the world, which was designed through an international tender, assigned and financed by the city and implemented in an urban area for the use of the urban population (Ráday 2016a).

¹¹ *Hungarian*

¹² *German* (official language in Hungary until 1867)

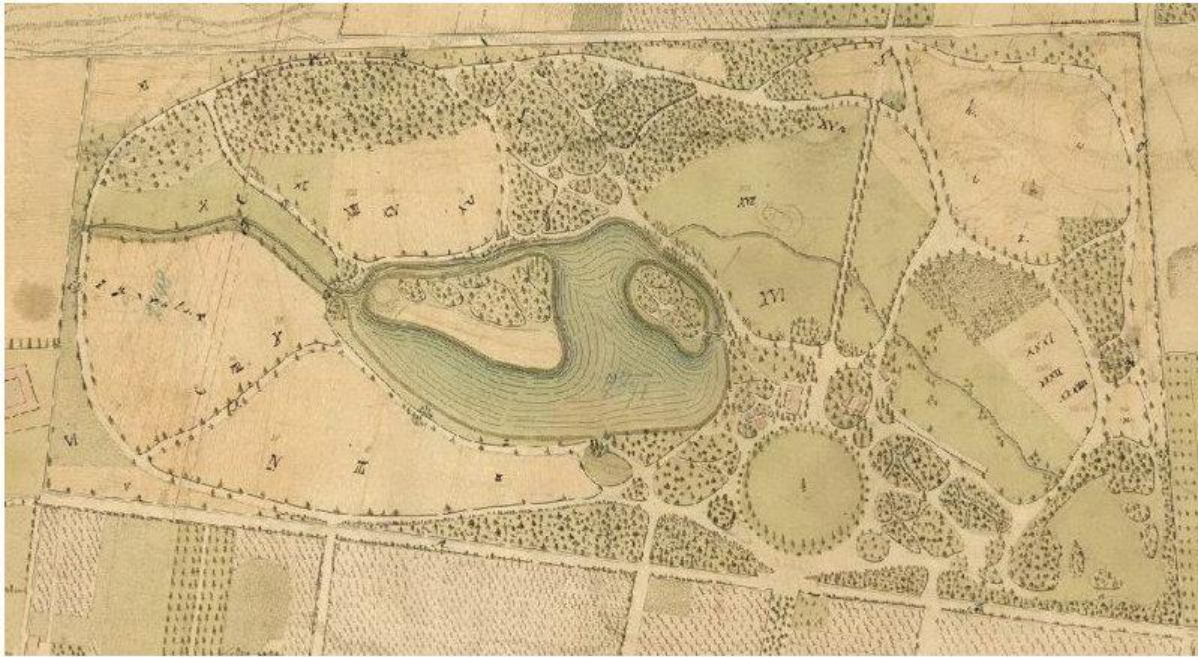


Figure 10: Map of Városliget, 1836

4.1.2 Golden Age

To define an exact period as ‘golden age’ in case of Városliget is quite difficult. According to Jámbor (2015), the Városliget had its most glorious years in the 1840-50s. However, about 10 years after its establishment in the mid-1840s the territory of the park has been already diminished as a consequence of the construction of a new railway line, and the reduction of the park’s green areas has been continued recurrently during its history (Jámbor 2015). The early decreases of the urban green are particularly controversial, since in the 19th century the city of Pest was significantly smaller than today, the Városliget was on the outer part of the city and the neighbouring territories were still not built in (Jámbor 2015). Hence, there would have been enough space for the planned and accomplished constructions elsewhere (Jámbor 2015). Despite of the changes in the size of the green areas, the Városliget retained its original functions of a public park in accordance with Nebbien’s concept until the end of the

19th century and was a substantial element in the life and development of Budapest's bourgeois. Therefore, this thesis considers the period from the establishment of the Városliget until the organization of the first exhibition in the park (National Fair¹³ in 1885) as 'golden age'. Accordingly, the following chapter gives an overview about the history and about the functions of the park during these years.



Figure 11: Omnibus to Városliget

At the beginning of the public park's history the main mentor and advocate of Városliget was Joseph Palatine, who once said: "Trees

are not benefitting in cities."¹⁴ (Sisa 2014) For the first glance this famous sentence of him might seem confusing. However, saying it he referred to his conviction, that green areas should be developed in the outer parts of cities and/or in closed units (Magyar 2013). Therefore, he supported the evolution of Városliget with high commitment (Magyar 2013). Yet, after his death in 1847 the Royal Beautifying Commission lost its significance and the maintenance of the park became neglected (Leéb 2014). Ten years after the death of the Palatine the Commission ceased its function and from the 1860s it became the task of the Municipality of Pest again to take care of the Városliget (Jámbor 2015). At that time the Városliget was particularly beloved and popular by the citizens of Budapest and it became a

¹³ Országos Kiállítás; Hungarian

¹⁴ „Fák nem valók a városba.” (Sisa 2014); Hungarian

priority of the city to provide recreational and entertainment opportunities to a broad range of social strata (Magyar 2013). The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and the unification of Pest Buda and Óbuda also gave impetus for the development of city architecture, of civil society and hence, also for the significance of the Városliget (Sisa 2014). Since the Városliget was one of the most important public spaces of Budapest at that time, it received more financial support, than all other parks of Budapest together (Magyar 2013).



Figure 12: Városliget Vurstli, early 20th century

From the beginning of the 1800s there were grifters in the Városliget, who later established the so-called ‘*Vurstli*’¹⁵ (amusement park) (Granasztói 2013b). In 1866 the Budapest Zoo was opened, in 1877 the artesian bath (the pioneer of the Széchenyi Bath), and in 1889 the Circus (Lovas 2013a). The ice of the Lake Városliget had been used for ice-skating in

winters from the establishment of the park on, but from the 1860s the ice-skating life of Városliget became more and more important and organized, particularly after the opening of the Ice-skating Hall, planned by architect Ödön Lechner in 1880 (Majkó 2013b). With the founding of these new institutions the Városliget grew into a conglomerate with environmental, cultural and entertainment functions (Granasztói 2013b). Consequently, the number of visitors steadily increased, inducing the development of the transportation

¹⁵ Hungarian

infrastructure from the city centre to the park. From the 1830s there had been an omnibus line to the Városliget, but as the Városliget became more popular, so grew the traffic (Lovas 2013c). Magyar (2013) points out, that this process is one of the good examples for the correlation of city and park. In case of Városliget about half of the city traffic drifted to Városliget at the end of the 1950s, which exceeded 70% in the 1870s (Magyar 2013). In order to create a transition from the city to the park not only physically, but also visually, the entrance of the park was embellished with the Gloriette, planned by Miklós Ybl in 1878 (Csepely-Knorr 2016). The expansion of the traffic affected not only the transportation to the park, but also the one within the park, so that the carriageways in the Városliget had to be broadened during the late 1870s (Magyar 2013). By that time the Városliget lost its characteristic as a park of the outer part of Pest and became part of the inner city, since both the territory of the urban environment and the significance of the green area increased (Magyar 2013). By the 1880s the Városliget developed into an urban public park with illuminated walking paths and fountains (Leéb 2014). However, this improvement also induced a territorial separation of the social strata visiting the Városliget (Granasztói 2013a). Whereas the Circus or the Ice-skating Hall provided entertainment opportunities mostly for the city aristocracy, the Vurstli was more popular within the lower social strata of Budapest (Granasztói 2013a). Even though the different social strata of Budapest visited mostly different institutions of the park, the Városliget still preserved its function of a public park, being open for every strata of the society, so that they could meet and learn from each other, in accordance with Hirschfeld's theory. Also the first regulations related to the park's usage (such as the ban of flower cull or bathing in the Városliget Lake) were introduced in the 1880s as a consequence of the high attendance and occasional vandalism (Lovas 2013a). The evolution of the Városliget required a substantial personal, administrative

and institutional background, so the first state-owned Horticultural Institute of Budapest was established in 1894, supporting gardening education (Sisa 2014).



Figure 13: Beketow Circus in Városliget, 1904

However, despite of all of these developments in the Városliget, the territory of the green area was repeatedly diminished, already during the first century of the park's history. The first modification of the Városliget's territory occurred in 1845-46, when 29 hectares were cut off from the park in order to build the Pest-Vác railway line (Jámbor 2015). Although, there were alternative plans for the trace of the railway and although, according to the critiques, fewer places would have been enough, the railway line was built up (Jámbor 2015). The second extenuation of the Városliget's territory was the establishment of the Budapest Zoo in 1864-66, occupying 30.8 hectares from the original size of the public park, 24% of its original territory (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). The decision to build the Zoo in the Városliget was

arguable, since the territory next to the park was still not built in in the 1860s and hence, it could have been provided an appropriate location for the Zoo (Jámbor 2015). Both decisions were made during the time when Hungary was part of the Austrian Empire.



Figure 14: Decrease of Városliget's territory as a consequence of the new Pest-Vác railway line, 1845-46

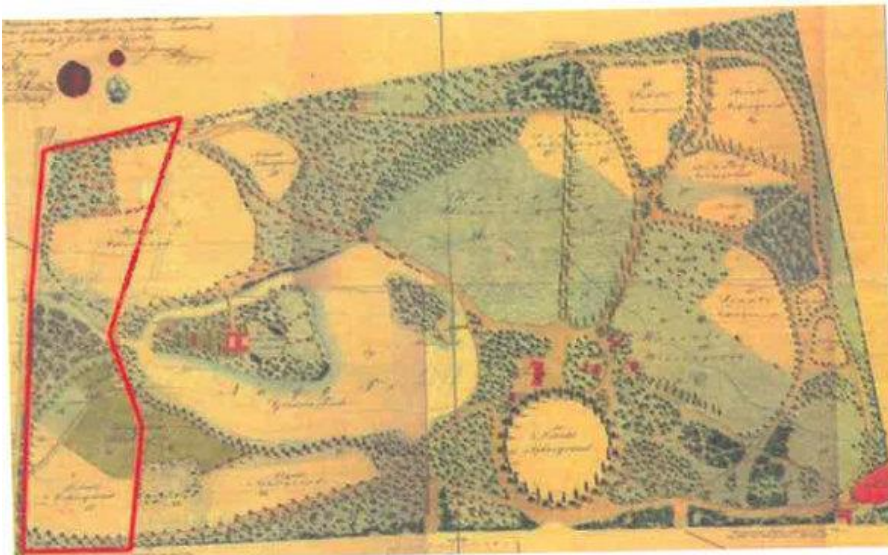


Figure 15: Decrease of Városliget's park area due to the construction of the Budapest Zoo, 1864-66

4.1.3 Exhibitions in the Városliget

The plan of Nebbien to create Városliget as a national pantheon and patriotic symbol came true in the 1880s and 1890s with the organization of the National Fair and the Millennium Exhibition in the park (Leéb 2014). The idea to continue the development of Városliget not only from environmental and aesthetic perspectives, but also to expand it with new public institutions in order to promote national education and to create a ‘national park’, based on Nebbien’s plans, was raised already in the 1860s by Sándor Lukácsy in a horticultural journal¹⁶ (Magyar 2013). Yet, it was first accomplished with the organization of the National Fair in 1885, when the Városliget was transformed to a national memorial centrum (Magyar 2013). The aim of the National Fair was to exhibit the economic life and products of Hungary (Lovas 2013b). The plan of constructing the National Fair in the Városliget had oppositions, referring to the foreseeable damage in the park’s green areas, but the Fair opened its doors for the public in the spring of 1885 (Lovas 2013b). About 800 trees were cut down to provide space for the 108 temporary buildings, from which the Industry Hall (*Iparcsarnok*¹⁷), in the middle of the park, remained permanent (Radó 1985). The National Fair occupied roughly one third (300.000 km²) of the park’s territory, significantly influencing its future development (Lovas 2013b). As part of the National Fair some new flowerbeds were planted, also new pathways and fountains were built and the Stefánia Street was extended, slightly restructuring the park’s green area (Sisa 2014).

¹⁶ *Kerti Gazdaság* 1861 (Magyar 2013)

¹⁷ *Hungarian*

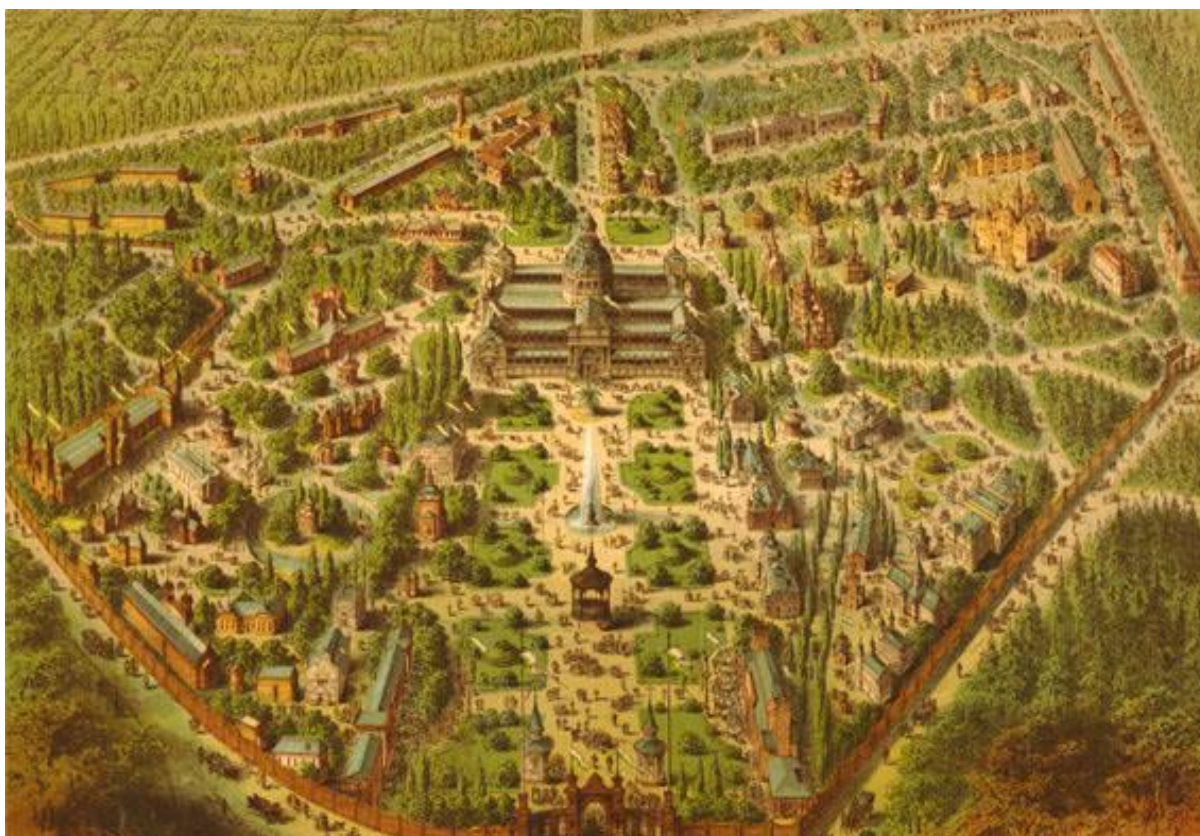


Figure 16: View of the National Fair, 1885

Eleven years after the National Fair another exhibition was organized in the Városliget: the Millennium Exhibition, celebrating the millennial anniversary of the Hungarian conquest. The construction works started in 1893, the Exhibition opened in 1896 and remained open for the next six months (Magyar 2013). The idea of setting up the Millennium Exhibition in the Városliget came from Seydewitz Ernő, royal horticulturist of Budapest (Sisa 1996). According to him, the trees of the park were too old and many of them needed to be cut down anyway (Sisa 1996). However, there was a substantial opposition of the plan, arguing, that the damage of the National Fair for the park's green areas had been huge, the renovation of the park after the Fair had required significant investments, and the Millennium Exhibition would have similar effects (Sisa 1996). Moreover, on one hand, they considered the size of Városliget too small for the Exhibition and, on the other hand, the price of depriving the citizens of Budapest from their recreational opportunities too big (Sisa 1996). Therefore, the

plan of organizing the Exhibition in the Városliget received absolutely low support within the local population (Sisa 1996). Yet, it was the Committee of the General National Exhibition (*Általános Országos Nemzeti Kiállítást Előkészítő Bizottság*¹⁸) deciding about the location of the Millennium Exhibition (Sisa 1996). There were three options (Városliget, Lágymányos and Népliget), from which the Városliget was the cheapest location, according to previous assessments (Sisa 1996). In order to effectively implement the plan and the construction of the Exhibition, the Municipality of Budapest assigned the ownership of the Városliget to the state for the duration of the construction works and the Exhibition (Ráday 2016b). However, according to the contract between the Municipality and the state, the state was required to replant all the fallen trees and re-park the green areas after the end of the event in his own expenses (Ráday 2016b).



Figure 17: View of the Millennium Exhibition, 1896

¹⁸ Hungarian

In order to create space for the Exhibition's pavilions, several hundreds of old trees were cut down and the Városliget was temporary converted to an urban area (Sisa 2014). The Exhibition extended an area of 55 hectares (54% of the park's territory), from which 104.000 m² (11% of the park's area) was effectively built-up (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). The Ice-skating Hall was extended (Ráday 2016b) and so the Sugár (today Andrásy) Street, which ensured the connection between the city centre and the Városliget (Magyar 2013). The first subway line of the continental Europe, the so-called Millennium Railway, was also built for the Millennium, connecting the centrum of Budapest with the Exhibition. At that time, one part (500 m long) of the subway was aboveground, reaching its final step at the Budapest Zoo (Lovas 2013c). However, as a consequence of the construction of the Millennium Railway a part of the Városliget Lake had to be covered in (Lovas 2013c). Furthermore, in order to ensure the transportation of the Exhibition's visitors, a temporary electronic train line (1300 meters long) was introduced in the park (Lovas 2013c). The Millennium Monument, the representative and symbolic entrance of the Millennium Exhibition, was also built at the end of the 19th century and the Gloriette, the former passageway of the Városliget, was moved to the Széchenyi Hill where it functions as a lookout tower up to this day.

Although all the pavilions of the Exhibition had been planned to be temporary, some of them became so popular and successful, that they were rebuilt as permanent buildings, such as the Vajdahunyad Castle (*Vajdahunyad Vára*¹⁹) as the Hungarian Agricultural Museum²⁰, the former pavilion of transportation as the Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport and the Hall of Art (*Műcsarnok*²¹) (Magyar 2013). Even though the contract between the municipality and the state about the Millennium Exhibition originally had not allowed the construction of any permanent buildings, they were rebuilt from durable

¹⁹ Hungarian

²⁰ The Hungarian Agricultural Museum became the first agricultural museum of the world (The Oxford Companion to the Garden 2006)

²¹ Hungarian

construction materials in consideration of the huge popularity of these pavilions (Ráday 2016b) With the exception of the recently demolished Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport²² all these rebuilt museums constitute sections of the Városliget until today. Yet, these remaining buildings were and are not in synchrony with the landscape garden, but ruling it (Magyar 2013). The urbanization of the Városliget began with the National Fair and the Millennium Exhibition, inducing the rollback of the landscape garden elements of the park (Sisa 1996). Moreover, these alterations of the park involved the change of the social context and attitudes as well (Magyar 2013). On one hand, even if the events organized in the Városliget were open for everyone, the entry was not free and hence, not every stratum of the society could attend them. Moreover, since the exhibitions in the Városliget occupied a huge territory from the green areas, the theory of landscape gardens promoting liberal philosophy and social coherence could not fully make its way. Furthermore, as the city grew around the Városliget and the neighbouring areas were built in with aristocratic palaces and villas (e.g. on the Andrássy Street), so changed the public of the park and the institutions in it and the Vurstli, cafés and restaurants providing entertainment for the middle class and labour people had to move to the outer parts to the Városliget (Magyar 2013). This progress of urbanization and division of the city according to social strata is, in a way, a reasonable process. However, the construction of the exhibitions in the Városliget and the urbanization of the park intensified the division of the park and the extrusion of the lower social strata from it.

²² The Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport was demolished as part of the Liget Project and according to the latest news about the future of the building, it is planned to be rebuilt as the Hungarian House of Innovation.



Figure 18: Vajdahunyad Castle, early 20th century

The construction of the National Fair and the Millennium Exhibition caused a substantial ravage in the original functions and functioning of the Városliget. With the new permanent buildings the green area of the park further declined. At the time when Budapest made the decision to organize these exhibitions in its most important public park of the city, it was part of Austria-Hungary. However, when comparing the development of Budapest and Vienna, the Austrian capital, Péter Hanák argues, that the rapid development of the Hungarian capital was partly a result of the ‘inferiority complex’ of Budapest opposed to Vienna (Magyar 2013). According to him, it caused a ‘non-organic urban development’ in Budapest and the city became overcrowded and lacked in green areas (Magyar 2013). He referred to Vienna as the ‘city of gardens’ compared to Budapest, the ‘city of factories, the factory of the Hungarian embourgeoisement’ (Magyar 2013).

The Városliget was probably chosen as the location of the exhibitions, not at last, because of its symbolic meaning and significance, since both the National Fair and the Millennium Exhibition were aiming to promote the greatness of the Hungarian nation. Yet, similarly to previous changes of the park's territory, a bulk part of the neighbouring areas of the Városliget were at that time still blank (Jámbor 2015). From environmental perspectives they might have been more appropriate locations for such mass events (Jámbor 2015).

4.1.4 Turn of the Century and the World Wars

By the turn of the 19th-20th century the Városliget became ecologically overloaded due to overuse and mass events organized in the park (Radó 1985). Paradoxically, at the same time, in 1896, as a sign of increasing environmental consciousness and rising demand for beautiful landscapes, Ignác Durányi, agricultural minister of Hungary initiated the planting of new trees for the Millennium (Radó 1985). Around 2 million trees were planted throughout the country as part of his initiative (Radó 1985). Moreover, the Népliget, the biggest public park of Budapest (Városliget is the second biggest), was officially opened in the year of the Millennium Exhibition as well. Whereas the Városliget was more and more popular within the city aristocracy, the Népliget was established mostly for the lower social strata (Radó 1985). However, by the first decade of the new century the Népliget could fill its function of city green more, than the Városliget, which was occupied by vast exhibitions (Radó 1985). Although at the beginning of the 20th century the idea of expanding the Városliget's territory emerged, the rapid urbanization of the neighbouring areas had priority opposed to the enlargement of the city park (Radó 1985).

Even though the Millennium Exhibition was closed in the second half of 1896, since not all the planned constructions were finished, the urbanization of the Városliget continued. The

Museum of Fine Arts was built in 1906 in place of the pavilion exhibiting an enormous cyclorama painting depicting the Arrival of the Hungarians (*Feszty körkép*²³) (Ráday 2016b). The former Heroes Square between the Museum of Fine Arts and the Hall of Arts used to be a park until the end of the 1930s (Ráday 2016b). However, in 1938, as a decision of the Kingdom of Hungary²⁴, it was covered with concrete for the Eucharistic Congress organized on the occasion of the centennial of the death of Saint Stephen, the first Hungarian king (Ráday 2016b). The vegetation was removed not only from the Heroes Square, but also from the areas around the square and the museums (Jámbor 2015) and according to Szilágyi *et al.* (2015), the Heroes Square with the two museums occupies 4,6 hectares of the effective park area. The waterbed of the Városliget Lake was also covered with concrete at the beginning of the 20th century, in order to facilitate the cleaning of the water and to extend the length of the ice-skating period (Majkó 2013b). The last big construction before World War I was the



building of the Széchenyi Bath at the place of the former artesian bath in 1913 (Bodnár 2015). Similarly to other parts of Budapest, although the Városliget was partly destroyed during World War I, it was renovated in the 1920s.

Figure 19: Millennium Monument covered by red carpet in 1919

²³ Hungarian

²⁴ From 1920 until the end of World War II the official form of government in Hungary was kingdom.

Yet, the Városliget became overloaded and damaged again, well before the destructions caused by World War II. Between 1925 and 1942 it was the first public park of the world, which provided place for the Budapest International Fair, occupying 23 hectares (22,4%) of the park's territory (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Although the International Fair was dismantled and rebuilt ever year, the territory of the fair remained closed from traditional park users for the rest of the year (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Furthermore, from the 1930s the horticultural pavilion of the fair became a permanent building (Lovas 2013b).

Due to the geographical location of the Városliget, the park was significantly damaged during the World War II Siege of Budapest²⁵, since it fall victim to many of the bombs thrown on the strategically important East and West Railway Stations nearby (Majkó 2013a). However, the reconstruction of the Városliget and the replanting of the trees started right after the liberation of Budapest in 1945 (Majkó 2013a). Although the Industry Hall became substantially damaged and needed to be demolished after the War, instead of giving back its



territory to the real park, it was rebuilt as the biggest hall of the Budapest International Fair in 1947, later called Petőfi Hall (*Petőfi Csarnok* or *Pecsa*)²⁶ (Ráday 2016b).

Figure 20: Városliget after the Siege of Budapest

²⁵ 29 December 1944 – 13 February 1945

²⁶ Hungarian

4.1.5 Stalinist Dictatorship, Socialist Era and Regime Change

The configuration of the communist dictatorship in Hungary began in 1947 under the leadership of Mátyás Rákosi, after a short transition period between the end of World War II and the beginning of the so-called Rákosi-period, which ended in the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. From then on it was János Kádár ruling as Hungarian communist leader and the General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party right until the regime change in 1989. The new political regime was not supportive to the development of civil society, and so it was not promoting the values originally symbolized by the Városliget as an urban public park. Therefore, the changes in the Városliget accomplished until the regime change can be characterized mostly as expressions of symbolic power demonstration.



Figure 21: Decrease of the Városliget's territory as a consequence of the construction of Dózsa György Street and Felvonulási Square, 1950s

At the beginning of the Rákosi-period the decision was made for the widening of the Dózsa György Street and the establishment of the Felvonulási Square (today Square of Ötvenhatosok), particularly for military parades and labour movement marches, and the later installation of the Stalin Statue (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). The constructions caused a territory loss of about 21 hectares for the Városliget and a loss of roughly 10% of the park's vegetation (Jámbor 2015). Albeit the Statue was brought down during the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and there were no more need for a procession square, and although the replanting of the area was a frequent topic of the discussions about the park, it has never happened (Ráday 2016b). Later on, only a short line of trees has been replanted after the regime change, indicating the original border of the Városliget (Ráday 2015).



Figure 22: Budapest International Fair, 1950s

After the Hungarian Revolution the tradition of setting up vast exhibitions in the Városliget continued. Between 1958 and 1974 the Városliget was the location of the Budapest Industrial Fair, the 'socialist edition' of the former

Budapest International Fair (Ráday 2016b). During the first couple of years the buildings were temporary, according to the motto of the organizers (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015, 438):

“The Fair closed by the end of May, and grass grew in the beginning of July, even on the place of the nicest pavilions.”

However, after a few years most of the temporary pavilions became permanent and the built-in area reached the size of 260.000 m² by the 1960s (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). The area of the Industrial Fair was fenced with permanent structures (Jámbor 2015) and the pathways within the Fair were covered with concrete (Ráday 2016b). On one hand, this mass events organized in the Városliget had a damaging impact on the park's vegetation, permanently degrading the green surfaces (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). On the other hand, with the closed area of the Industrial Fair the absolute public usage of the park became limited and the space available for traditional park users significantly declined (Jámbor 2015).



Figure 23: Budapest Industrial Fair, 1965

The total relocation of the Industrial Fair was set in 1974, after the initiative of the Municipality of Budapest due to the ecological load caused by the exhibitions in Városliget (Ráday 2016b). The Fair was

moved to *Kőbánya*²⁷ and the park-renovation started in the same year, with the installation of new playgrounds, sport facilities and recreational areas (Jámbor 2015). The full completion of the reconstruction works lasted until 1978 and has been one of the biggest park-constructions in Hungary so far (Radó 1985). However, some of the former buildings of the

²⁷ District X. of Budapest

Industrial Fair remained in the Városliget, occupying more than 72.000 m² (7,3% of the total park area) from the originally green area of the park (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Many of these buildings have lost their functions and become demolished by today (Leéb 2014). Moreover, the Kós Károly Street, connecting the city centre with the M3 highway is still crossing Városliget (Leéb 2014). Since the 1970s no major changes have been carried out and the current area of the Városliget is 98,2 hectares, 76% of the original territory of Nebbien's plans (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Hence, according to the calculations of Szilágyi *et al.* (2015), the Városliget has lost 34% of its initial territory. Whereas Budapest's population and the number of park users have increased, the financial expenditures for the maintenance of the park have continuously declined since the 1980s (Jámbor 2015). Despite the fact, that there are open air mass events held in the Városliget almost every weekend causing large-scale overloads to the park, the maintenance of the park's vegetation has low quality, lacking regular renewing, soil improvement, irrigation or replacement of damaged grass surfaces (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). As Szilágyi *et al.* (2015, 446) point out,

“Without quality maintenance the park can fulfill neither its recreational nor its urban ecological conditioning functions.”

The today's built-up area of the Városliget (5,7%) still exceeds the 3% maximum proportion, set in the former Hungarian law of construction (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). However, as a preparation for the Liget Project the current Hungarian government has changed the regulations and according to the new construction law the allowed proportion of built-up area is 7% (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015).

4.2 Berlin Tiergarten

4.2.1 Establishment

Although the exact origin of the Tiergarten is not known, the name initially refers to a hunting garden (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). The territory of today's Tiergarten was first laid out as a park in the late 17th century, including the construction of a formal street pattern, the so-called Great Star (*Großer Stern*²⁸) with eight avenues, which constitute part of the park's design up to today (Pahl 2006). In the mid-18th century as a sign of the notions of the Enlightenment under King Friedrich II, the Tiergarten was opened for the public (Pahl 2006). According to the legends, the king did not favour hunting and therefore gave the mandate to architect Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff for the removal of the park's fences and its redesign as a '*Lustpark*'²⁹ (amusement, delight park) for public use (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985), based on French baroque models (Bartels 1982). However, as Bartels (1982, 148) points out,

“[...] the opening up of the Tiergarten, as well as of other royal parks, represented rather a grand gesture on the part of the ruler and, therefore, the perpetuation of the concept of the absolute monarchy than the advent of a truly democratic spirit.”

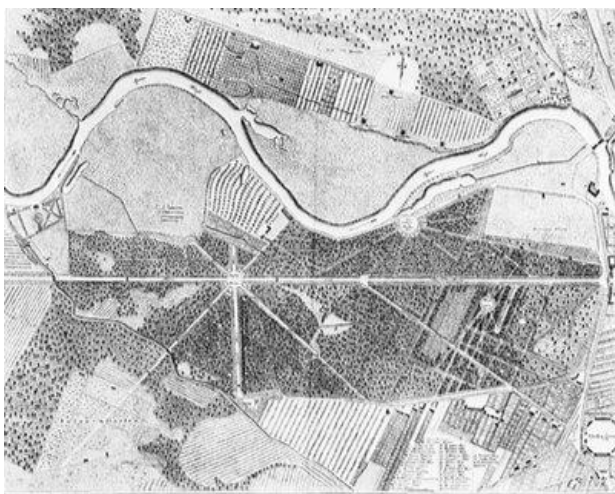


Figure 24: Map of Tiergarten, 1765

The first landscape elements of the Tiergarten, such as the Rousseau and Luise Islands, were introduced under the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm II by Court Gardener

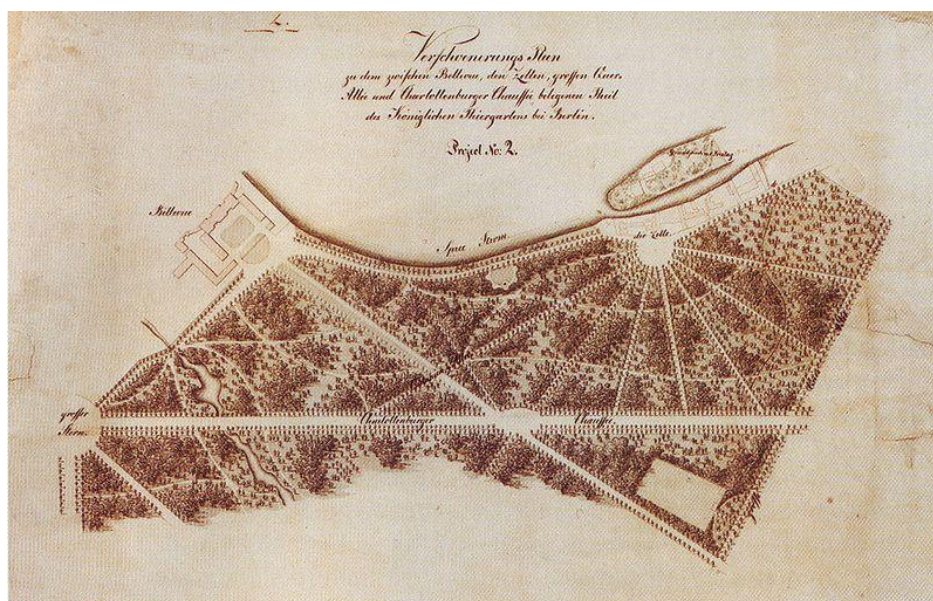
²⁸ German

²⁹ German

Justus Ehrenreich Sello, at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century (Bartels 1982). Nonetheless, the Tiergarten became a real public park with landscape design in the first half of the 19th century, when Peter Joseph Lenné, probably the most influential landscape architect of his time in Germany, fundamentally redesigned it (Pahl 2006). Lenné laid down his first plans for the reconstruction of the park as public park and national monument with informal gathering places for Friedrich Wilhelm III in 1819 (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Yet, the reconstruction of the park would have been too costly, so the king rejected Lenné's plan (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). The redesign of Tiergarten came into the discussion again in the 1830s, and in 1832 Lenné submitted another plan for the creation of a 'People's Park' (Bartels 1982, 152). This time, the constructions proposed by Lenné were somewhat simpler than the ones of his previous plan (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Yet, Friedrich Wilhelm III rejected the plan again, referring to its high costs (Bartels 1982). However, Lenné's plan enjoyed high support from the upper and middle classes: e.g. from physician Theodor Hufeland due to the positive impact of the park on peoples' health (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Hence, in the following year, instead of submitting a new plan, Lenné counterplotted the king's decision by laying down the same plan in different pieces (Bartels 1982). The aim of Lenné's plan was to promote the health and the cultural and spiritual education of the urban population through walks, recreation and entertaining opportunities in the public park (Bartels 1982). Most of the constructions initiated by Lenné were finished by 1839 and from this year on the Tiergarten became a real urban public park (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Hence, from the 1840s Lenné was working on the enlargement and the canalization of the park (Bartels 1982). The Berlin Zoo (*Zoologischer Garten*³⁰), planned also by Lenné in English landscape style, and the so-called *Exerzierplatz* were added to the park area in the mid-19th century (Orgel-

³⁰ *German*

Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). The commonly named *Neue See*³¹ (New Lake) was created as part of the area's drainage in 1847 (Bartels 1982). By that time the Tiergarten became an



essential part of Berlin and remained until today the oldest, and after the Tempelhofer Park, the second largest public park of the German capital.

Figure 25: Plan of Tiergarten by Lenné, 1837

4.2.2 Golden Age

The ‘golden age’ of Tiergarten as public park lasted unbroken until the first half of the 20th century. Unlike in case of Városliget, the ecological values of the Tiergarten were seen as privileged assets compared to any other values and functions attached to the park. Although the park played a significant role as public sphere in the formation of public (including political) opinion, Lenné’s design remained mostly unaltered until World War II, with the exception of a few changes related to the installation of new patriotic symbols and the construction of new buildings in the neighboring areas. Similar to the Városliget, at the time of its establishment as public park, the Tiergarten was located in the outer part of Berlin.

³¹ German

Nevertheless, with the gradual expansion of the urban environment, the city grew around the park and today the Tiergarten is one of the most centrally located parks of Berlin.



Figure 26: 'Zelten', around 1840; Drawing of E. Lütke

During the revolution of 1848 the Tiergarten served as an important locus of political demonstrations. Particularly the so-called

'Zelten'³² (tent restaurants) of the park provided a public sphere and meeting point of all social strata for the formation of public opinion. It was the centrum of the revolution in 1848, demanding inter alia the abolishment of the state censorship (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). In the 1860s a few changes were made in the park's architecture in order to increase the water quality and provide more entertainment opportunities for the public (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). New, illuminated pathways, playgrounds, sport facilities and a winter garden were integrated into the park's design, initiated by Eduard Neide, the director of the park (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Although the ecological value and importance of the park as urban green area grew parallel with the industrial development of Berlin, the *Siegesallee* and the *Friedensallee* were widened in the 1870s, despite of opposition critiquing the cutting down of trees along the new alleys (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985).

³² German

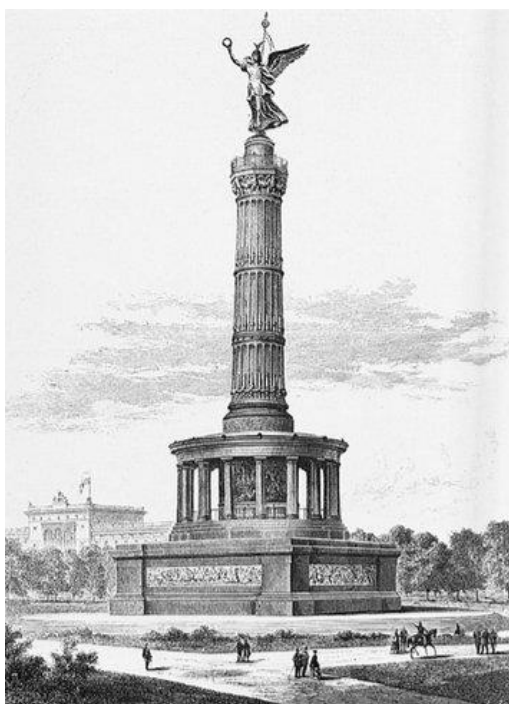


Figure 27: *Siegessäule at the Königsplatz; Drawing of E. Weiß, 1875*

From 1871 on, from the unification of Germany, a new period started in the life of Tiergarten (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). The park became more important as a place representing the German nation and in accordance some units of the city green were reconstructed, expressing national symbols (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). As part of the representative architecture new statues and monuments were installed, such as the so-called *Siegessäule*³³ (Berlin Victory Column), at the *Königsplatz*³⁴ (today *Platz der Republik*), or the decoration of the *Siegesallee* with 32 statues of historical figures (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). In 1881 the first plan of building the Reichstag at the *Königsplatz* emerged (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985), and in the same year the Crown assigned the ownership of Tiergarten as a gift to the city of Berlin (Bartels 1982). The two private properties at the northwest side of the park were built in at the end of the 19th century, from which one, later on, became the so-called *Hansaviertel* (Hansa District) (Wendland 1993). Similar to the *Városliget*, as the significance and the popularity of the Tiergarten increased, so grew the traffic to the park and the first railway station (*Bahnhof Tiergarten*³⁵) at the edge of the Tiergarten was opened in 1885 (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985).

³³ Symbolizing the German victory in the unification wars; *German*

³⁴ The *Siegessäule* was moved to the middle of the Tiergarten during the Nazi period in 1938 (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985)

³⁵ *German*



Figure 28: Siegesallee with statues of historical figures, 1903

By the time of the turn of the 19th-20th century the Tiergarten became a substantial element in

the life of Berlin's population. It was open for every social stratum and abounded in environmental, recreational, entertainment, cultural and sport opportunities. Also the neighboring areas received an increasing significance. New houses, palaces, villas and the first embassies were built, mostly in the area of the *Tiergartenstraße* and the *Potsdamer Platz* (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Yet, the 'golden age' of the Tiergarten ended with the beginning of the 20th century.

4.2.3 Park in the Weimar Republic

The Tiergarten was not significantly damaged during World War I, hence, it was soon again appropriate to become the centrum of political changes after the war (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). During the November Revolution in 1918-19 the Tiergarten was the central location of political demonstrations, demanding the replacement of the German federal constitutional monarchy, the adoption of the Weimar constitution and the establishment of the Weimar Republic, a democratic parliamentary monarchy.

During the 1920s-30s new trees were planted and new banks installed in the Tiergarten in every year (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Berliners were proud of their park and the

trees in it, some of them being over 400 years old oaks (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). The tradition of just married couples to plant oak trees in the Tiergarten, in the *Querallee* (former *Jungfrauenallee*), symbolizing the strength and longevity of the marriage, was still maintained (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). However, as a consequence of the increasing traffic in the streets crossing the Tiergarten, the park became more and more overloaded (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Therefore, a plan of closing the park from the road traffic was initiated and supported by the public, but has remained in the main part unimplemented (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Still, both the flora and fauna of the Tiergarten were well maintained and played a substantial role in the life of the German capital and its citizens.

4.2.4 The Nazi Regime: Reconstruction, Damage and Restoration



Figure 29: Riding in Tiergarten, 1933

During its history the Tiergarten bore the biggest damage and destruction under the Nazi period from 1933 until the

end of World War II. The park was, at first, a medium of symbolic power demonstration of the National Socialists, who undertook considerable changes in the Tiergarten's design. Afterwards, during the Battle of Berlin and the immediate post-war period the Tiergarten was

almost completely destroyed and deforested. The restoration and renovation of the park required significant resources and the determination of West Berlin's citizens.

The district Tiergarten and the park itself were substantial elements of the Nazi regime's projected plan for the renewal of Berlin as 'World Capital Germania' (*Welthauptstadt Germania*³⁶), submitted by Albert Speer, 'first architect of the Third Reich' in 1936. The construction works started one year later in 1937 and lasted up until 1943 (Kitchen 2015). It is well, that during these years the National Socialist regime managed to implement only parts of the renewal plan (Kitchen 2015). Although the reconstruction of the Tiergarten under the Nazi regime was characterized ideologically, the basic elements of Lenné's concept were retained and the maintenance of the park's vegetation was continued until the 1940s (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Still, there were also alterations made by the National Socialists in the park's design, as part of the plan to transform Berlin to 'World Capital Germania'. One of the most significant changes accomplished by the Nazi regime in the park was the placing of the *Siegessäule* from its original location (*Königsplatz*) to the middle of the Tiergarten (Wendland 1993), where it stands until today. In order to replace the *Siegessäule*, the diameter of the Great Star was widened from 100 to 200 meters, which involved the cut down of the last remaining oaks planted in the 18th century (Wendland 1993). The statues of the *Siegesallee* were also moved to the Great Star, but since the monument of Bismarck was too big, it was accommodated 50 meters in the former park area (Wendland 1993). Furthermore, the creation of a great East-West city axis crossing the Tiergarten was also part of the renewal plan (Wendland 1993). More than 1000 trees were cut down for the broadening of the *Charlottenburger Chaussee* (today *Straße des 17. Juni*) from 27 to 53 meters, which has retained its broadness until today³⁷ (Wendland 1993). In order to

³⁶ *German*

³⁷ Since the *Charlottenburger Chaussee* was covered with a net during the Battle of Berlin in order to avert the orientation of bombers, it remained in quite good conditions during World War II (Wendland 1993).

assure the illumination of the area, new candelabras were installed in place of the fallen trees, designed by Albert Speer himself. Some of them have been adorning the Tiergarten up to this day.

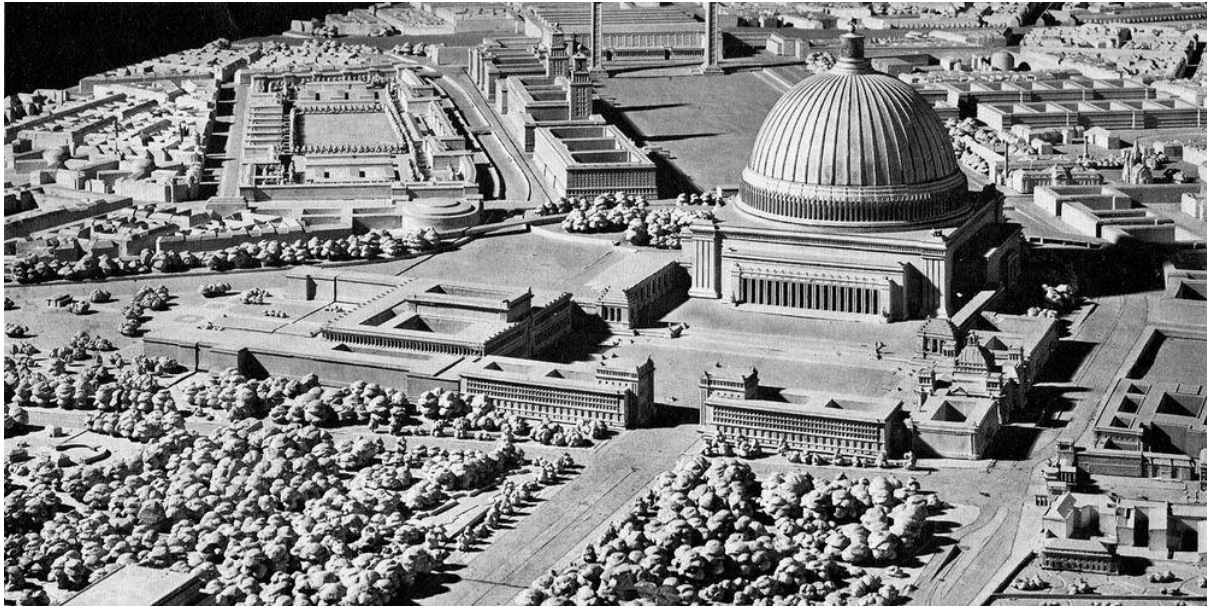


Figure 30: Plan of World Capital Germania

The other axis, the North-South axis, would have been accomplished by the 7 kilometers long extension of the *Siegesallee*, which has somehow never happened (Wendland 1993). According to the plans also new buildings for the government, administration and for the party would have been built on both sides of the *Siegesallee*, cutting off and demolishing almost one-third of the park's green area (Wendland 1993). The planned changes causing the devastation of the Tiergarten's design and a significant loss of its green area were communicated to the public as being absolutely harmless (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). The propaganda focused on the enhancement of the creation of new green areas as part of the planned renewal concept, avoiding to mention the demolishing effects of the constructions, all planned alterations affecting the park were depicted as embellishment arrangements (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985).

Yet, World War II stopped the accomplishment of the renewal plans, battering down the city of Berlin. By the summer of 1945 the Tiergarten and the Zoo were almost completely destroyed and razed to the ground (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). From the once 200.000 trees remained roughly 700 by the end of the War, most of them were fallen during the War or cut down for firing in the first winters of the post-war era (Baudisch and Cullen 1991).



Figure 31: Berlin Zoo at home during World War II, 1943

Although after the capitulation of Germany the Tiergarten became part of the area controlled by the Brits, it retained its function of permitting of location for military parades and commemorations (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Not only the Brits celebrated their victory in the Tiergarten, but also on 14th July 1945 the French hold their national holiday

at the *Siegessäule* (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Later on, on the occasion of the Potsdam Conference, the *Charlottenburger Chaussee* was decorated with figures of Churchill, Stalin and Truman (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Also the Soviets used the park's area for emblematic power demonstration by installing a memorial at the symbolic middle of Berlin for the conquest of Berlin by the Red Army (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Even though this Soviet monument was in the territory of Great Britain during the Cold War, it was guarded by soldiers of the Soviet Union and forms part of the Tiergarten up

to this day (Boyn 2014). Although after the end of the War the removal of the *Siegestsäule* was long discussed, it has never been lifted, but remained in the middle of the park (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). The 32 statues displaying German historical figures were buried after the end of the War by Berliner in order to hide and protect them, and were excavated only in 1981 (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985).



Figure 32: Great Star after the Battle of Berlin

Although in the summer of 1945 a decision for the renovation of Tiergarten was made, the needs of the population had priority: In 1946, with the allowance of the Brit leadership of Berlin, Mayor Arthur Werner,

appointed by the Soviets, commanded the convert of the Tiergarten to an agricultural field with about 2550 parcels for crop cultivation to reduce food shortages (Baudisch and Cullen 1991). Yet, the history of the Tiergarten as agricultural land did not last long and in 1947, after the decision of the Brit leadership and the provision of the required sources, the renovation and the replanting of the park began (Baudisch and Cullen 1991). The aim of the reconstruction was the reestablishment the basic elements of the park according to Lenné's plan, but with more playgrounds, sport facilities and open green spaces (Baudisch and Cullen 1991). However, there were also alternative proposals, such as the concept of Georg Wolf

Theodor Béla Pniower landscape architect, suggesting the expansion of the Tiergarten and its connection with all significant green areas of the Northeast, South and West of the city, and a complete ban of car traffic in these parks (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). His plan has however, remained mostly unrealized (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985).



Figure 33: Crop cultivation in Tiergarten near to Siegessäule, 1945

The first phase of the Tiergarten's renovation started in 1947 and lasted until the end of the Berlin Blockade. More than 30 municipalities

from other parts of West Germany donated geld and/or tree saplings for the park's renovation (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Around 250.000 young trees were purchased by the City of Berlin, from which roughly 150.000 were transported from the states of Schleswig-Holstein and Bremen by English plains and thrown into the city during the Blockade (Baudisch and Cullen 1991). The first tree planted after the War was a linden, put in the ground by Mayor Ernst Reuter at the Great star on 17th March 1949 (Baudisch and Cullen 1991). He referred to the damage the Tiergarten had experienced as "the most painful wound of Berlin"³⁸ (Serra 2015).

³⁸ „The schmerzlichste Wunde Berlins" (Serra 2015); German



Figure 34: Mayor Ernst Reuter while planting the first tree near to the Great Star, 1949

4.2.5 West Berlin and the Regime Change

After the end of the Berlin Blockade, from May 1949, West Berlin became, and so the Tiergarten, officially parts of the Federal Republic of Germany. It was a milestone not only in the history of the city, but also for its public park, since its restoration continued with renewed efforts. According to a survey, held in the summer of 1949, 97% of the 5600 participating Berliner citizens supported the renovation of the Tiergarten as a public park and the abolishment of its use as agricultural land (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Hence, the reconstruction of the park had high priority. In order to create the appropriate background for the extensive renovation, it became part of the ‘state of emergency plan’ (*Notstandsprogramm*³⁹) and a new ‘City Office for Horticulture and Public Green Areas’ (*Hauptamt für Grünflächen und Gartenbau*⁴⁰) was established (Wendland 1993). More than a thousand ‘emergency workers’ were employed to clean the Tiergarten from garbage and unwanted roads, remnants of the Nazi period, as the initial step of the renovation works (Wendland 1993). Consequently, the use of the park as agricultural land ended completely on 31st October 1949 (Baudisch and Cullen 1991).

Landscape gardener Wilhelm “Willy” Alverdes conducted the restoration of the Tiergarten and established a concept and design for the park, which constitute the base of Tiergarten until today (Baudisch and Cullen 1991). He considered the results of the survey of 1949 and

³⁹ German

⁴⁰ German

created more playgrounds, sport facilities, larger meadows for recreation, benches and restaurants in accordance with the Berliner's desire expressed in the survey (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). The so-called 'English Garden' (*'Englischer Garten'*⁴¹), a garden within the Tiergarten, was established in 1951, initiated by city commander General Bourne (Wendland 1993). Yet, its name refers not to its landscape style, but to the English tree donations for the Tiergarten (Wendland 1993). In 1955 even Queen Elizabeth II planted a tree, an oak in the park (Wendland 1993). Today, all this donations and the first tree planting by Mayor Ernst Reuter have memorials in the Tiergarten, erected in the 1970s (Wendland 1993). Parallel to the park's restoration also the renovation of the buildings in and around the Tiergarten started, such as the refurbishment of Bellevue Palace or the Reichstag (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Also the *Hansaviertel* was rebuilt, occupying a part of the once park area (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Yet, the built-in area of the *Hansaviertel* became smaller than it used to be before the War and its design was constructed in a way that it optically looks like the continuation of the park's green area (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Most of these developments were the results of the architectural competition initiated by the government of West Berlin in the 1950s to rebuild the centre of the city (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Also the construction of the so-called '*Kulturforum*⁴²' ('Culture Forum Berlin') started as part of the competition (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985), but as opposed to the Városliget, not in, but next to the urban public park.

During the Cold War the Tiergarten retained its role as public sphere and place for the expression of public opinion. On 17th June 1953 the Brandenburg Gate (*Brandenburger Tor*⁴³) was closed as a consequence of anti-Soviet demonstrations and as a sign of solidarity

⁴¹ *German*

⁴² *German*

⁴³ *German*

the *Charlottenburger Chaussee* was renamed to *Straße des 17. Juni* (Street of 17th June), as it is called until today (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). During the 1950's the Tiergarten was several times the centre of demonstration against soviet politics, such as of the demonstration against the soviet invasion in Budapest in 1956 (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). However, the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 changed the life of the Tiergarten as well. On one hand, it held the symbolic character of a location, where the two Germany should have been connected (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). On the other hand, it became even more important in the life of West Berliner citizens, since it remained almost the only park for recreation in the surrounded city (Wendland 1993). Yet, the eastern part of the Tiergarten was closed due to security reasons after the building of the Berlin Wall, until mid-1962 (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Furthermore, as the city became completely surrounded by the Wall, the structure of urban traffic changed and there emerged an increasing need for a North-South axis (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Despite of opposition due to losses in green area, the so-called *Entlastungsstraße* was built, crossing the eastern part of the Tiergarten (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Nevertheless, as a compensation, the eastern part of the *Straße des 17. Juni* was temporarily closed from the traffic (Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985). Not long after the fall of the Wall the plan of replacing the *Entlastungsstraße* with a tunnel emerged and despite of oppositions regarding possible sink of the ground water level, as a outcome of subsequent social negotiations initiated by democratic processes, the construction works began in 1995 (Peters 2010). In 2006 the tunnel finally changed the *Entlastungsstraße* in its function and the street was replanted with vegetation and given back to the park (Berliner Straßenlexikon 2017).

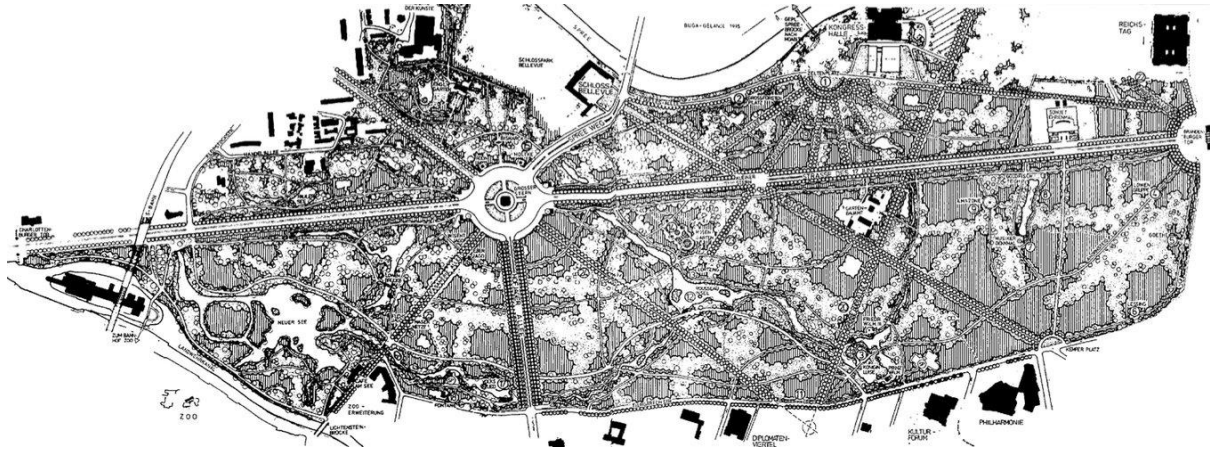


Figure 35: Map of Tiergarten, 1988

Shortly after the regime change in 1991 the Tiergarten became a historic ‘garden monument’ (*‘Gartendenkmal’*⁴⁴) in regard to its historical, cultural, scientific and architectural significance and is protected by the heritage preservation law (*Denkmalschutzgesetz*⁴⁵) from intervention (Senatsverwaltung für Umwelt, Verkehr und Klimaschutz 2017c). Due to their ecological load mass events are no more organized in the Tiergarten. The last such event was the Love Parade (electronic dance music festival and techno parade), which was from 1989 annually organized on the *Straße des 17. Juni*. Yet, as a consequence of insufficient toilet facilities and the damage caused in the park’s ecological integrity, the last time when the festival took place in Berlin was in 2006. Since then no major changes have been occurred in the Tiergarten and the aim of today’s garden conservation is to preserve the park’s ecological balance and complexity (Senatsverwaltung für Umwelt, Verkehr und Klimaschutz 2017a).

⁴⁴ German

⁴⁵ German

4.3 Historical Comparison

The comparison of the history of Városliget and Tiergarten explored, that the two parks' histories are very similar and very different at the same time. This thesis did not aim to compare every segment of the parks' histories and reveal all their similarities and differences. Instead, it intended to show the main trends and patterns of the parks' histories from the aspect of different political systems' approaches to them, through the introduction of the actions of these diverse political systems towards the selected parks.

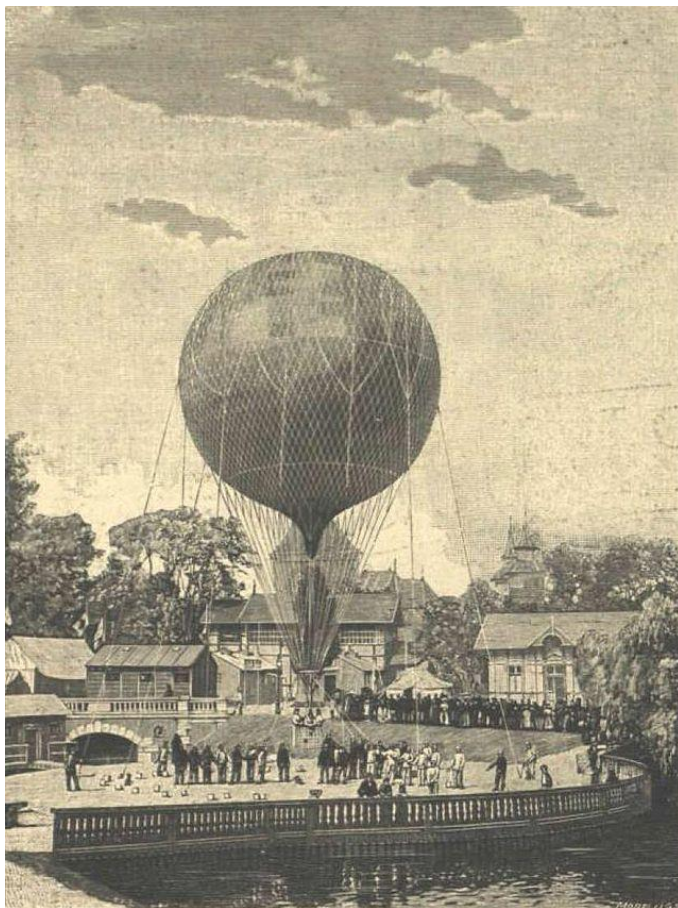


Figure 36: Balloon ascent in Városliget at the time of the Millennium Exhibition

Both parks opened their doors for the public as urban public parks in the first half of the 19th century, constructed on the base of Hirschfeld's theory of public parks, both in European capitals. Consequently, they both have had considerably similar environmental, cultural, social and political functions, symbols and values attached to them,

throughout their history. They have possessed a high significance as city greens in the urban environment. Furthermore, they have been cultural heritages and sites of expressing national values and representing patriotic symbols in form of cultural products. They both have provided public spheres for learning and for the formation of public opinion. Moreover, they

have been mediums of symbolic power demonstration of different political systems. However, different political systems of Germany and Hungary have had substantially different approaches to their public parks.

Although the history of Városliget and Tiergarten as public parks started at about the same time and run almost parallel until the turn of the 19th-20th century, they have evolved completely differently afterwards. The golden age of Városliget ended as other than environmental values became the priorities of political decisions about the park and hence the tradition of organizing exhibitions in the green area began. Despite the role of Tiergarten as national symbol and a park providing place for representative art became more significant by the end of the 19th century, it was not to compare with the representative architecture the Városliget experienced by the time of the turn of the century. Compared to the Városliget, the Tiergarten had a longer lasting ‘golden age’ ended with the beginning of the 20th century and the world wars.



Figure 37: Agricultural works in Tiergarten at the Great Star, 1948

Even though Hitler's Germany carried out changes in the park's design involving the cut-down of trees and the reduction of the park's green area, the damage was substantially smaller than the ones caused in Városliget by the organization of diverse exhibitions throughout the park's history.

The only time when the planned constructions would have similarly affected the size of the

Tiergarten's green area to the continuous reduction of the Városliget's park area, was the renewal plans of the Nazi regime, which have by chance, never been completed. During World War II both parks suffered substantial damages, but whereas the Városliget could retain its characteristics as park, the Tiergarten was almost completely demolished and transformed to an agricultural land. However, this was the only time in the history of Tiergarten, when it lost its characteristics as public park, and even at this time it was a consequence of the destruction of the War and the basic survival needs of the population. Yet, after the War the restoration of Tiergarten became a high priority of the city and its citizens and was accomplished with enormous efforts. Even though the Városliget was also renovated after the Siege of Budapest, the communist and later socialist regimes of Hungary accorded greater importance to the emblematic and representative functions of the park, than to its environmental and recreational values. Later on in the 1970s, with the move out of the exhibitions, the Városliget was reconstructed in accordance with the changing needs of the society and expanded with new playgrounds, sport facilities and open greens for recreational needs, similar to the renovations of the Tiergarten conducted in the 1950s. Since then, despite of some possible and known controversies, the conservation of the Tiergarten and the preservation of the park's ecological integrity have been among the highest priorities of the diverse city leaderships of (West) Berlin, all based on democratic principles. With the exception of the Nazi era, the ecological values of the Tiergarten have always been seen as privileged assets compared to any other values and functions attached to the park. By contrast, the Városliget have been experienced the competition and siege of other than environmental values, several times throughout its history. Moreover, although after the 1970s the tradition of exhibitions organized in the Városliget and with the regime change also the series of other than democratic political systems seemed to be ending, the ecological values of the park have still not become privileged assets of the city leadership and the park's

maintenance have been neglected. Today it looks like, that the construction of the illiberal democratic regime has started a new chapter not only in the political life of Hungary, but also in the life of Városliget. Seemingly a new chapter for Városliget, it will be just a time travel back to the age and tradition of enormous exhibitions organized in one of the most important urban public parks of Budapest. But, this time those exhibiting pavilions are planned to be vast, buildings to be permanent and inventions to be final towards the urbanization of Városliget.

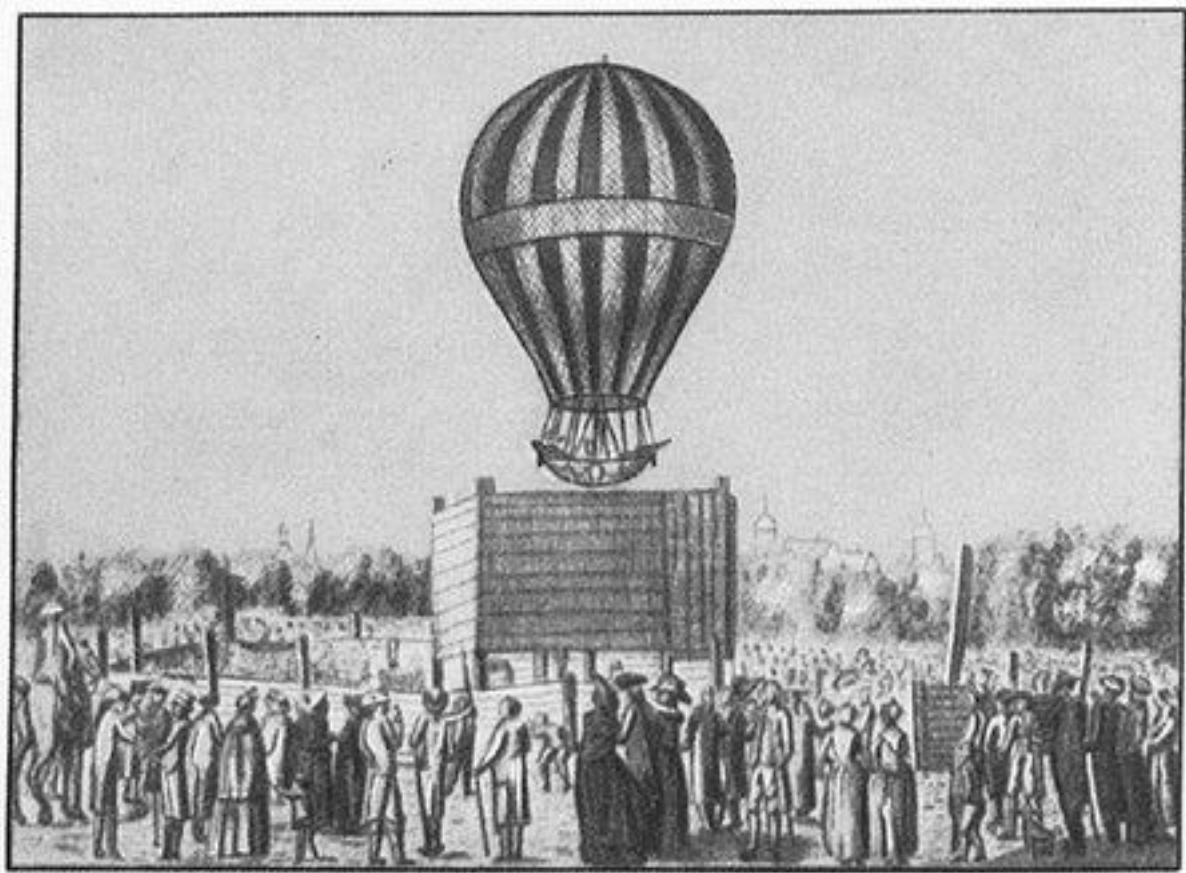


Figure 38: Balloon ascent in Tiergarten; Daniel Chodowiecki (1726-1801)

5 Today's Approaches and Future Perspectives

The following chapter concentrates on the recent reconstruction plans of Városliget in the context of illiberal democracy. Even so, it does not seek for the demonstration of every segments of the Liget Project, since it would exceed the wordage frameworks of this master's thesis. Instead, it aims to provide a review about the most important aspects of the recent events and plans related to the Városliget. After presenting the Liget Project and the related issues around the park, the thesis gives a brief overview about the current stance and importance of the Tiergarten in the city of Berlin. Finally, it intends to summarize the main prospective future perspectives both of Városliget and Tiergarten.

5.1 The Case of Illiberalism

5.1.1 Illiberal Democracy in Hungary

The term 'illiberal democracy' was first used by Zakaria (1997) stating, that "democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been reelected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms". In Hungary, the phrase became commonly known in 2014, after Prime Minister Viktor Orbán referred to the political systems of Singapore, China, India, Russia and Turkey as successful and the "stars of the international analysts" (Orbán 2014). He said in his infamous illiberal democracy speech in 2014, that

"the new state that we are constructing in Hungary is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not reject the fundamental principles of liberalism such as freedom, and I could list a few more, but it does not make this ideology the central element of state organisation, but instead includes a different, special, national approach."

Accordingly, the systematic construction of an illiberal democratic state in Hungary has started in 2014 and has been continued with ever increasing efforts up to this day. Although Hungary is still member of the European Union, democratic values and principles are under expanding threat and as Végh (2017) points out, Hungary falls under the category of ‘semi-consolidated democracy’, since its downgrading in 2015, according to the evaluation of the Freedom House.

The evolvement of illiberal democracy opened a new period in Hungary not only from political aspects, but also from the perspectives of social, cultural and environmental values and approaches. Consequently, the illiberal democratic regime started a new epoch in the life of the oldest public park of Budapest as well, by the plans of reconstructing the park and putting a final and everlasting stamp on its image, functions and symbols, in accordance with the values and approaches of the Hungarian illiberal democracy stands for.

5.1.2 The Liget Project



Figure 39: View of the planned Liget Project, 2017

The plans of the Liget Budapest Project, or commonly referred as Liget Project, were launched in 2012. The idea of reconstructing the Városliget has already emerged in 2010, similarly to the idea of a new Museum Quarter, after the governing party (Fidesz) won the elections. Yet, the latter was originally designed to another location, next to the Nyugati Railway Station on the Buda side of Budapest. However, this site has been changed to the Városliget eventually (Bodnár 2015a). In 2013 the Hungarian Parliament adopted the so-called ‘Városliget Law’ (CCXLII) about the reconstruction of the park (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). According to the original plans the Project included the construction of five new museums, the Ethnographic Museum, the House of Hungarian Music, the Museum of Architecture, the Museum of Photography and a new National Gallery merged with the Ludwig Museum, with additional underground car parks. Moreover, already existing buildings of the Városliget, such as the Capital Circus of Budapest, the Budapest Zoo, the Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Vajdahunyad Castle and the Olof

Palme House⁴⁶ would be developed and refurbished. The rebuilding of the former Városliget Theatre, which was built in the early 20th century and later torn down by the widening of the Dózsa György Street and construction of the Felvonulási Square in 1952, is also part of the Liget Project's plans. Additionally, a National Museum Restoration and Storage Center for artworks restoration and research would be built to the northwest side of the park. Finally, the park's green area is to be restored. However, the exact number, later function and in some cases the location of these new buildings, their design and planned implementation are continuously changing elements of the Liget Project. Hence, at this point it is impossible to forecast the future design and the particular number of museums constructed in the Városliget in the future. As Bardóczy (2017) argues, the conception of the Liget Project was built on "shifting sand"⁴⁷. Yet, in accordance with the current plans, the constructions will cost HUF 200 billion (roughly \$710 million) and will comprise two phases, scheduled to be finished by 2019 (Fenyvesi 2016). However, the costs and the required time for the realization of the Liget Project are continuously increasing, parallel with the persistent alterations regarding the construction plans. Although according to the Liget Project's website⁴⁸ the park's green areas will develop from the current 60% to 65% after the completion of the Project, it includes the water surface of the Városliget Lake, the grass of the buildings' rooftops and the underground parking lot entrances (Fenyvesi 2016). Intrinsically, the realization of the Liget Project involves the cut down of more than 400 150-year old trees and the additional destruction of the remaining trees as a consequence of the building operations (Fenyvesi 2016). Moreover, the survival prospects of the replanted old trees are also substantially low (Ráday 2016b). Even though the final plans and design of the new Museum District and the reconstruction of the Városliget have been changing and therefore no final version have been proposed yet, the

⁴⁶ The Olof Palme House is the former building of the Art Hall (*Műcsarnok*) built for the National Fair of 1885. Today it is the headquarter of the Hungarian Artists Community (*Magyar Alkotóművészek Országos Egyesülete*)

⁴⁷ „futóhomok”; Hungarian

⁴⁸ <http://ligetbudapest.hu/>

replanting and cut down of the old trees and the demolition of the old buildings have already started as the initial steps of the construction works. Consequently, despite of huge support from the government, the launch of the Liget Project induced particularly controversial reactions both in the professional field and in the society.

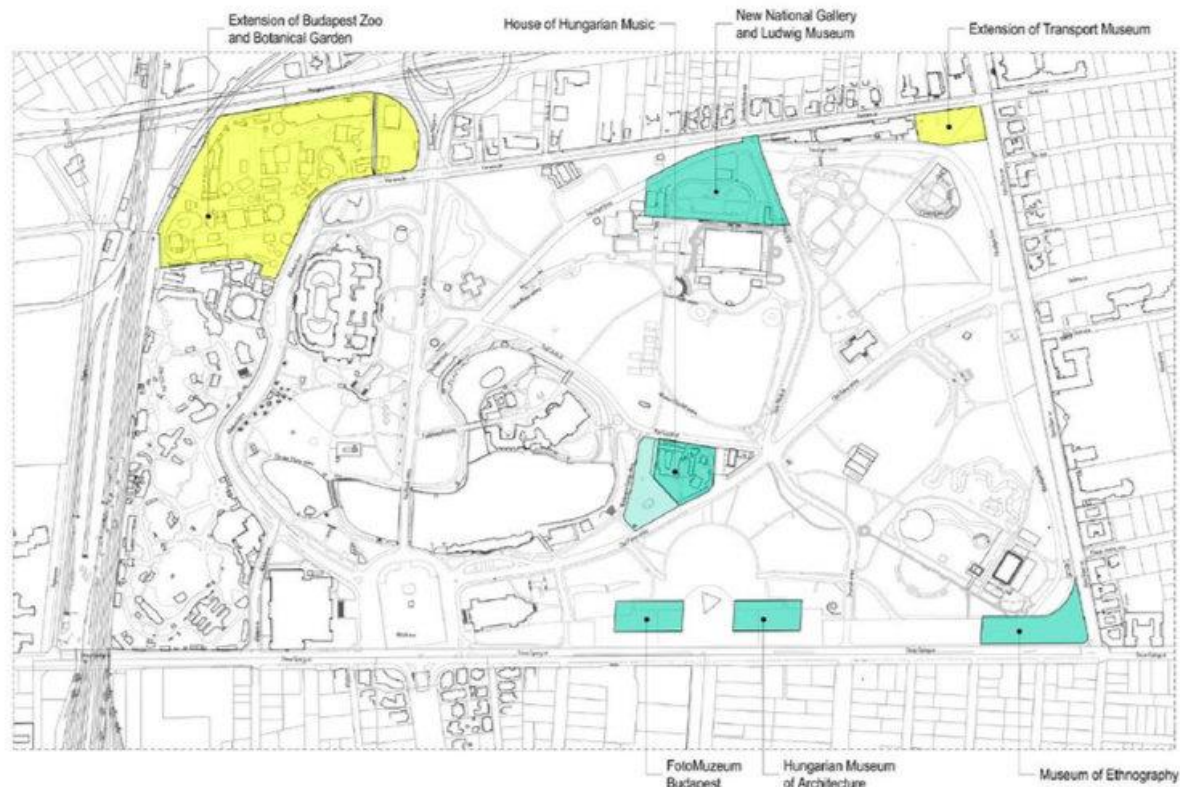


Figure 40: Original plan of the Liget Project, 2013

The need for new museums arose as a consequence of the reconstruction of the Buda Castle to a representative government district (Mélyi 2015). Since the Buda Castle is the home of many museums and other cultural and research institutions of Hungary, the transformation of the Buda Castle to a government district involves the relocation of the current institutions of the Castle. Some of them, such as e.g. the Hungarian National Dance Theatre, the Centre for Social Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences or collections of the Budapest History Museum have already been moved to other locations. Others, such as the National

Széchenyi Library or the National Gallery — latter is planned to receive a new building in the Városliget — are about to move. Yet, the question just where they are exactly moving is still open. There are several old buildings in Budapest, which could be rebuilt in form of ‘brownfield investments’ and provide appropriate locations for these institutions⁴⁹ (Schneller 2015b). However, instead of ‘brownfield expenses’ the government decided to construct a Museum Quarter in the Városliget, without any real social consultation about the project (Körmendy 2015). The Liget Project has had no proper social publicity; the initiative of the project has been dominated by political arguments raised by pro-governmental poles in favor of the reconstructions (Mélyi 2015). Residents of the neighboring areas have not been involved in the decision-making (Mélyi 2015). Even though a so-called ‘partnership agreement’⁵⁰ took place prior to the Project’s approval, 95% of the proposals and recommendations raised by civil society organizations and attending residents have been ignored (Mélyi 2015). Similarly, there have been no open discussions organized with the involvement of the affected institutions about the function or place requirements of the planned museums (Mélyi 2015). Therefore, the reasons of choosing the Városliget as the location of the Museum Quarter can only be assumed (Mélyi 2015). On one hand, a museum complex might develop into a monumental memorial of a political era (Mélyi 2015) and it would be not the first time in the Városliget’s history when a political regime uses the most famous public park of Budapest for emblematic power demonstration, highlighting its national symbolic, while undermining its environmental values. On the other hand, there are many memories and personal narratives attached to urban places, contributing to the evolution of personal identity, linked to particular objects and spaces (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Since the Városliget is one of the most important public places of Budapest with all of its historical, cultural, environmental and social values, the reconstruction of the park might

⁴⁹ Schneller (2015b) list several potential buildings for such ‘brownfield investments’, e.g. the abandoned railway territory in Rákosmező or the neighboring areas of the Népliget

⁵⁰ *‘partnerségi egyeztetés; Hungarian*

partly replaces these values with new ones, assigned by top-down methods of the illiberal democratic regime.

In order to assure the uncomplicated flow of the implementation of the Liget Project, the trusteeship of the Városliget has been assigned from the City of Budapest and the Municipality of Zugló to the state owned *Városliget Ingatlanfejlesztő Zrt.* (Városliget Property Development Company) at no expenses for 99 years, in accordance with the Városliget Law (Brenner 2015). Furthermore, all new buildings of the Városliget and their income will remain state-owned (Brenner 2015), whereas the negative effects of the construction works, the increased traffic and the declining green area will affect the Municipality and the residents of the neighboring areas. By contrast, at the end of the 19th century at the time of the organization of the Millennium Exhibition, at least all the remaining buildings and infrastructure became the property of the City of Budapest after the end of the Exhibition (Ráday 2015). Moreover, as a consequence of the Városliget Law, the Liget Project became a so-called ‘advantaged infrastructural investment’⁵¹ and hence, the construction law (including the regulation of the allowed percentages of built-in areas and the allowed high of buildings) and the environmental protection law have been suspended for the Városliget’s territory (Hargitai and Szalai 2013). Even though the opposition parties initiated an extraordinary parliamentary session about the feasibility of the Liget Project, the governing party boycotted the session (Hörömpöli-Tóth 2016) and it has never took place since then. As Körmendy (2015) points out, the approval of new legislation about ‘advantaged infrastructural investments’ is a common practice in Germany as well, but only after a prior social agreement and consensus. According to him, the Liget Project has the attributes of a real estate investment, instead of the characteristics of a proper urban planning proposal. As Ráday (2014) argues, there has been no nationalization in such measures in

⁵¹ ‘*kiemelt infrastrukturális beruházás*’; Hungarian

Hungary since the Rákosi-period. Additionally, there were on one hand, no assessments for alternative locations for the Museum Quarter (Bardóczy 2017). On the other hand, both the existing environmental impact assessments related to the planned constructions were conducted after the approval of the Városliget Law and the announcement of the architectural tender (Pákozdi 2015). Moreover, these environmental impact assessments have been prepared not by an independent organization, but by the *Városliget Ingatlanfejlesztő Zrt.*, the owner of the Liget Project (Pákozdi 2015). Therefore, they cannot be considered as proper environmental impact assessments, but as studies justifying prior made decisions (Pákozdi 2015). Furthermore, since the reconstruction plans have been altering continuously, even if there was an intention to make proper environmental impact assessments prior to the constructions, it would be impossible to follow the ever-changing plans.

Certainly, there are pros and cons about the Liget Project, but as this thesis argues, the negative effects caused by the planned reconstructions in the Városliget are dominating, compared to the expected benefits of the Project. One of the main arguments in favor of the Liget Project is, that the maintenance of the Városliget has been neglected during the last decades and the park green areas truly require significant restorations. In accordance, according to a Greenpeace study, more than 80% of the people visiting Városliget support its renovation, however, not at the expense of the park's green areas (Hörömpöli-Tóth 2016). Although according to the Liget Project's website⁵² the percentage of the park's green area will increase after the renovation of the Városliget, alternative studies came to opposing results (Bodnár 2016; Eltér *et al.* 2014; Ráday 2016b; Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). A group of independent experts have prepared an alternative plan for the Liget Project, commonly named Városliget+ plan, proposing a solution for the Museum District with significantly fewer environmental degradations for the Városliget (Eltér *et al.* 2014). However, the Liget

⁵² <http://ligetbudapest.hu/>

Project has never included the alternative recommendations of the Városliget+ into its reconstruction plans. According to the calculations of Eltér *et al.* (2014), the built-in area of the Városliget would increase from the present 5,7% — which already exceeded the 3% maximum proportion, set in the Hungarian construction law (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015) — to 13% with the implementation of the Liget Project. Consequently, the percentage of green areas in the park would decrease and fall under the current level of 60% (Eltér *et al.* 2014). By contrast, the official, pro-Liget Project communication depicts the contrary, stating that the park's green areas will increase with the realization of the park's reconstruction. Although the restoration of the green areas has a highlighted role in the official communication, in reality, the landscape architectural tender was invited last from all the tenders invited in the framework of the Project (Bardóczy 2017). Furthermore, as there are no proper environmental impact assessments, there is no official communication about other potential effects of the Liget Project, causing further environmental degradation.

Currently, the Városliget has about 4-5 million visitors a year (Kanczlerne Veréb 2015), 7000-24000 person/day, depending on the season and labor-weekend days (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). According to the Liget Project's website⁵³, the number of people visiting the park yearly could rise to more than 6 million in the following years after the opening of the new museums (Liget Budapest 2017). Consequently, with the reduced green areas and the increased number of visitors, the citizens recreational and relaxation opportunities in the Városliget might decrease (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Moreover, the Liget Project has not calculated in the increased environmental load caused by the extended number of visitors in the park (Eltér *et al.* 2014). Yet, there are other issues related to potential environmental degradations caused by the implementation of the Liget Project: inter alia, the development of built-in area in the park would increase the so-called inner heat island effect, having

⁵³ <http://ligetbudapest.hu/>

additional negative impacts on the park's vegetation (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Furthermore, the planned underground constructions might on one hand, reduce the aboveground areas' ability to provide appropriate soil and depth to veteran trees (Ráday 2016b). On the other hand, they might change the underground hydrological processes inducing significant issues to the surrounding houses, since the Városliget's territory is originally a swampy area and in case of Danube floods the rising groundwater occasionally floats in the basements of the neighboring buildings (Ráday 2016b). In addition, many of the old trees of the Városliget are to be replanted as a consequence of the Liget Project's construction works (Ráday 2016b). At any rate, according to horticultural experts, trees can be replanted only in winter or early spring, during non-vegetation time and only younger trees can survive such translocations (Ráday 2016b). Yet, the replanting of many of the old trees, some of them more than 100 year old, has already started, even though the final location of these trees is still uncertain, since the plans of the new museum buildings have been permanently changing (Ráday 2016b). Moreover, the assessment measuring the number and condition of old trees in the Városliget contains a significant amount of conflicting and inaccurate information concluding, that the majority of the park's trees are in bad physical shape and needs to be cut down (Bodnár 2016). Yet, according to the analysis of independent horticultural experts, the condition of the Városliget's old trees is much higher and only a significantly smaller proportion of them need to be replaced (Bodnár 2016).

The expansion of the Budapest Zoo's territory is often mentioned among the pro-arguments in favor of the Liget Project. While the idea is well founded and the Zoo truly requires a bigger area, even the Zoo's reconstruction can be reviewed with environmental criticism, similarly to other elements of the Liget Project. Inter alia, the bulk part of the Zoo's extended territory would be occupied by a so-called Biodom, which is basically a special art of a greenhouse. Paradoxically, the Biodom would provide home for many of the Zoo's

endangered species and for a Hunting World Fair at the same time, so that e.g. the ivory collection of the Hunting World Fair would be in the same building with the elephant family of the Budapest Zoo (Szabó 2017). Consequently, even the Zoo would orient itself to the new Museum District of the Városliget, with the installation of additional exhibitions. Moreover, the Zoo's expanded territory will only reach the minimal required percentage of green surfaces by using a 'legal loophole' and considering the green area under the transparent roof of the Biodom as green surface (Garay 2015).

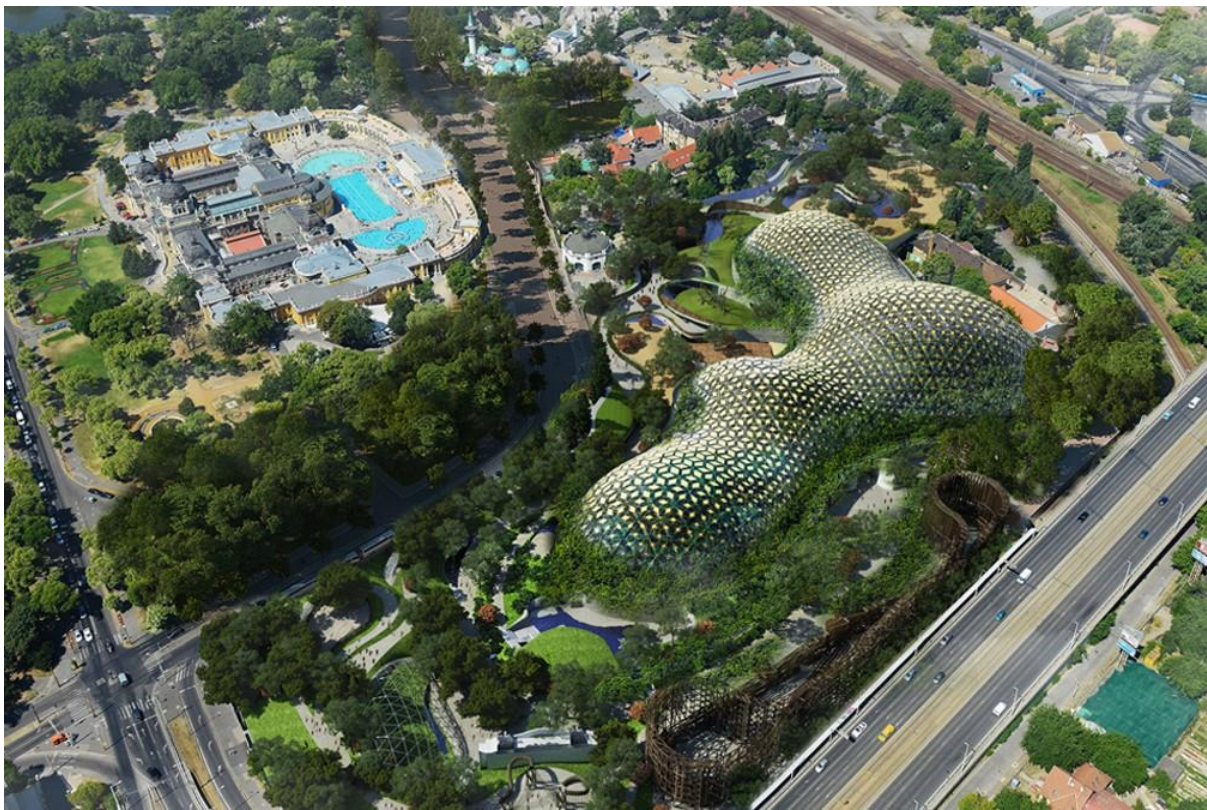


Figure 41: View of the planned Biodom

Another, from environmental aspects positively assessed element of the Liget Project is the closing of the Kós Károly Promenade, which connects the city centre with the M3 highway by crossing Városliget and causing significant air pollution in the area (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Yet, the road development necessary for the offload of the transit traffic from the Kós Károly Promenade is not included in the Liget Project's budget, but remained within the

competencies and scope of duties of the City of Budapest, which consistently with reason, has no financial sources for such road constructions (Városliget Info 2016).

As Szilágyi *et al.* (2015) emphasize, the reconstruction plans would induce significant changes in the Városliget, endangering the ecological balance and integrity of the park, since the proposed developments risk the survival of the park's vegetation. Kanczlerne Veréb (2015) analyzing the usage of the park comes to the conclusion that most of the park's visitors go to Városliget because of its passive recreational values. According to the results of a survey asking park visitors what do they like most in the Városliget, the most important attributes of the park are its landscape characteristics, the second most beloved elements are the vegetation and the old trees, the third are the calmness and peacefulness provided by the park, while the institutions of the Városliget are only on the fourth place, including the visit of the Budapest Zoo (Kanczlerne Veréb (2015). Studying public parks Conway (1996, 83-84) wrote the following:

“All the research on park use indicates that people still use them in the ways that parks have been used for generations: to meet in groups, to walk the dog, to take the children to play, to get away from it all, or to mark the passage of the various phases of life. People still like to feel the grass under their feet and they still need places where children can run and play safely. Above all, contact with nature, trees, birdsongs, beauty and quiet may be unfashionable, but many people will still battle to preserve them. The people who need parks most are the young, the old and the disadvantaged, those who do not have gardens of their own or private transport. These people cannot get to country parks and if their local park is threatened there is an immediate outcry. If the number of visitors to parks is declining, this is not because the design of the parks is at fault but because boarded-up and burnt-out buildings, bare flower beds and empty lakes make very unattractive places to visit. People want their parks the way they used to be: well-maintained, safe and peaceful places where they can enjoy the open space, flowers and trees and where they can stroll, relax or run around as they choose. And these are just the uses that parks were designed for originally.”

Although this quote from Conway is from 1996, her thoughts might be still valid, in case of the Városliget certainly. The pro-Liget Project communication with maquettes, posters and

other mediums are clearly misleading, e.g. demonstrating the planned museum buildings smaller than they will be by changing their relation to trees and peoples (Ráday 2016b) or by putting bigger trees around the new buildings than the old trees around the already existing institutions of the park. The social and professional reaction to the planned reconstructions of the Városliget is substantially controversial. Not only professional circles have expressed their opposition and/or boycotted the participation in any aspects of the implementation of the Liget Project, but also the civil society has demonstrated against the realization of the Museum Quarter. A group of activist, the so-called *‘Ligetvédők’*⁵⁴ (‘Park Protectors’) started a constant demonstration parallel with the launch of the Liget Project against the cut down of trees and the realization of the Project. They have been camping in the park and protected its trees by chaining themselves to them or simply by sitting on them, holding back environmental degradation by the construction works.



Figure 42: View of the House of Hungarian Music; misleading scales

The protection of the Városliget is however, a highly politicized topic symbolizing not only environmental values, but

also political notions, and as such resembles to the former conditions of environmental activism in Hungary, at the time of the regime change. As Harper (2006, 16-17), quoting Escobar (1998), points out, “it highlights the political struggles over definition — the

⁵⁴ Hungarian

definition of social actors who can legitimately make demands for environmental improvements, as well as the definition of resources, public space and public sphere”. According to Harper (2006, 96), in the 1990s “Hungarian environmental activists were redefining the term ‘environment’ to include not only non-human nature, but also the social world of public space, access to information and debate, and public participation in political decision-making.” Yet, it seems like the same encounter is occurring today and there is a struggle over information, democratic participation, public spaces, public spheres and environmental protection. As Unwin (2012) highlights, the lack of transparent decision-making and long-term consideration have been inherent features of cultural-policy making in Hungary for a long time. According to Unwin (2012), József Mélyi, the president of the Hungarian section of the International Association of Art Critics once said, that “cultural policy in Hungary means: demonstrate your power and never stop. Like the shark: eat everything you see”. True, the conditions of environmental policy in today’s Hungary seem to be similar as well.

Many experts of urban planning and cultural policy have profoundly criticized the concept of a Museum Quarter as well (Mélyi 2015; Schulz 2015; Schneller 2015a; Schneller 2015b). According to them the distribution of the museums in different parts of Budapest, mostly in form of ‘brownfield investments’, and the creation of complex city quarters with mixed functions would benefit the city more, from the aspects of urban planning. Moreover, Schulz (2015) argues – referring to the examples of the Museum Quartier in Vienna and the Culture Forum Berlin — that the expected increase in the number of tourists arriving to Budapest induced by the Museum Quarter is unfounded. According to Mélyi (2015) the concept of museum districts is not able to follow the rapid technological improvements of the 21st century and therefore its future is indefinite. In addition, Mélyi (2015) also points out, that museums are significant institutions by the evolution of peoples’ cultural identity.

However, the establishment of the Museum Quarter in the Városliget under controversial circumstances in a process created by illiberal democratic methods challenges the future prospects of the museums of the Quarter to display exhibitions about controversial topics, in a democratic and open manner (Mélyi 2015). Consequently, to influence the evolvement of peoples' cultural identity in the long term might be one of the reasons of an illiberal democracy to create new museums in a public park.

Yet, despite of the demonstrations the realization of the Liget Project — the biggest ongoing museum investment in Europa (Schulz 2015) — has already started, with the clearing of the objected vegetation and the demolishing of the old buildings, in whose place the new ones will be built. According to the latest news⁵⁵ about the reconstruction plans, the following alterations have been made compared to the original proposal of the Liget Project: The Ethnographic Museum will be built in place of the originally planned Museum of Architecture and Museum of Photography. Although the construction has been commonly justified with the argument, that the Ethnographic Museum will be built on the former Felvonulási Square, which is a parking area today, this area used to be a green area until the 1950's and should be given back to the Városliget, in accordance with Nebbien's plans. The Városliget Theatre will occupy the place originally allocated for the Ethnographic Museum. Besides, the design of the National Gallery is still under construction, whereas the House of Hungarian Music seems to stand on solid foundations so far. Yet, the Capital Circus of Budapest and the Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport will be moved to other locations, which are again, still indefinite. According to the original plans, the Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport was located in the former building of the Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport in the Városliget, but renovated. This former building, which was the permanent version of the Pfaff-Pavilion left

⁵⁵ The thesis was last edited on 28 July, 2017.

from the Millennium Exhibition, would have been demolished, rebuilt and extended. However, since it turned out that even the rebuilt version of the building would be inappropriately undersize to house a transportation museum, now it is planned to locate the Hungarian House of Innovation. Evidently, only the future will show how appropriate a rebuilt version of a pavilion from 1896, originally planned as a temporary building, could be, as location of the Hungarian House of Innovation. One might say, in the projection of the illiberal democratic regime, the Hungarian innovation is still at the level of the time of the Millennium, or should be kept here at least. As Bardóczi (2017) rightly points out, the actual aim of the Liget Project is not the park's restoration, but the reconstruction of the Millennium Exhibition. Even László Baán, government commissioner in charge of developing the Museum Quarter stated, that the ideal for the Museum Quarter is the time of the turn of the century and the Millennium (Bodnár 2015a). However, only this time the urbanization of the oldest public park of Europe would not remain temporary.



Figure 43: Postcard of the old Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport

5.2 Whereas in Berlin

Compared to the current changes and alteration plans related to the Városliget, there is nothing unconventional in the approaches of recent political systems of Germany to the Tiergarten. The Tiergarten with its 210 hectares has almost the same extension as it had at the time of its establishment as a public park in the mid-19th century (Senatsverwaltung für Umwelt, Verkehr und Klimaschutz 2017a). Since 1991 the park is a historic ‘garden monument’ and legally protected from intervention causing territorial losses, significant alterations in the park’s design, environmental degradation or the damage of the park’s ecological integrity. The Tiergarten has been developing in a well-balanced background of liberal democracies since the regime change. The aim of today’s garden conservation is to preserve the park’s ecological balance and complexity, including the conservation of the park’s old trees due to their historical and environmental significance (Senatsverwaltung für Umwelt, Verkehr und Klimaschutz 2017a). All activities practiced in the park’s territory causing potential environmental degradation have been forbidden, such as barbequing, which is banned since 2012 (Senatsverwaltung für Umwelt, Verkehr und Klimaschutz 2017a). Therefore, the park’s vegetation is well maintained and there are regular tree-planting programs, e.g. the project of cultivating new trees along the *Straße des 17. Juni* since the year of 2000 (Senatsverwaltung für Umwelt, Verkehr und Klimaschutz 2017a). As Serra (2015) emphasizes, Berlin’s Tiergarten is more than a huge park in the middle of the city, it is a place of Germany’s history and present. According to Serra (2015) the Tiergarten is

“Tourist attraction and recreational area, political stage and architectural show case, baroque park and English landscape garden, wild forest of oaks, chestnut trees, birchen, willows and artistic nature arrangements from lavender, gorse, rhododendron, sallow thorn, the fun meadow of the new, peaceful, friendly

Germany and a museum of its history full with warning signs of past glory, memorial of historic felony and monument of German great minds.”⁵⁶

Today, just as it used to be, the Tiergarten is a particularly important place in the life of Berlin and its citizens. Accordingly, all of its environmental, cultural, social and even



political functions have been treated as the treasures of the city, and there has been no such plans proposed, which would induce the change or override of any of these values.

Figure 44: Tiergarten today with horticultural monument

5.3 Future Perspectives

The future perspectives of the Városliget and the Tiergarten are significantly different, mirroring the difference between the approaches of a liberal and an illiberal democracy to their most important urban public parks. The Tiergarten has been steadily developing for decades and possesses a well-kept and honoured green area. Since it is a historic ‘garden

⁵⁶ “Touristenattraktion und Naherholungsgebiet, politische Bühne und architektonischer Schaukasten, barocker Park und englischer Landschaftsgarten, wilder Wald aus Eichen, Kastanien, Birken, Weiden und kunstvolles Naturarrangement aus Lavendel, Ginster, Rhododendron, Sanddorn, die Spaßwiese des neuen, friedlichen, freundlichen Deutschlands und ein Museum seiner Geschichte voller Menetekel vergangener Glorie, Mahnmale historischer Verbrechen und Denkmale deutscher Geistesgrößen.” (Serra 2015); German

monument’ protected by the German law, it can be claimed with high confidence, that the Tiergarten will further maintain its functioning as urban public park and will remain substantial and highly appreciated part of the life in Berlin.

By contrast, the Városliget’s future is rather dubious. The decrease or neglect of the park’s green area is a reoccurring issue in Hungary, just as the organization of vast events and enormous exhibitions, which has become a tradition in the oldest public park of Europe. Although a similar legal category to the German ‘garden monument’ exists in Hungary as well, the so-called ‘historic park’ protected by monumental conservation, and although a few other parks of Budapest⁵⁷ have been declared as such, the Városliget has never received this title (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015). Yet, if it had been declared as ‘historic park’, it would have been an obstacle for the Liget Project. However, as it seems, the modification of the existing law does not encumber the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime from accomplishing its plans anyway.

Over its history the Városliget has been several times used for the expression of symbolic power demonstration of diverse political systems. Yet, it could retained its functions as urban public park and provide many recreational and entertainment opportunities for its visitors. Indisputably, the recent reconstruction plans initiated by the illiberal democratic regime of Hungary will make the final step towards the permanent urbanization of the Városliget by decreasing the park’s green area and its environmental values in favour of the new Museum Quarter. Meanwhile, as the reconstruction plans have been continuously changing and the future of the newly planted and replanted trees in the Városliget is also obscure, the future perspectives of the oldest urban public park of Europe are obscure. There might be a pale and slight hope for change, a hope that the environmental values of the park will finally be

⁵⁷ Margitsziget and Népliget (Szilágyi *et al.* 2015)

managed as deserved, as honoured and substantial elements of the Városliget. Manifestly, the current plans are demonstrating a decidedly different vision for the park's future.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to examine how Budapest Városliget and Berlin Tiergarten symbolize different political regimes' approaches to the environment, considering different environmental and broader political values in different periods of their history under diverse political regimes. It also intended to explore, based on the Városliget example, how the approach of the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime to the environment differs from other political systems' approaches, and what the main characteristics of the current Hungarian approach are.

The thesis has argued, that urban public parks as small-scale symbols of nature are indicators of the natural environment. Moreover, as demonstrated, public parks have a complex range of functions providing *inter alia* environmental, recreational, educational, entertainment, cultural, political and aesthetic opportunities, and are symbolizing environmental, cultural, social, political, national and historical values. Urban public parks reflect social changes and challenges, and bear the sign of past and present political decisions related to them. Since both the Városliget and the Tiergarten have exceptional environmental, cultural, political and also historical intertexture with the cities they are located in and also with the life of their citizens, the approaches of divers political regimes to these parks indicate the same political systems' approaches to the environment as well. Although urban public parks provide an area of interpretation for this environmental, cultural, political and social nexus, the way how a political system and a society manage their natural environment has other influential factors as well, such as economic background, geographical location, political and environmental culture or administrative and technical characteristics.

The analysis of the Városliget and the Tiergarten in the context of political systems has focused on the most important stages of the parks' histories from their establishment as

public parks until recently. It has shown the main trends and patterns of the parks' histories from the aspect of different political systems' approaches to them through the introduction of their actions towards the parks chosen for comparison. Although history does not repeat itself, it might be possible to learn from it and this study has argued, that the contextualization of the recent case of Városliget historically and with a comparison, the examination of the history with a special focus, might reveal new perspectives for a contemporary challenge. As presented, public parks and landscape gardens are the symbols of liberal philosophy, democratic values, social coherence and the enlightened way of thinking. However, the comparative historical study of the Városliget and Tiergarten has shown, that the decline of these values in the course of the Hungarian illiberal regime has an impact on Városliget and its environmental assets as well. Furthermore, since urban public parks are the mediums of symbolic power demonstration and representation, the emblematic occupation of these parks with memorials, buildings or vast events is a way of taking over symbolic spaces.



Figure 45: Tiergarten after World War II with the Amazon Statue

The analysis of the history of Városliget and Tiergarten in the context of different political systems' approaches to the parks has

exemplified, that these approaches have been changing over time, depending on which functions and values of the urban public parks have been prioritized by particular political systems. Therefore, the prioritization of the parks' particular values and functions

characterize the approaches of different political systems to their public parks and to the environment. The thesis has explored, how the different environmental, political, social, cultural and historical values and functions of the Városliget and the Tiergarten have been interlinked over the parks' histories, yet with different connotations. Compared to the Városliget, the Tiergarten has been steadily developed until the 20th century, retaining the original and equally balanced functions of a public park. The most substantial changes since the Tiergarten's establishment as public park have occurred in the first half of the 20th century, as a consequence of the reconstructions initiated by the National Socialists and the damage caused by the Wars. In the Tiergarten's history the Nazi regime has been the only one, which has had substantially different approaches to the park and significantly altered its design, in accordance with the symbolic power demonstration demands of the National Socialist notions, considering of higher importance for the park's representative missions than its environmental functions. It has been also the only time in the Tiergarten's history, when a political regime proposed the transformation of a substantial proportion of the park's green area to an urban environment, which has after all, never been accomplished. During its history the Tiergarten has lost its characteristics as public park only once, after the 1945 Battle of Berlin, when following the destructions caused by the War the remaining park area was transformed to agricultural land. At any rate, it was the consequence of the devastation caused by World War II and the immediate survival needs of Berlin's population, and shortly after the immediate post-war era the Tiergarten's environmental values reclaimed their advantaged significance. The park was restored with enormous efforts and since then the preservation of the Tiergarten's ecological integrity has been among the highest priorities of (West) Berlin's citizens and the diverse city leaderships, all based on democratic principles. With the exception of the Nazi period, the ecological values of the Tiergarten have always been seen as privileged assets compared to any other values and functions attached to the

park, and the diverse political systems' approaches to the Tiergarten can be characterized accordingly.

By contrast, the Városliget have been experienced the competition and siege of other than environmental values several times throughout its history. The urbanization of the Városliget and the decline of its territory have started already in the 19th century. Although the construction of small-scale 'museum cities' in the Városliget was always planned to be temporary, almost every time after the closing down of such mass events the park's infrastructure has been left with new permanent buildings. The functions of the Városliget as cultural, national and patriotic symbol, and as medium of emblematic power demonstration have been recurrently more important, than the park's environmental assets. Consequently, the Városliget's territory has been significantly decreased several times over its history and has a much smaller extension today than at the time of its establishment.

After the regime change and the democratization of the Hungarian political system both the Városliget's vegetation and its infrastructure have been neglected. Yet, despite of its neglect and the recurring overload of the Városliget with extra, often environmentally damaging functions, still it could retained its characteristics as urban public park and provide many recreational and entertainment opportunities for its visitors. However, the recent reconstruction plans of the Városliget initiated by the illiberal democratic regime of Hungary would perpetually change the functions of the park by transforming it to an enormous and permanent Museum Quarter. One could argue, that the organization of vast exhibitions in the Városliget has already become a tradition and therefore the approach of the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime does not differ significantly from its predecessors. Nevertheless, as this thesis has argued, the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime's approach is different than any other past or present political regimes' approaches to the Városliget or to the

Tiergarten. On one hand, compared to previous exhibitions, this time the urbanization of the Városliget would remain permanent in a much larger scale than ever since its establishment as public park. On the other hand, compared to the Tiergarten, even though the Nazi regime has also initiated a large-scale decrease of the park's green area and used the park for symbolic power demonstration by redesigning it, it did not oppose the cultural values of the public park to its environmental ones, as does the illiberal democratic regime of Hungary by transforming Városliget to a Museum Quarter. The current Hungarian regime uses the significance of cultural values and functions in the Városliget as the main argument for the justification of symbolic power demonstration. The construction of a Museum Quarter in Europe's oldest public park would make an everlasting memorial for the illiberal democratic regime, overwriting the park's environmental aspects and functions as a historic public park. Furthermore, instead of learning from the history, the illiberal democratic regime intends to reconstruct a historic time, the time of the Millennium with all of its national and patriotic symbols. It aims to conserve the present with the Museum Quarter, and at the same time sets the past glory of the Hungarian conquest, celebrated at the Millennium, as ideal. Magyar (2008) argues, that parks are the illusions of eternity. In accordance, the Hungarian illiberal regime plans to leave an eternal imprint in one of the most significant public places of Budapest, without any meaningful social agreement, without transparent decision making and despite of substantial oppositions both in the professional field and in the society.



Figure 46: Ice-skating in Városliget

In conclusion, the comparative historical study of Városliget and Tiergarten in the context of different political regimes' approaches to these parks has illuminated, that the Hungarian illiberal democracy's approach to the Városliget is characterized by the domination of various declared and undeclared interests and agendas counterplotted with the

environmental aspects, and that the illiberal democratic regime of Hungary endeavours, based on the Városliget example, to overwrite environmental aspects as such. However, since urban public parks have a complex range of interlinking functions, from environmental through cultural to political and representative, and these functions are not separable from each other, it would be improper to draw general conclusion from the single and perhaps special case of Városliget about the overall approaches of the Hungarian illiberal regime to the environment. Therefore, the overall and general characterization of the Hungarian illiberal democracy's approach to the environment requires further research. Notwithstanding, the Városliget case offers the possibility — especially in the context of other recent reconstructions and construction plans related to many of Budapest's green areas —, that the Hungarian illiberal

regime's overall approaches and so other, recently emerging illiberal regimes' approaches to the environment and to environmental issues may be similarly adverse. If so, the accumulation of these policies as a consequence of the spread of illiberal democracies could substantially influence the future discourse on the environment and could eventual induce a turning point in environmental governance as well. Although the analysis of this questions requires further verification, exposing the Hungarian illiberal democratic regime's approaches to the environment based on the example of Városliget might provide an initial step to the further analyses of this challenge, both in Hungary and in a broader context.

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8 Source of Figures

Figure 1: Wintertime amusement at Városliget Lake

Image Source: <http://ujjealigetben.blog.hu/>

Figure 2: Ice-skating in Tiergarten, ca. 1820

Image Source: Wendland 1993, 164

Figure 3: De Vieux: Fashion in Városliget

Image Source: <http://varosliget.info/>

Figure 4: Women's fashion in Tiergarten, late 18th century

Image Source: Oschilewski 1960, 13

Figure 5: Women playing ice hockey in Városliget

Image Source: <http://varosliget.info/>

Figure 6: Ice-skating in Városliget

Image Source: Forteplan

Figure 7: Ice-skating in Városliget

Image Source: <http://ujjealigetben.blog.hu/page/2>

Figure 8: Tiergarten near to the Brandenburg Gate; Drawing of F.A. Calau, 1818

Image Source: Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985, 116

Figure 9: Amusement in Tiergarten at wintertime, ca. 1850

Image Source: Oschilewski 1960, 36

Figure 10: Map of Városliget, 1836

Image Source: <http://varosliget.info/>

Figure 11: Omnibus to Városliget

Image Source: <http://varosliget.info/>

Figure 12: Városliget Vurstli, early 20th century

Image Source: <http://varosliget.info/>

Figure 13: Beketow Circus in Városliget, 1904

Image Source: <http://www.nlcafe.hu/foto/20141120/a-varosliget-tortenete/>

Figure 14: Decrease of Városliget's territory as a consequence of the new Pest-Vác railway line, 1845-46

Image Source: Jámbor 2015, 72

Figure 15: Decrease of Városliget's park area due to the construction of the Budapest Zoo, 1864-66

Image Source: Jámbor 2015, 74

Figure 16: View of the National Fair, 1885

Image Source: Budapest History Museum

Figure 17: View of the Millennium Exhibition, 1896

Image Source: <http://www.nlcafe.hu/foto/20141120/a-varosliget-tortenete/>

Figure 18: Vajdahunyad Castle, early 20th century

Image Source: <http://www.nlcafe.hu/foto/20141120/a-varosliget-tortenete/>

Figure 19: Millennium Monument covered by red carpet in 1919

Image Source: <http://varosliget.info/>

Figure 20: Városliget after the Siege of Budapest

Image Source: <http://www.europeana.eu/>

Figure 21: Decrease of the Városliget's territory as a consequence of the construction of Dózsa György Street and Felvonulási Square, 1950s

Image Source: Jámbor 2015, 77

Figure 22: Budapest International Fair, 1950s

Image Source: <http://www.nlcafe.hu/foto/20141120/a-varosliget-tortenete/>

Figure 23: Budapest Industrial Fair, 1965

Image Source: <http://varosliget.info/>

Figure 24: Map of Tiergarten, 1765

Image Source: Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985, 109

Figure 25: Plan of Tiergarten by Lenné, 1837

Image Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Figure 26: 'Zelten', around 1840; Drawing of E. Lütke

Image Source: Wendland 1993, 163

Figure 27: Siegestsäule at the Königsplatz; Drawing of E. Weiß, 1875

Image Source: Wendland 1993, 198

Figure 28: Siegesallee with statues of historical figures, 1903

Image Source: Wendland 1993, 218

Figure 29: Riding in Tiergarten, 1933

Image Source: Wendland 1993, 230

Figure 30: Plan of World Capital Germania

Image Source: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de>

Figure 31: Berlin Zoo at home during World War II, 1943

Image Source: <http://theelephantgate.weebly.com/the-war-comes-to-the-zoo.html>

Figure 32: Great Star after the Battle of Berlin

Image Source: <https://www.pinterest.de>

Figure 33: Crop cultivation in Tiergarten near to Siegessäule, 1945

Image Source: <https://de.wikipedia.org>

Figure 34: Mayor Ernst Reuter while planting the first tree near to the Great Star, 1949

Image Source: Baudisch and Cullen 1991, 103

Figure 35: Map of Tiergarten, 1988

Image Source: Wendland 1993, 10-11

Figure 36: Balloon ascent in Városliget at the time of the Millennium Exhibition

Image Source: http://www.wikiwand.com/hu/1896-os_millenniumi_%C3%BCneps%C3%A9gek

Figure 37: Agricultural works in Tiergarten at the Great Star, 1948

Image Source: Orgel-Köhne and Orgel-Köhne 1985, 78

Figure 38: Balloon ascent in Tiergarten; Daniel Chodowiecki (1726-1801)

Image Source: Oschilewski 1960, 17

Figure 39: View of the planned Liget Project, 2017

Image Source: <http://ligetbudapest.hu/>

Figure 40: Original plan of the Liget Project, 2013

Image Source: Szilágyi *et al.* 2015, 6

Figure 41: View of the planned Biodom

Image Source: <http://magyarepitok.hu/gigantikus-biodom-epul-fovarosi-allatkertben>

Figure 42: View of the House of Hungarian Music; misleading scales

Image Source: <http://ligetbudapest.hu/>

Figure 43: Postcard of the old Hungarian Museum of Science, Technology and Transport

Image Source: <http://egykor.hu/budapest-xiv--kerulet/kozlekedesi-muzeum/2438>

Figure 44: Tiergarten today with horticultural monument

Image Source: <http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de>

Figure 45: Tiergarten after World War II with the Amazon Statue

Image Source: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_imglist_s.cfm?s_sub_id=8&sub_id=162§ion_id=14

Figure 47: Ice-skating in Városliget

Image Source: Magyar 2008, 122

Cover image: Nebbien's plan for the Városliget's main entrance

Image Source: <http://varosliget.info/>