Klára Nagy

THE EIGHTH OF BUDAPEST

CREATING NEW NARRATIVES FOR A STIGMATIZED

DISTRICT

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management

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CREATING NEW NARRATIVES FOR A STIGMATIZED DISTRICT

by

Klára Nagy

(Hungary)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy,

Management.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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External Supervisor

I, the undersigned, Klára Nagy, candidate for the MA degree in in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 29 May 2017

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Signature

Abstract

District VIII, a central yet stigmatized district of Budapest is in a visible transformation these days. The redrawing of the district's inner boundaries, urban redevelopment programs, tourism development concepts, newly emerged walking tours and other local events all show a growing interest in changing the bad reputation of the district. Considering these parallel and sometimes interweaving processes, the aim of this study is to define and compare the newly formulated narratives of District VIII, looking for similarities and missing components in terms of the favored cultural narrative. Research questions include what role does cultural heritage play in the urban redevelopment programs and touristic projects in the district and to what extent the different initiatives contribute to the objectives of increasing tolerance and social cohesion in the community of the district and beyond. The analysis of the stated problems was undertaken by using the conceptual framework borrowed from anthropology. The dichotomic notions of hosts – guests and front stage – backstage helped to position the narratives of District VIII regarding their scope and target audience. The main findings of this study include that the interpretation of District VIII is very much fragmented between different stakeholders. Furthermore two apparent characteristics of the outer units of the district, the immigrant and Roma culture, were found to be rather neglected in almost every discussed means of interpretation. The study also reflects on possible directions to enhance the cohesion of the parallel narratives.

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Table of contents

List of Illustrations

List of Tables

Introduction

"In which district do you think we are?" The question was posed by the guide to his group standing on the stairs of the National Museum in the beginning of an alternative walking tour that promised to challenge the bad reputation of District VIII[1] of Budapest by showing its hidden and rather ragged beauty. Inner Józsefváros, where the National Museum is located, situated between the Little and the Great Boulevard is not perceived to be part of the infamous 'Nyócker'[2], the least developed central district of Budapest. This part of the district, recently renamed to Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter) is in an in-between situation: not yet recognized as part of the downtown of Pest, but also disconnected from the 'typical' District VIII, situated 'beyond the boulevard'[3], an area charged with connotations of poverty, crime and prejudices against its Roma population. District VIII is indeed in a challenging situation of not only fighting prejudices, but also attaining the convergence of its less developed areas, which are very much in overlap with the territories of the Nyócker in the minds of people.

Presently District VIII is an area where a number of transformations take place engaging different actors with a shared aim of improving the reputation of the district. The redrawing of the district's inner boundaries, redevelopment programs, tourism development concepts, newly emerged walking tours and other local events and programs all show a determination to change the widely held image of the Eighth. What is also common in these initiatives is that they attempt to define either an existing or a new local identity in the different parts of the district.

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[1] The other names of District VIII, such as Józsefváros or the Eighth, will be also used throughout the thesis referring to the same territory.

[2] 'Nyócker' or 'nyolcker' is the informal abbreviation of the Hungarian term 'nyolcadik kerület' (eighth district) , referring pejoratively to the outer parts of the district

[3] „Beyond the boulevard [körúton túl]" is frequently used expression to refer to the perceived demarcation line represented by the Grand Boulevard between the 'real downtown' of Budapest and 'everything else'

Local identity is, in general, very much connected in general to the cultural assets of an area and its people that make the definition of local heritage part of this reimagining process.

Considering these parallel and sometimes interweaving processes, the aim of this study is to retrace and compare the newly formulated narratives of District VIII, looking for similarities and missing features in terms of the favored cultural identity. Further research questions include what role does cultural heritage play in the urban redevelopment programs and tourism in the district and to what extent these developments contribute to the objectives of increasing tolerance and social cohesion in the community of the district and beyond.

What makes District VIII of Budapest an adept case study for examining the intertwining of urban renewal, tourism and heritage is its great diversity in every sense. The two main parts of the district, on one side the aristocratic Palotanegyed and on the other the most derelict central area of Budapest shows already a sharp contrast, which is hard to frame when it comes to identity-building attempts. Diversity is an important characteristic of Józsefváros also because of its ethnic composition that makes it the most multicultural district of the city, although it is rather the high share of Roma in the total population that is mostly registered in common thinking. All these contrasts and challenges make the district difficult to interpret in a simple way. As the interpretation of a site or city is often undertaken by tourism, this study relies on various touristic narratives, including the mainstream and the alternative that were designed recently with the aim of highlighting the positive and interesting elements unknown in the Eighth.

The promotion of District VIII in the context of Budapest can be considered as a phenomenon mirroring main touristic tendencies and needs, namely the expansion of tourism activities to new areas and the increased popularity of alternative destinations that offer unique and off-the-beaten-track experiences which tend to focus on areas of a mixed or bad reputation. District

VIII stands in an in-between situation in this regard, as one part of it, Palotanegyed is already claimed to be part of downtown, while the outer parts of the district – still bearing a negative stigma – are being discovered only by alternative tourism, attracting both Hungarian and foreign tourists who look for seeing the 'backstage' of the notorious district. These alternative initiatives – that are not left without criticism – at the same time often have a societal mission too, namely the rapprochement of different social or ethnic groups by engaging all of them in interaction. This kind of mission is highly relevant in the case of District VIII that is inhabited by many ethnic groups.

Besides tourism, urban redevelopment programs focusing on selected neighborhoods individually are the most influential nowadays in shaping the contemporary image of District VIII. Beyond the narratives that they represent, another important question is what role the local community is given in these projects that describe their activities as representations of the local identity and culture. Recent proposals in the field of heritage protection and management addressed this issue by drafting a new approach, the so called Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) (UNESCO, 2011) for urban heritage management that emphasize strongly the widest possible inclusion of communities in all measures shaping the urban space. Although HUL is a fairly new concept coined in 2011 and is still in its pilot phase, the main principles and toolkit it provides might be useful for the future definition of a more inclusive cultural identity for Józsefváros.

Given all these intertwining aspects, this study aims to untangle the various narratives held about District VIII, with a reflection of its position in the broader framework of tourism in Budapest and its future potential to be an area for a different kind of tourism that attracts both the Hungarian and the foreign audience, which at the same time is beneficial for the local community as well. Acknowledging the favored position of Palotanegyed within District VIII,

this study will focus on the initiatives and projects taking place in the underrepresented outer parts of the district, especially Csarnok negyed, Magdolna negyed and Népszínház negyed. The main findings of the study aim to show that the mainstream and alternative tourism very much complement each other within the borders of the district, as the 'official' narrative emphasizes exclusively the easily marketable Palotanegyed neighborhood, while alternative tourism thrives in the other, more controversial parts of the district. However, studying main touristic tendencies both globally and in Budapest show that 'alternative' attractions that propose to reintroduce the 'other' and the 'exoticism' of going off-the-beaten track are of growing popularity, proven by the fact that mainstream agencies also started to promote this kind of experiences in urban tourism.

Budapest as a tourist destination is also found to be in a challenging situation, namely that despite its popularity the management and marketing of tourism is very much fragmented on the city-level. In lack of a comprehensive tourism strategy, the city must rely on the almost autonomous districts to encourage tourism in their territory. District VIII, being an unusual, but nevertheless exciting potential destination, might offer novel understanding of tourism development, if managed with the inclusion of the very diverse local community. Establishing a more inclusive and responsible tourism in the Eighth, for all kinds of explorers including local and foreign might attain the image change of District VIII.

The research underpinning this study mainly relies on a large number of studies and research projects that have been undertaken discussing the manifold challenges of District VIII. In addition I conducted semi-structural interviews with experts of various fields, namely of cultural tourism, urban planning and redevelopment, sociology and alternative walking tours, specialized in District VIII. For the analytical parts discussing perceptions and expectations of tourism I used mostly electronical sources (e.g. top 10 lists of attractions, online articles) as

they are the main information sources for tourists. Consulting electronic sources was a important part of the research, as the transformation of District VIII detailed in the thesis is a fairly recent and still ongoing process, producing new content continuously. As a potential continuation of the research I would also consider conducting a survey among the residents of the district to find out their position on the 'rebranding' attempts and results.

The study first introduces the main questions and notions that are relevant for discussing the case of District VIII, including urban tourism and heritage, their connection to sustainable development and local identity. The main concepts cover notions borrowed from the field of anthropology that will be applied when analyzing the district narratives. The following chapter is dedicated to the introduction of District VIII in relation to its main characteristics, common-held perceptions and recent municipal attempts to address the district's bad reputation. Then a longer analysis of the touristic narratives of District VIII is offered, embedded in the framework of tourism of Budapest. At last the findings of the analysis are summarized, reflecting on the possible development of identity-building and tourism and its difficulties in District VIII.

Chapter 1 – Conceptual framework

1.1. Heritage & tourism in the City

"Urban heritage is of vital importance for our cities – now and in the future. Tangible and intangible urban heritage are sources of social cohesion, factors of diversity and drivers of creativity, innovation and urban regeneration." (UNESCO, 2013:5)

Cities are increasingly deemed to be major players nowadays in shaping the future. The prediction announcing that by 2050 seventy percent of all humanity will live in cities (UNESCO, 2016) is only one telling example of commonly discussed facts that emphasizes the importance of cities. This, however, carries a whole range of consequences that entail a great concentration of political and economic power and socio-cultural diversity in cities that make them indeed important players that deserve our attention.

The rapid development of cities that we witness, of course, does not affect every urban community the same way. There are great differences between cities, let us only take for example the size of the population that makes a smaller city of 100,000 inhabitans incomparable to a global city inhabited by millions of people. While the expanding pool of global cities inflicts the greatest challenges for most of the urban fields of study, from urban planning to governance, smaller cities – on their own scale – are also experiencing changes, imposed by, for instance, their growing interconnectedness that make them exposed to the interest of a large number of people, future inhabitants and tourists alike.

Cities increasingly rely on their 'symbolic economy' (Zukin, 1995) or symbolic assets that constitute the core of representational strategies that cities apply to make themselves distinct from each other (Niedermüller, 2010). The sources of these symbolic assets are diverse, Niedermüller offers a four-component model (2010) in which the arts, cosmopolitan culture,

cultural diversity and the city's past and history play the key role. The success of representative strategies can be measured in the field of tourism that also supports the creation of unique narratives. These narratives, however, are created on various levels, from decision-makers to the everyday citizens who all possess different means to communicate their vision of the city.

Cultural assets are often derived from cultural heritage, let it be tangible or intangible, outstanding or of only local interest. Cities are often described as dynamic organisms that are subject of constant change (Bandarin & van Oers, 2014) that raise a wide array of questions concerning heritage: what role could heritage play in this everchanging context? What should be preserved from a city's past in in an era characterized by rapid development? What deems to be authentic, thus worth to safeguard in an environment characterized by living cultures? Who should decide on what remains to be seen or experienced by the future generations or even by contemporary societies? These questions show that the preservation, protection and even the promotion of cultural heritage is essentially a selective process that always reflects on certain value statements, often entangled with politics.

The same set of questions and the rule of selective promotion apply to tourism, more precisely to cultural tourism that is claimed to be one of the most important branch of the industry (McKercher & Du Cros, 2015). Cultural or heritage tourism as defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (US) is *'traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes visitation to cultural, historic, and natural resources''* (Gibson, 2015). As the definition makes clear, tourism displays only *representations* of a culture and its many components, which implies that only selected, highlighted cultural components are accessible through tourism. Another key term in the definition is *authenticity*, which is a recurring notion both in the field of tourism

7

and heritage that also limits the scope of culture to its 'authentic' form, which is in fact impossible to define – therefore it is rather selective.

Cities are important destinations for cultural heritage tourism. The high number (over 280) of World Heritage Cities inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO representing a total population of 164 million people (OWCH, 2017) call our attention to a very important element missing from the above cited definition, which is the urban population. The local communities, or as they are called in the discourse of tourism, the host community also deserves to be taken into account when deciding, planning and managing the representations of culture for tourism. The 'human component' is increasingly important in the field of heritage that is demonstrated by a growing number of official documents, such as declarations and conventions that puts the local community in the focus of cultural heritage management. Tourism has been also reconsidered according to these ideas, shifting the attention from the visitor experience to the quality of interactions between the local community and tourists.

The discourse of heritage and tourism has progressively been endorsed by the notion of sustainability. In the age of a global urge for development, the values propagated by heritage namely the community-based safeguarding of traditions and material culture seems to contradict the processes of globalization. This very tension however did not remain unanswered by the policy-setting international organizations. Sustainability has become already a key word in the last decades, but its first mentioning in relation to heritage in an official document was done by the Budapest Declaration, adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2002 (Labadi & Logan 2016). The relevant section of the Declaration goes as follows: [the World Heritage Committee]

'seeks to ensure *an appropriate and equitable balance between conservation, sustainability and development, so that World Heritage properties can be protected through appropriate*

activities contributing to the social and economic development and the quality of life of our communities' (World Heritage Committee, 2002)

Although the text refers only to World Heritage properties in this case, later adopted international instruments strengthened further the interrelatedness of culture/heritage, society development and sustainability. For instance, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) ratified by 171 State Parties claims intangible cultural heritage to be a 'guarantee of sustainable development', envisioned by a 'the widest possible participation of communities' in the maintenance, transmission and management of their own heritage (UNESCO, 2003). This community-based approach was rather unprecedented before the ICH Convention, but it became an important cornerstone of sustainability by nowadays.

Cultural heritage in cities and sustainable development are presented as interlinked elements in various recently adopted documents, too, among which the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) by UNESCO is of key importance for this study. Acknowledging the high and growing number of urban World Heritage Sites, UNESCO was committed to provide a special framework to ensure the conservation and management of historic areas within their broader urban context (UNESCO, 2016). The HUL approach provides a new definition for the historic environment:

"the historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of 'historic centre' or 'ensemble' to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting." (UNESCO, 2011)

Prior to the adoption of HUL in 2011, the notion of urban heritage was in a process of constant redefinition that gradually led to the affirmation that protected city centers should not be considered valuable for their aesthetic attractiveness or historic significance only, but also for

their function of social habitats (Sonkoly, 2011). That is the reason why the landscape approach won over the previously used 'historic area' concept, as it reflected better the socio-cultural and intangible aspects of urban heritage beyond its spatial and physical characteristics (Sonkoly, 2011). Again, the role of the society and the ultimate goal of achieving social cohesion by integrating heritage aspects into the urban governance strategies are very much emphasized by this HUL document.

The Historic Urban Landscape approach aims to cover all aspects of the urban center, from tangible elements to the activities it hosts, all based on the assumption that urban landscape in its complexity is the bearer of local identity (Sonkoly, 2011). Linking identities to space, however is not an automatic process, it is done by appropriation of the space, ideally by the community, but it can also be utilized by external actors, as it is the case in many popular city destinations, where the tourism industry took over city centers from everyday functions. In this sense, historic centers can be regarded as spaces of politics, as there is a wide range of stakeholders that can shape and impact the use of a certain space. Although the HUL recommendation is only a soft law, which is to be implemented by UNESCO Member States on a voluntary basis, it definitely points to a new direction, which can be concluded in that urban governance and development should be defined on the basis of local characteristics, including the unique historic layering of cultural and natural values.

1.2. Main concepts

"Urban tourism brings together people, place and consumption and mixes cultures, values, expectations and experiences, it provides an exciting landscape for exploration." (Edwards, Griffin, & Hayllar, 2008:1034).

As the quote implies, tourism in the city triggers a multitude of interactions that make considerable impacts on both the people and the places involved. Since the 1970s anthropology,

defined as the study of people, their evolutionary history and behavior (What is Anthropology?, 2017), has endorsed tourism as one of its fields, focusing on tourists as subjects, their motivations, attitudes, expectations and experience with the local community and place while on a journey. The central paradigms of the anthropology of tourism are authenticity, the dichotomy of hosts and guests and the front and back stage of experiencing the local culture of a destination. These terms form the conceptual framework of this study, therefore this chapter is dedicated to discuss them in the context of urban tourism.

Authenticity

In the context of urban tourism 'authenticity' is hard to define and what is more, it is very often unwarily or misleadingly used in any kind of tourist materials. 'Authentic' souvenirs and experiences are offered on almost every corner of the touristic districts in cities, alternative tours are promoted as unique experiences to experience the 'real life' of locals. "*The rhetoric of tourism is full of manifestations of the importance of authenticity*" – wrote MacCannell (1999:14). The role of the tourism industry can be described as to provide interpretations of authenticity to determine the expectations of tourists. The critics of such catchphrases raise the alarm that these real life experiences are rather artificial 'staged authenticities' (Boorstin, 1964), while according to a more flexible approach authenticity is essentially a relative term, constructed by the individual, who decides what he or she accepts as authentic based on his or her expectations (Pusztai, 2011). As this term is inevitable in the discourse of tourism, I will also refer to it throughout this study, with the intention of making the reader aware of the various possible meanings that this term can convey.

The gaze

John Urry introduced the notion of the tourist gaze, which is to describe an attitude and a distinct way of observation by people on holiday (Urry, 1990). The main motivation of

traveling is to escape the routine of everyday life and absorb in a new environment that is 'out of the ordinary'. Tourists therefore visit and look at new places with curiosity, which is contrasted to the non-tourist attitude and experience that is already used to its own environment, making the locals less interested in their locality. The gaze of tourists, however, does not develop spontaneously, as it tends to be constructed and influenced by tourism experts. They determine what is to be seen and encountered by the foreign audience, by facilitating or limiting access to certain areas or activities (Urry, 1990). In this regard the emergence of the so-called alternative tourism agencies can be considered a progress as their offer includes a wider range of possible experiences and encounters with the local culture, although their staging can be also measured on the front stage – back stage continuum.

From the backstage to the front stage

When authenticity is put into the focus, we inevitably make a distinction between the 'forged' and the 'real' experience. As both the field of tourism and anthropology apply this reference point, the notion of the front stage and the back stage are relevant to discuss. According to MacCannell tourist experiences can be defined on a continuum from the 'backstage' to the 'front stage' (1999). He argues that the tourism industry – especially on the scale of mass tourism – focuses on the polishing of the front area that is nevertheless communicated with reference to authentic experiences. Cities are especially interesting as tourist destinations, since compared to more isolated sites or attractions, the visitor experience is less easily forged in the urban setting (Niedermüller, 2000). In the city there are many possibilities to go off the beaten track that is increasingly played upon by alternative tourism, as later will be explained in detail.

The front stage and the backstage are however to be found in cities as well. Looking at cities as a whole, the front stage is located in areas where mass tourism is present, concentrated around famous sights. The definition of backstage is harder to make as the backstage is

connected to the 'authentic' and the 'original', it is perceived to be the space, where the locals live their life. When looking for authenticity, some tourists get interested especially in this backtstage area, which usually remains hidden behind the well-promoted sites and experiences. However, when the 'tourist gaze' settles in the back stage in search of authentic experiences, it is probable that it is only a 'staged authentiticy' that can be encountered.

According to Szijártó, the front stage and backstage of the urban space and culture can be defined beyond the touristic discourse too (2010). The same dichotomy applies between the groups of political power, the elite (front stage) and the subcultural groups formed within the urban society (backstage). Szijártó (2010) brings the example of urban local festivals that are organized to display the local culture or what is meant by it in the interpretation of the decision-makers. The backstage in Szijártó's opinion is the turf of smaller communities whose objective is to create and form local identity or narrative on a smaller scale.

Hosts and guests and in between

The early works on the anthropology of tourism mostly dealt with the host-guest relation between pre-industrial groups and tourists in the context of third world tourism (see Bruner et al., 1994), where the cultural distance is larger, therefore the myth of the Other is even more relevant. In these cases, global power structures play in the background, where the different forms of cultural expressions are turned into commodities, transformed and petrified to meet the needs and expectations of the foreign audience.

There are considerable differences in the host-guest relation in the previously described case and in cities. Most urban tourists are also city-dwellers themselves, therefore the aim of the journey is less about experiencing the cultural shock of meeting the "exotic other" (Niedermüller, 2000).The principle motivations are nevertheless the same, the quest for authenticity is essentially a key element of urban tourism, along with the desire of experiencing

13

the quotidianity of the city and its residents (Maitland, 2013). Pre-forged images are however determining expectations, famous and widely promoted sights are on the must-see list of almost every tourist that emphasizes the importance of the image and narratives created by the tourism industry.

There are however new initiatives that bring back the notion of otherness to a certain extent in the field of tourism. These initiatives aim to engage the least privileged groups, e.g. homeless people and slum-dwellers in the tourism industry by incorporating their narratives of the city and providing them with the benefits of working in tourism. Poverty tourism shows the very opposite of what usually city marketing aims to promote (Allen, 2016). Such novel services have a social mission, to raise awareness of important social problems, to provide benefits to the contributors and also to contest the 'official' representation of a city's identity.

'Slumming' or in other words, touring in the poorest areas is not a completely new phenomenon, the early examples are dated to the Victorian era of London (Kirk, 2016). There are varying opinions on the impacts and intentions of such projects, some suspect economic exploitation in the background, while others go as far as to call these services 'poverty porn' calling the attention on the unequal power relation in the background between the visited and the visitors in the case of ghetto tourism (Nuwer, 2015). From an anthropological point of view, these tours reintroduce the notions of 'the Other' and 'cultural distance' in urban tourism, already known from third world tourism, while its intentions of such initiatives remain dubious.

Another phenomenon, which is important to explore in the context of this study is the emergence of alternative walking tours organized for locals, who wish to rediscover their usual environment in a different way. The companies in question share the mission of making the locals discover their city applying the tourist gaze. Being a tourist or doing sightseeing in one's own neighborhood reveal a new quality for the everyday life for citizens. These companies are

also very creative and even risk-taking in their selection of topics. These unusual topics and neighborhoods presented by alternative tours attract both a domestic and the foreign audience. Citizens acting like tourists in their own city form therefore a new group beyond the hosts and the guests, which is the group of 'local tourists' who are willing to reconnect with their city.

Chapter 2 – An Introduction to District VIII
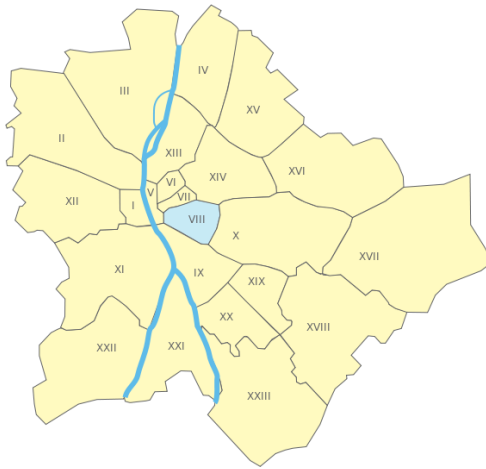
1. Figure: Map of Budapest (Wikipedia, 2017)

District VIII or Józsefváros (Joseph Town) is one of the 23 districts of Budapest, covering a territory of 6,78 km^2, which makes it the largest among the central districts of the city. It is traditionally divided into three main parts, Inner, Middle and Outer Józsefváros; and more recently within these parts into eleven quarters. Its population is 76 250, which is also ethnically the most diverse in the city: beyond Hungarians (77.05%), there is a high number of Roma (4%), German (1.31%) and other domestic nationalities (2.03%) (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2011)[4], but there is also a growing number of other nationalities among whom the Chinese, Arabs and Vietnamese are the most significant (Fabula, et al., 2017).

In its history, there were two important periods that contributed mostly to the present-day general image of the district as a stigmatized and marginalized district. The first was between the end of the 19th century and the WW1. It is in this period that aristocratic palaces and universities were established in Inner Józsefváros (now called Palotanegyed), making it the artistic, scientific and educational center of the city at that time (György, 2012). Parallel to that the outer parts hosted a growing number of workers of the flourishing industrialization, along with artisans, carters and the petty bourgeois. The fact that two railway stations, the Keleti and the Józsefváros stations, were located in the district predestinated it to become the destination for foreign and domestic immigrants (Fabula, et al., 2017). By this time already, the district showed a very diverse composition of local population with great contrasts: while Inner

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[4] Non-domestic nationalities added up to 4,57%, while there is 11,04% who did not provide an answer.

Józsefváros was an aristocratic neighborhood, the outer parts resembled for long the countryside with comfortless flats and at a time it became known also for its brothels, high rate of crime and segregation (György, 2012).

The second period is following the political transition of the 1990s. By this time the outer parts of the district were already characterized by a severely dilapidated housing stock, mostly due to the wartime destructions, as no comprehensive renovations were undertaken. The more well-off residents left the district and were replaced by the lower skilled worker class (Fabula, et al, 2017). The increasing spatial and social segregation resulted in its reputation as an ethnic ghetto within the city (Keresztély, James W., & Virág, 2017).

2.1. Perceptions

It is not only the social composition, physical appearance and economic performance of District VIII that shows considerable contrasts and diversity, but also its perception as a whole points to the fact that the reputation of the Eighth is very divergent depending on which part of the district is in the focus. In the following I summarize the perceptions of District VIII from two different, outsider points of views. The first one is of the foreign audience who has no background knowledge of the district. The second point of view represents the 'public discourse' of non-resident Hungarians, who have a rather strong image of a stigmatized and marginalized district in their thinking.

A District is Reborn – the foreign gaze

Despite its wide-held bad reputation among the citizens of Budapest, District VIII has recently emerged in the center of attention of many international websites that promote this district as the new bohemian hub of Budapest for tourists who are looking for experiencing a more adventurous face of the city. Since usually tourists have only limited information on the visited

site, they are also expected to be less biased when it comes to evaluating their experiences. It is this 'uninvolved' gaze, what is interesting to explore in order to see the highlights of a district, whose heritage is rather underrated or unknown among the citizens of Budapest and most visitors of the city. For this purpose I analyzed four online articles from The Guardian (Coldwell, 2014), The New York Times (Crevar, 2010), Financial Times (McMullen, 2013) and Vogue (Akkam, 2015) that recount the transformation of the Eighth.

The selected articles prove that for the outsider's gaze, administrational and official boundaries do not play an important role. Most of the articles, when talking about the Eighth, detail exclusively the attractions of Inner Józsefváros/Palotanegyed, while the outer parts of the district are mostly not mentioned at all or are included only through a few bars situated near the boulevard. All the articles seem to be aware of the previous bad reputation of the district (citing mostly crime and prostitution) and they all tend to emphasize the great contrasts that the district represents both historically and physically. The most prevalent adjectives and words used for describing the district are bohemian, shabby, easygoing, arty, but the rundown and gritty environment is also mentioned in all article that emphasize further the contrasts that one may experience in the Eighth.

In terms of what is to be found in the district, it is mostly a great selection of bars, cafés and restaurants that is highlighted. Main heritage-related attractions include the 19th-century palaces, art galleries and a rich music scene including jazz and underground places. It is important to note that these characteristics almost without exception all belong to Inner Józsefváros / Palotanegyed that on one hand proves its successful branding that was consciously planned to surmount the negative connotations of the 'Nyócker', while on the other hand it fails to include existing highlights from the outer parts of the district. Some places from the mostly neglected parts are however included, like the new 'ruin bars', a synagogue and the

18

art nouveau architecture that is to be seen in a great number, although unfortunately in decay in these outer neighborhoods. Contrasting and comparisons are used to help the reader to identify better the Eighth: it is presented as something unique, which is a 'world away from the stag parties of the Seventh' (Guardian). The 'transformed' Józsefváros is compared to Berlin (Kreuzberg) and London (Hoxton) that have also witnessed a 'nascent bohemian scene' in the last few decades. These examples are indeed important, when it comes to the predictions concerning the districts future challenges on the medium and long term (e.g. gentrification).

The changing face of the ghetto – the non-resident gaze

District VIII is probably the district with the worst reputation among all the districts in the eyes of the residents of Budapest. Its dilapidated housing stock, demographic and segregation indexes point to the fact that despite the district's central location, it is the least developed part of the inner city (Fabula et al., 2017). The district possesses a strong and distinctive visual representation in the minds of Budapest citizens (György, 2012). The popular name 'nyócker' is very commonly used to refer to District VIII, although only a few parts represent the run-down and segregated neighborhoods that are usually meant by it[5]. This section focuses on the commonly held representations of District VIII and its changing perception by the non-resident community of Budapest.

György gives several examples of popular representations of District VIII in her dissertation on the identity of the Eighth (2012). From these I will refer to the one that was in my opinion the most efficient in diffusing widely the 'visuals' of the Eighth, which is the animation film 'Nyócker!' (Gauder, 2004). The fiction movie strongly plays upon the physical environment and topics that characterize this part of the city. The Romeo and Juliet type of story takes place

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[5] It refers to the territory framed by Rákóczi tér, Horváth Mihály tér and Mátyás tér

in the crumbling streets and courtyards of the Eighth, depicting the main characteristics attached to the 'nyócker', such as crime, prostitution and ethnic diversity. The movie also refers to this neighborhood as a ghetto, which is another commonly used term for describing the middle parts of the district, however it does not necessarily mean a negative connotation in the eyes of the locals (György, 2012). In sum, it can be said that the depiction of District VIII, more precisely the 'nyócker' that this movie applies was heavily based on commonly held stereotypes and important characteristics of the district that in a way also strengthened further this image of the Eighth as a 'dangerous place' for the non-resident audience.

A more recent phenomenon in the Eighth is the emergence of the 'alternative' services. For instance, alternative walking tour companies started to develop tours from 2007 in the district. The tours of the pioneering Beyond Budapest promise to introduce the 'happy face of Budapest' (Beyond Budapest, 2017) in District VIII, which is – in contrast to the stereotypes – not dangerous, but rather exciting, spontaneous and exotic. Since 2007, new tours have been introduced by different companies in more or less the same area, with different foci and profile, however they share the same mission: make people cross the 'invisible boundaries'[6] and experience a marginalized area of the district beyond stereotypes. The attitude towards District VIII has recently been changing indeed. For instance a popular local patriot website, We Love Budapest, has posted several articles praising this new 'vibrantly up-and-coming hub of culture' that replaces the formerly 'notorious neighborhood' (Fári, 2016). The main highlight is of course Palotanegyed that has been revitalized with the explicit aim of making it a livable central neighborhood of a strong cultural profile.

This process has started partly because of the transformation of the adjacent District VII, where party tourism and profit-oriented enterprises ruled out the previous community spaces and bars

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[6] A term used by the guide of the later described Hosszúlépés walk.

of a mixed social and cultural mission. Most of these places decided to simply continue their activities, but in a different location, the cheaper and in a way more 'authentic' District VIII (Balkányi, 2014). Many discuss that this is the beginning of a gentrification process that in case if it follows the example of District VII, it will drastically change the milieu and social composition of the district in a short time (Kováts, 2015).

The changing milieu is also due to the regeneration programs initiated by the local municipality and the citizen community that is exceptionally proactive in Palotanegyed, but also emerging in other corners of the district. Palotanegyed indeed enjoys a growing popularity these days among tourists and citizens from other parts of the city, who both tend to be attracted to historic city cores (Niedermüller, 2000) the so-called creative neighborhoods (Smith, et al., 2017). The outer parts of the district, beyond the boulevard are also getting more popular, however for the moment it is rather famous for its alternative night life and community spaces, than for its existing, but rather decaying heritage of for instance artisan tradition or its multicultural cultures.

2.2. New borders – new identities?

In 2004 in the framework of an administrative reform the municipality of District VIII divided the district into eleven quarters of "differing character and identity"[7] (see Figure 2) (ITS Józsefváros, 2015). Traditionally it was divided in three main parts, Inner, Middle and Outer Józsefváros, the Great Boulevard[8] being the borderline between the Inner unit and the rest of the district. The boulevard is a strict boundary in each district it crosses, but the contrast it assists might be the greatest on the two sides of the József boulevard (Fabula, et al., 2017). By the creation of quarters, some units that existed before were only given a new, more marketable

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[8] In the following I will use only 'boulevard' for the Great Boulevard (Nagykörút), if not indicated differently

name (eg. Inner Józsefváros received a new name 'Palotanegyed [Palace Quarter]' referring to its noble past), some were created as new quarters with boundaries that have no historical precedence (eg. Magdolna negyed), but were in a need of reshaping previous bad connotations. Some other parts however still seem to be lacking a clear concept or development objective.

By crossing the boulevard, one may experience a huge gap between a well-off area and the least developed part of inner Budapest. This gap is so considerable that people inhabiting these parts do not feel to belong to the same district (Fabula, et al., 2017). Palotanegyed is a neighborhood aspiring to be included in the downtown of Pest on the mental map of locals and tourists, consequently the citizens of Palotanegyed have an increased 'inner-city identity', which is demonstrated by their claim to be of Palotanegyed and not of Józsefváros, when asked (Fabula, et al., 2017). It proved to be equally true regarding the other side, too, where residents did not see Palotanegyed as an integral part of Józsefváros. This divergence of identities is further emphasized by the recent urban redevelopment programs initiated by the municipality, which targets individually three quarters of the district, Palotanegyed, Magdolna negyed and Corvin negyed.

According to Scott making new borders is a highly political project that has on one hand the aim of reconstructing the local sense of identity, but on the other hand it also helps to sort out groups that are not conformed with this newly created identity and image (Keresztély, et al., 2017). Both aims can be identified in the later detailed urban redevelopment programs. The redevelopment of Corvin negyed for example meant the total cleansing of the former population and dilapidated housing, while in the case of Palotanegyed the reconstruction aimed for the renewal of the historic milieu of the neighborhood. In each case, however, the municipality interpreted the changes as the prerequisite for the tailored development programs that are reshaping the district – or parts of it – these days too (ITS Józsefváros, 2015). These

programs have thus a very clear objective which is to transform the image of the district for the 'better'.

2. Figure: Map of District VIII with the quarters (Courtesy of Viktor Annus; edited by the author)

2.3. Redevelopment programs

The recent rehabilitations applied three different approaches in District VIII, each implemented in different units with differing conditions. Similarly to the intention behind the reorganization of district units, the aim of the area-based integrated approach applied in the development programs was to match the development needs to the unique conditions and problems of a unit. Without going into technical details, hereby I present the three approaches in order to show the

main territorial priorities of the municipal agenda, pointing to their tourism or culture related policies.

Palotanegyed, the Downtown of Europe – Culture-based redevelopment

3. *Figure: Mikszáth tér in Palotanegyed (Balkányi, 2015)*

Palotanegyed [Palace Quarter] enjoys the top priority in all development projects of the municipality. Being the only unit located within the boulevard, it has a direct connection to the city center of Budapest. Both its location and its history provide a better position for Palotanegyed, which was called by Máté Kocsis, present Mayor of the district, 'the cultural and economic catalyst of the district' (Tihanyi, 2012). As its name and also its unique built heritage implies, Palotanegyed was used to be the home of many Hungarian noble dynasties establishing their cosmopolitan bases in Pest-Buda from mid-18th century. The palaces have gained new and mostly public functions by now (e.g. hosting universities and libraries), but as emphasized by the renaming of the district, the built heritage still plays an important role in shaping the image of the district.

This image is enhanced further by the Európa Belvárosa Program [Downtown of Europe Program] that is defined as a cultural-economic development program aiming to integrate Palotanegyed in the city center of Pest by creating a 'unified cultural heritage zone' (ITS Józsefváros, 2015) that attracts not only the citizens of Budapest, new (creative) enterprises, but also tourists. It is done by the development of public spaces, renovation of residential buildings, installing floodlights and supporting 'community-building and image-enhancing'

24

programs (EUB Józsefváros, 2009), just to mention a few. Palotanegyed is also characterized by an active civil community represented by CaPE (Civilek a Palotanegyedért [Citizens for the Palace Quarter]) that has been consulted throughout the development program to identify the needs of the local community.

 "*The status of Palotanegyed in the long run will be more and more approaching the position of District V*" – concluded György Alföldi (Tihanyi, 2012), former leader of Rév8, the company responsible for the development programs and urban rehabilitation planning in District VIII since 1997. Palotanegyed is evidently the district's highlight that represents an important opportunity for District VIII to gain a better reputation, so that people associate a nicer image with the Eighth, grandeur and a vibrant cultural life instead of the pressing social problems dominating the outer parts of the district. Furthermore, the mayor of the district also hopes that the increasing attractiveness of this unit will have an impact on the entire district's perception that could elevate the district's status onto a higher level (Tihanyi, 2012). It is, however, hard to imagine that such a spill-over of positive impact could be realized on its own, without the coordinative efforts of the municipality or other agents interested in the development of the entire Eighth.

Magdolna negyed – The socially sensitive rehabilitation

4. Figure. Mátyás tér in Magolna negyed (Magdolna Negyed Blog,2008)

Only a ten minutes walk away from the edge of Palotanegyed is Magdolna negyed located that has a mixed image nowadays: some associate it with the ghetto, others with a shift in identity thanks to the social rehabilitation model undertaken on this territory (Baranyai, 2016). The main

challenges of the neighborhood include the highest level of segregation in the city, high unemployment rate, a dilapidated housing stock and high criminality (Baranyai, 2016). The Magdolna Negyed program was launched in 2005 and until today three phases have been implemented comprising the refurbishment of housing stock, renewal of public spaces and the realization of community-building and cultural programs. The overall aim was to make the neighborhood livable both socially, economically and environmentally for the local community (Rév8, 2005). Although there are still considerable differences between this neighborhood compared to other districts, the security and physical environment have visibly improved. In 2008 a report already concluded that the "Mátyás tér is not a taboo anymore" (Török, 2008), referring to the neighborhood's central square, where most of the community programs take place and where a new community center, Kesztyűgyár is located that aims to be a meeting place of the very diverse local community. Given the still rather low conditions of this neighborhood, the municipality has no plans to attract tourism to this area. However, many of the alternative routes include a stop at Mátyás tér, with the explicit aim of showing the audience the recent changes undertaken in this unit.

Corvin negyed – The brutal rehabilitation

5. Figure: Corvin negyed in the making (kutyabarat.hu, 2013)

The most apparent changes were undertaken in the former Józsefváros Központ [Józsefváros Centrum], now known as Corvin negyed. The 'brutal' or 'bulldozer' rehabilitation (Ladányi, 2008), as it is often labelled, meant an almost fully extensive erasure of the dilapidated housing stock of this part of the district, putting in the place of old houses modern

apartment houses that are nowadays among the most expensive housing possibilities in the city. The project – which is still in progress – did not only encompass a change of the built environment, but the former tenants were also replaced by new, more affluent residents, moving out the prior, mainly poor people to the peripheries of the district. In this regard, it is the opposite of the socially sensitive rehabilitation undertaken in Magdolna negyed, where the former tenants could remain in the renovated buildings owned by the municipality. The 'bulldozer rehabilitation' of Corvin negyed thus brought about the phenomena of gentrification, which is a recurring issue both historically and nowadays in the district. The Municipality that agreed with the private investors about the Corvin Boulevard project received much criticism for their 'socially irresponsibility' as the investors did not only pull up an entire new quarter, the Corvin quarter, but according to the original intentions, they made possible the improvement of the district's image and market position (Papp, 2010).

Chapter 3 – The narratives of tourism

The main motivations behind going on a journey is always a quest for a unique experience, an escape from everyday life, to feel the sensations of discovery (Franklin, 2003). Every tourist is looking for something that they do not have where they come from, should it be found on the 'front stage' or in the 'backstage' of the city. In the field of tourism narratives are created on both levels and in between that define what is to be seen and experienced in the city (Zukin, 1995). Symbolic assets play an important role in this process, which is why every destination seeks to emphasize its own outstanding characteristics, which usually means showcasing local culture and heritage, arts and cultural diversity (Niedermüller, 2010).

3.1. Mainstream tourism – the front stage

Connected to uniqueness, another important quality is authenticity. In MacCannell's view however lies a paradoxical situation: while he claims tourism to be a quest for authenticity and the experience of "real life" (MacCannell, 1999), tourists in other scholarly works are rather described as superficial observers who are driven by their own expectations and interpretations of an 'authentic experience' or the 'myth of the Other' (Craik, 1997). They tend to be passive, absorbing what is offered on the 'front stage', which is the field of official marketing campaigns and major tourism agencies that take up the task of interpreting the city for a great audience (MacCannell, 1999). These campaigns indeed focus on the 'bests of the best', they are selective and general at the same time, not willing to risk the reputation of a destination by showing contrasts or unveiling controversial issues in the urban space. The 'backstage' is therefore hidden behind the scenes, giving way to 'stages authenticities' offered by mass or mainstream tourism.

The sites that are put on a must-see list created for visitors are meant to represent the landmarks of a city. It is hard to imagine that one would leave out for instance seeing the Eiffel tower on his or her first visit to Paris, or the Parliament building in Budapest. These highlights attract every kind of visitor that can result – in an extreme case - in the emergence of 'tourist bubbles' (Judd & Fainstein, 1999) or 'tourist zones' (Craik, 1997) in cities, defined as areas that have been transformed to meet the expectations and needs of tourists. In practical terms, retail stores are replaced by souvenir shops, historic sights are only available in exchange of an entrance fee and other tourism-related services dominate the space. As a consequence, locals tend to avoid these places, which results in the creation of tourist zones. Since must-see sites are the most likely to be visited by a high number of tourists, the recommendations of top lists are indicative to define which parts are deemed to be put on the front stage and which remain neglected, handing over these latter areas for the alternative services.

3.1.1. Budapest

Before looking into the mainstream offers of Budapest, it is important to summarize briefly the functioning of the city in the field of tourism, which is very much dependent of general governance issues on the city-level. The city of Budapest has a unique administrative system as its governance is composed of two parallel, but not strictly hierarchical levels of management, the municipalities of the 23 districts and the Municipality of the City (Smith, Puczkó & Rátz, 2009). Each district has its own elected leaders, budget, resources and responsibilities that make every district independent from the central governance represented by the Municipality of the City, which has only a limited jurisdiction over the districts. The main consultative body on the city-level is the General Assembly of Budapest, which consists of the 23 mayors from the districts, 9 members are delegated by political parties based on the electoral lists. The Assembly is headed by the Mayor of Budapest, who is elected directly by

the citizens (Smith, Puczkó & Rátz, 2009). Due to the parallel, but at the same time fragmented structure, responsibilities and allocated resources are always a subject for debate. It is the fields of strategic and financial planning that are made especially hard to tackle by this system, which results in a general incoherence and lack of coordination of issues that should be handled in the cooperation of several or all districts (Interview with Smith, 2017).

This system which is 'not chaotic, but not coherent' (Interview with Smith, 2017) either has its impact on the field of tourism, too, although the popularity of Budapest shows that tourists do not sense these shortcomings when visiting the city. Budapest as an emerging Central European destination would nevertheless necessitate a consistent tourism marketing and management. The fields are handled rather district by district, for instance District I and V have their own tourism development plans, which are not harmonized in any way, although they could be connected due to the fact that the World Heritage Site of Budapest expand to both districts and beyond. Some other 'cross-district' projects also seem to struggle from the lack of cooperation (Smith, et al., 2017). Presently the Hungarian Tourism Ltd. and the Budapest Festival and Tourism Center Nonprofit Ltd. are jointly responsible for the tourism marketing of the city, however in the past 5-6 years there has been no clear tourism or branding strategy in Budapest, which is to a certain extent compensated by occasional seasonal marketing campaigns (Interview with Smith, 2017). At the same time, the tourism of Budapest is increasing rapidly, more and more foreign tourists come to the city, although no impact research has been conducted to find out, which marketing channels, attractions or events were the most effective in attracting a new audience (Interview with Smith, 2017).

Teodóra Bán sees two general directions for the development of tourism in Budapest (Mikola, 2016). One is the development of a new marketing plan for the city that promotes high culture and premium services to attract premium tourist that are expected to be less harmful to the local

environment, than party tourists. The other is the creation and advertisement of new attractions outside the now mostly frequented historic core of the city. (Mikola, 2016). These proposals are not without precedents; bigger tourist destinations are working along the same lines to keep tourism under control. However governing tourism and its impact is not the only responsibility of the government and the industry, the local community represented by the civil society and grassroots initiatives have a growing potential to affect the touristic offers of the city.

The new generation of country or city marketing materials, as seen for instance in the award-winning brand image film of Hungary from 2015 commissioned by the Hungarian Tourism Ltd. (GotoHungary.com, 2015) show a considerable shift from the formerly promoted romantic Puszta and emphasizes much more the vibrant urban culture of Hungary. The motto of the new marketing campaign, appearing also in the image video, 'Think Hungary – More than expected' enters into a dialogue with the 'Western gaze' (Hill, 2017: 25) that ever so often identifies Central-Eastern European countries with a post-communist image that is to be transcended by new marketing attempts. Experts also say that the official marketing increasingly uses the vocabulary and catchphrases of the alternative tourism, focusing on the 'hidden' and 'unique', which is rather to be found off the beaten track (Hill, 2017). The short recommendation on the cover of Lonely Planet guidebook seems to follow the same pattern by stating that "*Budapest is paradise for explorers. Keep your senses primed and you'll discover something wonderful at every turn. (Fallon, 2015)*" Although this is quite vague as compared to many other city descriptions, the main message is that there is a plenty of unexpected adventures awaiting for tourists in Budapest.

Every destination, when first encountered by a foreigner, is seen through different layers of expectations, mostly influenced by the messages of marketing campaigns constructing the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990). My interest is to map these visitor expectations in the case of

Budapest in order to see which areas and topics are promoted on the 'front stage' and what remain hidden in the discourse of mainstream tourism. I have chosen to compare and analyze the top 10 attractions lists of 5 renown online travel sites that are the most likely to be consulted by prospective visitors upon their arrival in the city[9].

Table 1 shows the summary of the Top 10 lists of Budapest attractions as they are presented on the respective websites, recommending these *on the beaten track* sites as the "must-see" attractions of the city for tourists. **Table 2** is based on the same concept, while it highlights the alternative top 10 lists of the same websites (with the exception of Rough Guides that does not have one), for tourists who prefer to discover places *off the beaten track* and who want to experience the "real city". The lists presented in Table 2 affirms that the mainstream offers increasingly turn towards new and more exotic topics and sights that are usually promoted by alternative agencies.

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[9] The five selected sites include four curated and one crowdsourced lists. Rough Guides and Lonely Planet are two globally known and well-established hard copy guide book publishers that also post articles with recommendations on their online platforms. The National Tourism Agency runs the official website exclusively for the tourists of Budapest with all the useful and practical information about the city. We Love Budapest might stand out a little bit from this selection, since it is a review website edited by local patriot Hungarians, available in Hungarian and in English. TripAdvisor is an interactive, crowdsourced platform for travelers therefore its content is generated by only by the users and its content is dynamically changing based on recent reviews of the users.

	Rough Guides	Lonely Planet	TripAdvisor	National Tourism Agency	We Love Budapest
1.	Castle Hill	*Hercules Villa*	Parliament	Parliament	Royal Palace and Castle District
2.	*Memento Park*	*Thermae Maiores Baths Museum*	Fishermen's Bastion	Spas	District VII pubs and party places
3.	National Museum	House of Terror	St. Stephen's Basilica	Castle Quarter	Thermal baths
4.	St. Stephen's Basilica	*Memento Park*	Shoes on the Danube Memorial	Nature of the city	District V: St. Stephen's Basilica and the Houses of Parliament
5.	Andrássy Avenue	*Aquincum Museum*	Matthias Church	Pest between Liberty and Rákóczi bridge	Danube and its bridges
6.	Városliget	Opera House	Castle Hill	Heroes' Square and City Park	Heroes' Square and City Park
7.	Gellért Hill	Great Synagogue	Danube	Andrássy Avenue	*Margaret Island*
8.	Pest - around Vörösmarty tér	Váci utca	Chain Bridge	The Danube and its bridges	Gellért Hill
9.	Great Synagogue and Jewish Quarter	Vörösmarty tér	Opera House	Citadel and Liberty statue on Gellért Hill	*Hungarian food*
10.	Parliament and the Danube East bank	n/d	Budapest Pinball Museum	Religious sites	Andrássy Avenue and the Opera House

1. Table: Top 10 'mainstream' recommendations of Budapest (made by the author)

The above presented lists have clearly many overlappings. Most of the recommended sites are located in the historic core of the city that mostly corresponds with the UNESCO World Heritage Site, namely "Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrássy Avenue", although interestingly enough there is no explicit mentioning of the

WHS in any of these articles. The UNESCO World Heritage designation however still holds an important marketing value that focuses the attention of tourists on the area of WHS of Budapest with its buffer zone that covers most must-see attractions (see the exceptions in italics) represented in the lists. The exceptions are either to be found on the edges of the WHS territory (e.g. National Museum, Margaret Island) or they are examples of a specific heritage interest (e.g. Antique sites in Óbuda highlighted by Lonely Planet only). Otherwise the beaten track can be defined as including the following areas: Castle District, Gellért Hill, Banks of Danube, Downtown of Pest (5th district), the Jewish Quarter, the Andrássy Avenue and the Heroes' Square with the City Park. These sites are indeed the ones where one is most likely to see tourists in the city. However, some attempts to expand the 'tourist zone' seem to exist: 'Pest between Liberty and Rákóczi bridge' might seem an odd recommendation, given by the National Tourism Agency, as it is an area which is mostly a residential zone, with a few recent brown-field developments (e.g. Bálna) or relatively new cultural institutions (Palace of Arts, National Theater) that do not yet belong to the typical agenda of tourists. It is apparent based on the lists that District VIII or its attractions are not included in the highlights (except for the National Museum located on the edge of Palotanegyed) that affirms the ambitions of the community of Palotanegyed that has a strong inner city identity, to be upgraded among the other central district units and their attractions.

Topic-wise, it is to be noted that the most represented historical periods are the dualist era (1867-1918) and the twentieth century. The former group mainly consists of the outstanding architectural achievements of the dualist period evoking the grandeur of Budapest in the post-Compromise period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This is a period that is further emphasized by the renewal project of the Castle District that aims to reconstruct buildings originating from this period that have been destroyed mostly during the WW2. The latter group represent the legacies of a less glorious period, namely the one of the totalitarian regimes of

34

the 20th century. Both sites (House of Terror and Memento Park) are conveying a message of dark heritage that is showcased in the isolation of the former headquarters of the secret police and a distant park where a great number of Communist statues were relegated. In relative isolation, these less "comfortable" sites are easily skipped while visiting the city, with the exception of the Shoes on the Danube Memorial that is more exposed in the direct surroundings of one of the most visited sites, the Parliament. Further themes include religious heritage, recommending such important landmarks as the St. Stephen Basilica or the Great Synagogue; and natural heritage, drawing attention to centrally located public parks, and of course, the Danube, which may well be the most important landmark of the city. Interestingly the ruin pubs and the party culture of the Jewish district is not mentioned in the international lists, only by the Hungarian site, which might be due to the fact that party tourism is the least tolerable for the local community, although ruin bars contributed strongly to the popularity of Budapest in the last five years.

	Lonely Planet	TripAdvisor	National Tourism Agency	We Love Budapest
1.	Kelenföld Power Station	Mátyás Caves	recommending walking tour companies	Play chess in the pool at Széchenyi Thermal Bath
2.	Budapest Caves	Kerepesi Cemetery		Glide up Castle Hill on the historic funicular
3.	Wekerle Estate	Art Nouveau Café		Visit the House of Terror
4.	Törley sparkling wine cellars	Children's Railway		Become a master of Rubik's cube
5.	Zwack Unicum Factory	Lehel Market Hall		Escape rooms
6.	Ecseri Market	Veli Bej Bath		Hungarian food (lángos, kürtős)
7.	Paloma House	Élesztő Craft Beer Bar		Hungarian alcohols
8.	Hospital in the Rock	Gül Baba's Tomb		Ruin bars
9.	Budapest Pinball Museum	Escape houses		Dive bars
10.	Turkish Baths	n/d		n/d

2. Table: Top 10 'alternative' recommendations of Budapest (made by the author)

Must-see sites are important to satisfy basic expectation towards a city, but some travelers look for something more 'authentic', closer to the 'back stage'. Interestingly these mainstream publishers also acknowledge the demand for alternative sight-seeing by assembling "off the beaten track" lists. In the following paragraph, I will use these lists to illustrate the different highlights of mass tourism and alternative tourism.

The secrets of Budapest are lying beneath our feet – as promised by the selected top lists and articles, unveiling sites and activities that are indeed quite different from the on the beaten track Top 10 lists. Spatially it can be said that the alternative lists show a very diverse picture. While

there are sites that are to be found in less known corners of downtown Budapest (e.g. Paloma House, Hospital in the Rock), most of the sites are located way beyond the boundaries of the central parts of the city (e.g. Kelenföld Power Station) usually meaning the territories within the Great Boulevard on the Pest side and the Castle district on the Buda side. Beyond the spatial differences, the alternative top lists are much more focused on the informal ways of discovering a city with recommended activities of well-being (spas), nightlife (bars and pubs), gastronomy (markets and food) and active tourism (hiking, caves). It is important to point out that most of the recommendations are on activities. These lists are less about the "things to see", instead they encourage people to try out "things to do", resonating with the aim of alternative tourism that emphasizes the importance of experience-based traveling.

Furthermore, these sites and activities do not represent any particular topic or historical period, they are a diverse selection both spatially and thematically. Interestingly, in these lists, the nightlife of Budapest is much more highlighted, which might be because alternative selections are attractive for young audiences who are seeking adventures instead of being only passive observers of the city. Another interesting remark is that the National Tourism Agency does not provide a top list, it recommends instead walking tour companies that are present in a growing number in the touristic offer nowadays in Budapest, targeting both locals and tourists, covering unconventional themes and areas.

3.1.2. District VIII

Given the slightly underdeveloped state of Józsefváros, tourism was not used to be a priority for long, but with the redevelopment programs and other more spontaneous processes such as the emergence of alternative culture, the reputation of the district has started to change, showing that many see the touristic potential in this diverse district. Tourism is now growing in the district, registering an 8% growth in the number of incoming tourists compared to 2015

(Jozsefvaros.hu, 2017). The growth is partly due to the growing number of hotels and hostels in the district, but according to the municipality, the wide range of cultural programs are also important in attracting the visitors to the district (Jozsefvaros.hu, 2017). The flagship unit in this regard is clearly Palotanegyed that is presented as an 'emerging neighborhood', while the outer parts have not been considered seriously for touristic investments by the municipality that gave way to the alternative walking tour companies, who developed diverse interpretations for the district as compared to the official narrative, emphasizing mostly Palotanegyed.

District VIII is in a visible transition nowadays, which might result in a full-scale transformation. Some predict the spill-over of the phenomena of District VII which has seen a rapid renewal (Balkányi, 2014), to the neighboring district that does not only entail development, a greater visibility and an improving reputation for the Eighth, but it might also bring about some disputable consequences, such as gentrification, party tourism and the commodification of the local environment. Today many different actors shape the image of the Eighth having different incentives, target audiences and aims when they interpret the district. What is in common in all stakeholders is their main objective to challenge the bad reputation for the Eighth, either by improving its physical environment, by mobilizing its local communities or by showing its unknown curiosities for the 'outsider' audience. In this chapter my aim is to analyze the 'official' or mainstream touristic interpretation of the district provided by the Municipality of Józsefváros, in order to see the priorities of each, the highlighted and neglected topics and territories that define the cultural identity of the district.

The Municipality of Józsefváros

The Municipality of Józsefváros represents the decision-maker level of District VIII. As discussed earlier, the districts of Budapest dispose a high level of autonomy, therefore it can decide on its own whether to develop tourism within the district. There are two options in the

hands of the decision-makers to enhance the attractivity of their area (Interview with Smith, 2017). One is the creation and implementation of a tourism strategy that includes the development of new attractions or the promotion of existing ones, ideally based on existing traditions and places. The other is a rather indirect way of reaching out to a new audience, which is physical regeneration or renewal of an area that promises to appeal both to locals and tourists as well. In the case of the Municipality of District VIII both approaches are applied, however these recent developments are limited to only some selected parts of the district. Having seen the implications of the redevelopment programs in the previous chapter, here I present the results and highlights of tourism development strategies that the municipality has issued recently.

Tourism strategies and interpretations

The Municipality of Józsefváros does not have an operating tourism strategy for the moment (Interview with Annus, 2017). However, there are different other types of documents that are informative on the municipal intentions concerning the main attractions of the district, namely city development strategies (including the previously described regeneration plans) and tourist development concepts – although these latter were tended to be commissioned only for fulfilling administrative requirements. In this section I make a summary of the interpretative elements gathered from these documents.

The most recent *Tourism and City Marketing Concept of Józsefváros* (Vármegye Média Kft., 2010), the first and last document of its sort until today[10], whose content will be analyzed in the following paragraphs. The document identified itself as the 'promising start' of tourism development in the district that was considered very much underdeveloped compared to its touristic potential. It also pointed to the main obstacles of tourism in District VIII, which is the

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[10] An individual tourism development concept was drafted for Palotanegyed in 2014.

39

absence of a dedicated municipal unit in the municipal framework. Nowadays still, it is rather Rév8, a city-owned company that deals with the potentials and impacts of tourism in the framework of urban rehabilitation planning (Interview with Annus, 2017) which is their core responsibility since 1997.

The Tourism and City Marketing Concept of 2010 did not provide a mission or 'master narrative' for the district, it rather listed the known and unknown attractions of Józsefváros quarter by quarter, attaching concrete project proposals to some of them. The Plan very much emphasized the importance of Palotanegyed, as most of the project proposals were focusing on this area. As for the other parts, the plan already mentioned the contribution of 'non-traditional travel agencies' that organize walking tours in non-conventional areas for tourists and the citizens of Budapest.

The Plan acknowledged the importance of interpretative strategies in urban tourism, whose aim should be the inclusion of ethnic groups and traditions in tourism, along with making tangible the history and uniqueness of the district. The Plan also claimed that isolated attractions should be more integrated, although all its project proposals concentrate on limited areas, without making the necessary connections between them within the district. It is also stated that it is the livable, everyday life of Józsefváros that should be promoted for tourists. The project ideas, for instance, included a socialist period themed 'retro' walking tour in Népszínház negyed and the creation of an Innovation boulevard along József körút that would promote the famous Hungarian inventions. These ideas however seem to reflect what are the most common expectations from a tourist destination and it is less about what is already to be found in the district concerning cultural attractions.

Two project could be highlighted that attempted to provide a broader narrative framework of the district, the first being the 'Street of Nations' program in Tavaszmező utca that builds upon

the multicultural nature of the district and the creation of new thematic walking tours that connect the different parts of the district based on a common theme, namely the 1956 revolution, Hungarian literature and the famous Hungarian novel, *Pál utcai fiúk*, whose story takes place in different parts of the district. Out of all the project proposals, it is only the ones focusing on Palotanegyed that were realized, as the development of this part was strongly backed by the municipality and the EU-funded development program. The new thematic tours were partially realized, their descriptions are available online[11], but no other service was attached to this initiative until nowadays.

The other document, the *Integrated Urban Development Strategy* from 2015 (ITS Józsefváros, 2015) seems to be more inclusive in its tourism development plans, as it recognized the unevenness of tourism in the district, consequently it defined a better penetration of tourism in the entire district as its main aim. According to the document the untapped potentials of the district are the artisan tradition and the ethnic diversity of the district. The strategy mentions that these topics are already partly represented in alternative walking tours, but not promoted or supported on the municipal level. The strategy also envisaged the design of new 'unit brands' for each neighborhood by 2020, based on their unique characteristics with expected positive impacts on the local community and economy, and the improvement of the image of District VIII as a whole.

Similarly to the previous city marketing concept, thematic tours play an important role in reconnecting the less represented attractions (e.g. the Botanic Garden) to the main ones (e.g. National Museum) in the district. There are three thematic project proposals in the document, however only one has been launched, the Gallery quarter project in Palotanegyed. The two other, both taking place beyond the boulevard, one presenting the Jewish traditions of Teleki

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[11] See walking tours at http://www.europabelvarosa.hu/setak_a_negyedben

tér and its environment and the artisan tradition combined with cultural diversity (mainly gastronomy) in Népszínház utca seem to fall out of scope, however there are recent developments that show an increasing local interest in these topics (Day of Nationalities on 20.05.2017 organized by the Teleki tér civil society).

Below I present only the Gallery quarter concept that is expected to be a main attraction of Józsefváros, more precisely of Palotanegyed, although its realization was postponed already many times.

Gallery quarter

In 2015 the Municipality announced its plan to develop a so-called Gallery quarter within the boundaries of Palotanegyed at the initiative of one of the gallery owners in the district (Józsefváros.hu, 2015). According to the plans, the municipality will support the settlement of new contemporary art galleries and connected services primarily in Bródy Sándor utca and other connected streets. For this purpose the municipality would like to first renovate selected municipality-owned buildings in the framework of EUB II and then tender the operation of the new exhibition places (EurópaBelvárosa.hu, 2015).

The principal aim of developing the Gallery district is the creation of a strong cultural identity for Palotanegyed that will attract new tourists to this area. The plan is part of the tourism development program of District VIII that aims to 'preserve and bring back the strong cultural tradition of Palotanegyed' (Józsefváros.hu, 2015), while it also consciously opposes the idea of party tourism, a branch of tourism dominating the inner parts of the neighboring District VII. The local municipality is in fact very much concerned of the potential spill-over of the 'party district' to the territory of the Eighth. Attila Egry, vice mayor of the 8th district and elected representative of Palotanegyed confirmed that the municipality is working on putting

an end to party tourism by the line of Rákóczi út by branding Palotanegyed as the Gallery district, attracting another, more premium profile of visitors (EurópaBelvárosa.hu, 2017).

It has been two years that the program was announced, originally to be finished in 2015. Still, the concept seems to be on the agenda, the renovations of future gallery spaces are in progress (Interview with Annus, 2017). In the meantime, the Vice-Mayor of the district claimed that the plans of the Gallery district have already prevented and stopped the expansion of the party tourism at Rákóczi út, the common border between the two districts (EurópaBelvárosa.hu, 2017). It is indeed true that Palotanegyed has a distinctly different image as compared to District VII, but the municipality seems to overlook the currently rising popularity of the outer parts of District VIII among tourists in district units where the municipality has not yet implemented any tourism development, as it is rather concerned for the moment with the emergence of Airbnb that enables private flat owners to rent out their property for tourists usually in a cheaper price than hotels in the same place (Interview with Annus, 2017).

3.2. Alternative tourism – the backstage

From the 1980s new understandings of tourism have emerged, interpreting it as a very much fragmented industry that gives way for niche tourism opportunities. The discourse on *alternative tourism* intensified in the 1990s including niche markets, such as ecotourism, heritage tourism and recreative tourism under its umbrella. In 1994, UNESCO also acknowledged the shift in the tourism industry towards a 'typology of service which goes beyond the concept of isolated tourist areas' (UNESCO, 1994). Nowadays too, it remained an important counterbalance of mass tourism (Wearing, Stevenson, & Young, 2010).

These alternative touristic initiatives share the importance of encounters and cultural interactions as their core values (Zátori, 2014). The most prevalent genre of alternative tourism – and by which the term is commonly identified – is walking tours. Alternative walking tours

differentiate themselves as services that guide tourists (or *explorers* as they prefer to call them) to urban areas where tourists usually do not or cannot go. Walking tour companies, consisting of city enthusiasts, have the idea of approaching their own environment the same way as tourists do – with curiosity. Guides have their favorite topic or neighborhood that they introduce to their audience during their tours.

One could raise the question in what way the staged authenticity of walking tours is better than the narratives applied by mainstream tourism. It goes without saying that every kind of tourist services represent new meanings and interpretations. In the context of walking tours especially, these interpretations are delivered in a very personal level, processing one's knowledge and everyday experience into a personal take on the city's narrative, making walking tours into a very subjective genre. As a result alternative tourism provides a shared experience and a positive interaction for both hosts and guests (Wearing, Stevenson, & Young, 2010). This participatory approach calls for the deconstruction of tourist bubbles and fosters the idea of more spontaneous ways of discovering a new place and its people. Another advantage pointed out by UNESCO already in 1994 is the fact that alternative walks and services within cities help considerably in spreading the tourist demand over space (UNESCO, 1994).

3.2.1. Budapest

It was in the 2000s that the so-called alternative walking tour companies emerged in Budapest (Hill, 2017). Their thematic offer indeed represented from the beginnings something distinctly different compared to mainstream tourism, the denomination 'alternative' was given to them by the media coverages. Although they would have preferred to be primarily identified with 'high-quality tourism' – as the word *alternative* in Hungarian is connected to notion of underground or counter-cultural – their position in the tourism market indeed fits into the category of the alternative, niche tourism (Hill, 2017).

What makes these alternative walking tour initiatives different from the already existing walking tour companies (e.g. Free Walking Tours) is that their main audience is the local community of Budapest. Residents being their target audience, the walking tours guide groups to those parts of the city that are either less accessible or simply just less known or appreciated among the locals. Also, beyond the fact that these companies are as profit-oriented as other mainstream agencies, it is to be noted that alternative walking tours have a strongly emphasized mission that is about fostering interaction between citizens and the city and in some cases also enhancing social cohesion between groups of different origin (Zátori, 2014). Furthermore, walking tours are designed to show the extraordinary out of the ordinary, let it be through explaining history through building ornaments or making people aware of ongoing social transformations by looking at the townscape of the city.

If we are to put the mission of these alternative guided tours into the framework provided by the anthropological approach, we could claim that these companies operate in the 'backstage', offering tours for the very people who usually represent the 'natives' of the 'authentic' back stage or the hosts in the previously presented host-guest dichotomy. 'Be a tourist in your neighborhood!' [Légy helyben turista!] – invites one of the companies, BUPAP that could serve as motto for all similar initiatives that encourages the local community for a closer interaction with its environment by applying a sort of tourist gaze in the city. The statements and words used in the descriptions of the companies also affirm their backstage position: leaving the beaten track (Hosszúlépés, 2017), going deep in the city to reveal its true face and real people (Budapest, 2017), getting to know the secrets of Budapest (Imagine Budapest, 2017), being the tourists of reality (BUPAP, 2017) – are only examples of the teasers available on their websites.

45

Another important characteristic of the walking tours in Budapest is their aim to foster interaction both within the group and between the group and the visited environment or community. A good example for that is the 'socio-cultural' walking tour of Beyond Budapest that includes a visit in the home of a Roma family that is aimed to deconstruct common held stereotypes towards the Roma in general. BUPAP has also a clearly demonstrated mission of making 'hidden' and often stigmatized communities more visible, which is to be experienced in their tours visiting Roma and Muslim communities in Budapest.

Beyond interaction, partnerships and local embeddedness is also very important for most walking tour companies in Budapest. A report on the walking tour companies of Budapest published by Forbes in 2016 described their growing market as one that is marked by competition, but no fights (Fekete, 2016). The 8-10 companies that dominate the market have found their niches and last year could reach up to 40-50 000 people by organizing walking tours, scavenger hunts, team-buildings and other unique events (Fekete, 2016). Most of the companies consider important to offer tours for 'real tourists' too. In their advertisements in English, these companies also emphasize their alternative approach and mission of showing hidden gems or tourist classics but differently and better, than mainstream agencies for the foreign audience.

3.2.2. District VIII

The present-day changing reputation of District VIII is due to many reasons, including the on-going regeneration programs and the emergence of new bottom-up initiatives and businesses, such as alternative walking tour companies, new bars and community centers that invite tourists and non-locals of District VIII to experience the 'real' face of this part of the city. These all contribute strongly to a creative milieu that is increasingly attractive for tourists (Smith, et al.,

2017). It is in this transforming environment, where alternative tourism has also set its foot, resulting in diverse interpretations of the rather unknown aspects of this part of the city.

The pioneer of walking tours in District VIII was Beyond Budapest, an enterprise founded in 2007 at the initiative of two university students with the aim of introducing District VIII to the circulation of tourism, without prejudices. Their position as stated on their website is as follows:

'Before [founding the company], the 8th district was considered the nightmare of tourists (and Hungarians as well). The area was said to be dangerous, slummy and strongly advised to avoid. Although the 8th district is continuously developing, the changes remained unnoticed and the strong negative stereotypes against the 8th district remained. We feel we happened to stop this bad automatic response with inventing and guiding the 'socio-cultural' walking tours. We present this very special and contradictory district, in order to break stereotypes, to show a real and happy face of Budapest.' (Beyond Budapest, 2017)

This quote is a good summary of what has been discussed in previous sections. District VIII is a strongly stigmatized territory in need of new interpretations that reflect better the present-day situation of the district, which is not much less diverse or contrasted, but definitely in the process of a transformation. Budapest Beyond presents its activities as an invention that have already managed to break the stereotypes, although it sounds a bit over ambitious that these tours can have such a great impact. Nevertheless, if it is only on a small scale, these alternative interpretations definitely provide a better image for the district.

Other companies have followed the example of Beyond Budapest, resulting in that by now all the main walking tour companies offer at least one tour covering the hidden parts of District VIII (see Table 3). These tours however differ in their interpretation, topic and approach. Before presenting my findings of the three selected tours (marked with * in the table), I

summarize the conclusions that can be drawn from the complete selection of walking tours available in the 'notorious part' of the city.

Title	Topic	Company
Past enclosed in stone - visit to the Jewish cemetery on Salgótarján út	Jewish heritage	Imagine Budapest
When Saturday comes… - Jewish history and present in Józsefváros	Jewish heritage	
Stars of Nyócker	Jewish heritage	Beyond Budapest
Walk in the derelict Jewish cemetery	Jewish heritage	
Arts and creation in the Eighth	Contemporary – Arts	
*Crumbling splendor of Nyócker - socio-cultural adventures in Józsefváros	History - Roma culture	
*Being home in the Eighth	Contemporary - social transformation	Hosszúlépés
The greatest ceremony (Kerepesi cemetery)	History	
Tanks and figures (1956)	History	
*Gypsies living among us	Contemporary - Roma culture	BUPAP

*3. Table:Walking tours in District VIII (made by the author)*

It can be seen from the list of tours that history and the ethnic culture are the most emphasized topics. The ethnic and cultural diversity of the district is represented only though the heritage of two minority groups, the Jewish and the Roma. Out of these two, it is only the Jewish heritage that has been considered to be included in the official promotion of the district initiated by the Integrated Urban Development Strategy in 2015. These tours that could be interpreted as examples for ethnic tourism, are especially interesting considering their authenticity that requires these tours to be sensitively designed in order to avoid an interpretation that

overemphasizes the exoticism and otherness of these groups. It is also to be noted that only a few tours undertake a contemporary approach when presenting the attractions or different areas of the district. The few examples include a tour introducing the galleries and artists of the district (Arts and creation in the Eighth) and another that shows the changing image of District VIII (Being home in the Eighth). The fact that most tours are past-oriented shows a hesitancy to challenge common-held stereotypes directly, they rather contextualize the present district in its history.

In order to gain insights on the shifting image of the district constructed by alternative tourism for all the tours on the Eighth, I chose to participate in and analyze the ones that aimed to provide a comprehensive framework for discovering and understanding the district with a focus on its outer parts. When taking part in the tours I was interested to see how the tours reflected their original intentions based on their description, what aspects of the district were emphasized or neglected and how the notions of authenticity and the host-guest dichotomy are reflected in the content of the tours.

The crumbling splendor of District VIII – socio-cultural walking tour (Beyond Budapest)

'Discover the 'nyócker' with us! We promise it's more beautiful than you think!' (Beyond
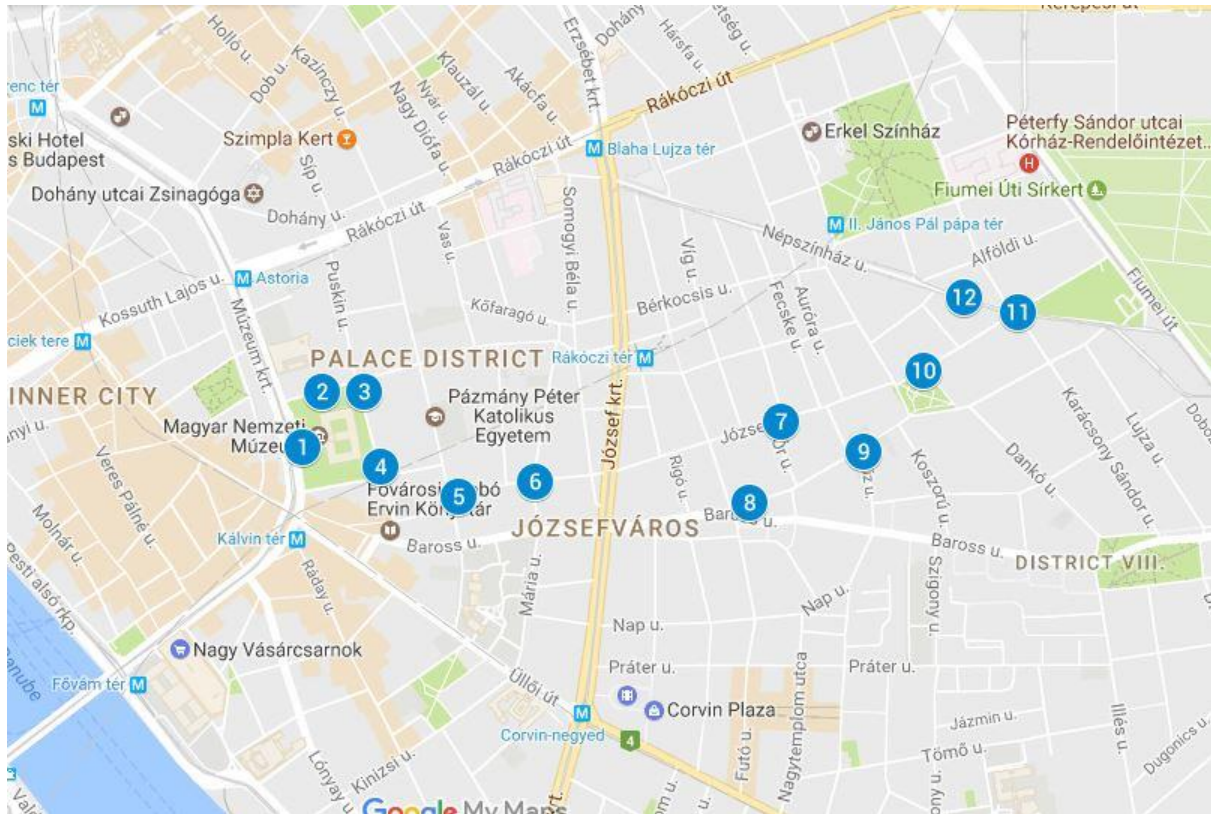
Budapest, 2017)

6. *Figure: Walking tour itinerary - Beyond Budapest (made by the author, based on Google Maps)*

As noted earlier Beyond Budapest, being the pioneer of the 'socio-cultural tours', aims to

deconstruct prejudices concerning the Eighth. Their approach for that is to show the existing

contrasts of the district within and beyond the boulevard, covering parts of both areas, namely

Palotanegyed and Magdolna negyed in one tour. It is the rather hidden, but existing beauty of

the outer parts that connects the two areas in the interpretation of the tour. The tour is identified

as a socio-cultural journey that guides people not only to less known streets of outer District

VIII, but it also includes a visit to a Roma family where the visitors can learn about the

'musician Gipsy' tradition of the district in an informal way.

The tour was mostly history-oriented, giving an overview of historical periods that shaped the district from the 18th century until nowadays. The first half of the 3-hours long walking tour was dedicated to the 19th century glory of Palotanegyed including a visit to the luxurious Festetics palace. The second half focused on the parts beyond the boulevard, showing some less known, but outstanding examples of architectural (e.g. Telephone Exchange Center) and artistic beauty (e.g. a ceiling fresco of the dilapidated former building of the Roma Parliament). Although the contrast of the physical and social conditions were made quite tangible between the two visited neighborhoods, there was less emphasis put on contemporary issues, it was rather the past splendor that is presented in both parts. Usual topics commonly associated with District VIII, like the ethnically diverse population and safety issues were only brought up by the Hungarian audience. The tour guide seemingly did not want to enter the more sensitive topics.

This task was delegated to the visit at the Roma family, which was the only part dedicated to the Roma culture and history of the district. The Roma host talked about the general context of the Hungarian Roma population of Budapest, with an emphasis on her own background in the 'musician Gipsy' tradition. The visit was intended to be a 'authentic' or representative experience with members of the local Roma community in the form of a discussion, but in reality it rather felt like a short Q&A session that was not sufficient to break the ice in the audience. It was also this part where the host-guest dichotomy was most intensively, or even literally played upon, the group being the guest at the private home of a family.

At the end the participants left with a feeling of discovery as most of them never visited the outer parts of the district that the tour covered. They also gave voice to their surprise that so many beautiful things can be found in the district that is rather famous for crumbling, than splendor. The visit at the family can be also interpreted as an initial step in reducing the cultural

distance between these groups and raising awareness of a rather invisible tradition of Gypsy musicians.

Being at home in the Eight (Hosszúlépés)

'District VIII is the certainly the most exciting district of Budapest.' (Hosszúlépés, 2017)
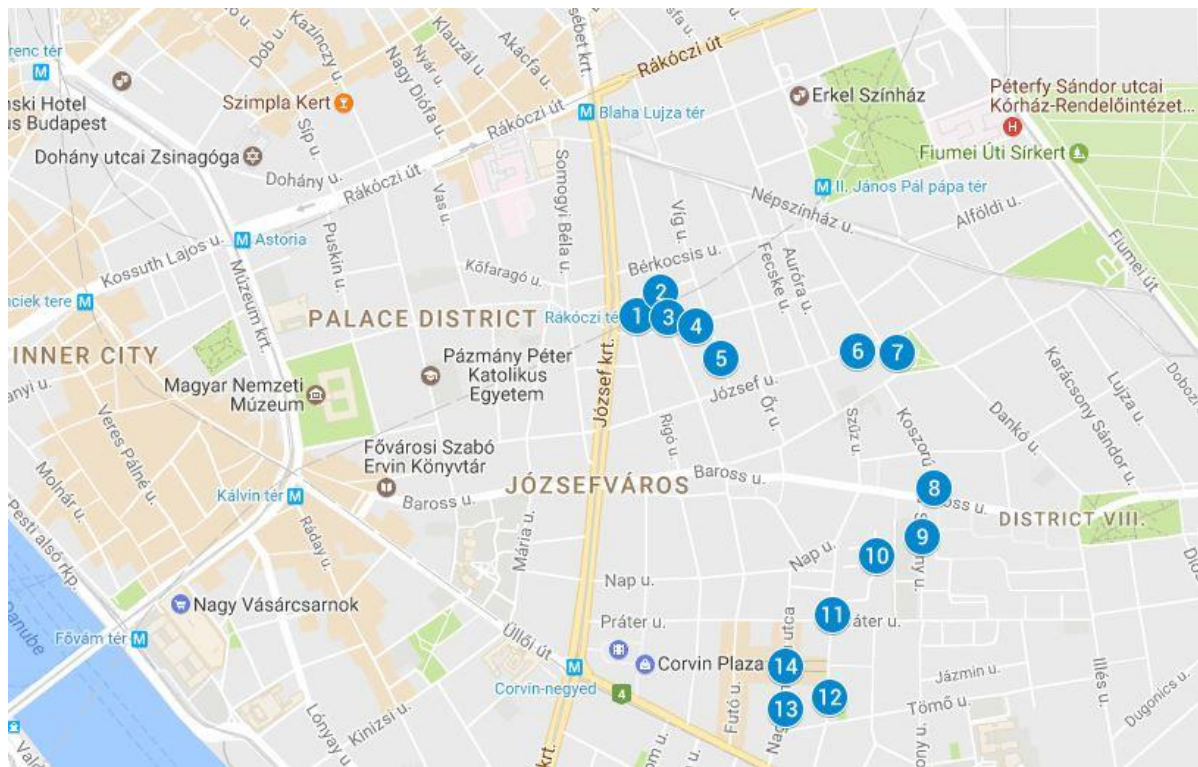
7. Figure: Walking tour itinerary - Hosszúlépés (made by the author, based on Google Maps)

After such a strong statement, the teaser of Hosszúlépés continues describing the Eighth as a multicultural district that bears the marks of all the major urban development periods, from the 19th century through the socialist era to the contemporary processes. Compared to the history-oriented Beyond Budapest tour, the tour of Hosszúlépés is a contemporary tour touching upon urban interventions and their socio-cultural impacts on the district. The tour covers parts of Csarnok negyed, Magdolna negyed and Corvin negyed (thus excluding Palotanegyed), giving insights of the many faces of rehabilitation processes in the district.

The main topics during the tour were gentrification, diversity and inclusion/exclusion. Gentrification was presented as a phenomenon that is not at all new to this district, what is more, the history of the district was presented as the history of population changes triggered by continuous urban development (examples ranging from the construction of the National Museum in the 19th century until the recent opening of Metro 4 on Rákóczi tér). The diversity of the district is shown through many contrasting details from everyday life: this part of the district is indeed not at all homogeneous, luxurious wine bars are next to the long-standing local inns, a community garden is located in the shadow of the glass-and-steel buildings of Corvin-negyed.

Another important topic was the issue of inclusion and exclusion, showing examples of conscious and unconscious ways of targeting only the more well-to-do population of the district. For instance, the luxurious wine bar with its English-only advertisements gives a clear message on the desired clientele. The community garden is not less exclusive as the registration for parcels can be done via internet, which is not at all a trivial commodity in a district that has the worst quality housing stock in the city. Connected to that the guide used very often the concept of 'invisible borders' referring to the imaginary border that Budapest residents tend to put and not to cross along the Great Boulevard line, but that exists everywhere where bad reputation holds back people to enter an area.

To conclude, this tour might not be very optimistic, but it shows a fair picture of the present-day district with all both the positive and negative impacts of development from a sociological point of view. In the narration of the tour, it is interesting that the guide used very small, almost negligible details to explain or make tangible important phenomena that underlines the ability of alternative tours to make extraordinary out of the ordinary. The host and guest dichotomy is not really applicable in the case of this tour as it did not intend to enhance interaction with the local community. When asked, the tour guide claimed that it is definitely not his intention to

make a safari experience. Authenticity is also less relevant in this case, as the tour did not try to position its narrative as the 'original' or 'real' experience of the district.

Gypsies living among us (BUPAP / Uccu Foundation)

'*We invite you to the most diverse district of Budapest. Our goal is that the Roma and non-Roma people challenge together the dangerous and terrifying image of 'nyócker' through personal encounters.*' (Uccu Alapítvány, 2017) (BUPAP, 2017)

The Uccu – Roma Informal Educational Foundation launched its 'unique walking tours for the

8. Figure: Walking tour itinerary - Uccu/BUPAP (Uccu Alapítvány, 2017)

social dialogue' in collaboration with BUPAP. The Uccu Foundations primary activities include non-formal educational sessions held at primary and high schools that attempts to engage both Roma and non-Roma youngsters, so that they can work together on deconstructing prejudices towards each other. The Uccu walks were designed to follow the same principles but opened it up to a wider audience that the inclusion into BUPAP's offered tours also ensures.

Compared to the other District VIII tours the Uccu walks are unique as the guides are Roma, who introduce the district through their point of view to challenge the prejudices that are commonly held about the infamous 'Nyócker'. The description of the walk underlines that the tour provides an authentic experience, since the content of the tour is provided by locals of the Eighth, who share personal stories and are willing to answer all kinds of questions during the tour.

The itinerary of the Uccu tour covered some of the most 'infamous' parts of Népszínház and Magdolna negyed. The content of the tour was a mixture of urban history, Roma culture and history and present-day life in Józsefváros. As an article put it, this walk takes place not only in the Eighth, but in the minds of people (Adorjáni, 2015) that points to the fact that the guide was addressing directly the stereotypes towards the Roma people, asking the audience about their previous perceptions and experience with Józsefváros. The guide in exchange provided her own narrative about the district through pointing to small and hard-to-notice details in every possible direction: on the ground the stumbling stones remind us of the deported Jewish residents, Chinese inscriptions on the street invite to one of the oldest Chinese restaurant of Józsefváros and by looking up we can see beautiful art deco facades, although mostly in very poor conditions. Népszínház utca, which used to be an important street for trade and home of many artisan workshops is now dotted with multicultural shops and restaurants that demonstrates well the growing multiculturalism in this part of the district. The changing image of the district is manifested by Mátyás tér, which is the center of the recently renovated Magdolna negyed; and Auróra, a community space and bar that had moved out from District VII recently and now is very much engaged in the alternative-cultural life of the Eighth.

Beyond the ethnic and cultural diversity of the district, it is the important places of the Roma community which are presented to the audience, including the Roma Minority Council, an instrument making workshop, the local school that is said to be the most segregated institution of the city; a former night club among many more. When presenting these places, the guide explains the heterogeneity of the Roma living in Hungary and the significance of the musician Gipsy tradition of the area of Magdolna negyed. However, the guide also tells the audience that the musician tradition is decaying nowadays and it is now less in common that Roma musicians gather in the public space to play music as they used to do. In fact, many of the presented places have closed down or are in a process of closure, although the reasons behind it are not known that means that the 'cultural landscape' is undeniably in a transformation in this part of the Eighth.

Authenticity and the host-guest relationship is the most interesting in this case. Given the fact that most guides of the Uccu walks are also residents of the district make them credible to talk about the contemporary issues of the district. The guide this way also acts like the 'host', who is an integral part of the presented neighborhood. Since the walking tour is very much informal and interactive, in my opinion out of the examined walking tours, it has the greatest potential to change mindsets both about the district and its inhabitants.

As I looked for examples of getting to know the city through interactions between the hosts and the guests, I found that walking tours are the most suitable means to share untold stories, make awareness of omitted local cultures in an informal way that at the same time does not hinder the local community to carry on with their every-day life. It requires an active engagement from all participants, making both the hosts and the guests part of a place-making process that essentially means attaching new meanings for a space, inspired by memories, stories and imaginaries of the past along with the narration of the present (Pink, 2008).

In a way, walking tours reconstruct the classic setting of an anthropological or ethnographic encounter, as in each discussed case, there is a differentiation between hosts and guests (which might seem evident only at the first sight), the authentic nature of the tours is presented in most cases to be uncontestable as each tour is said to take place in the backstage of the city, where the real people is to be found. Of course these affirmations have to be handled with caution, especially when it comes to the interpretation of sensitive issues (such as minority cultures) in order to avoid the reintroduction of a sort of 'urban safari'.

Chapter 4 – Reflections

As it was anticipated by the previous chapters, by looking through the various planned or used narratives of District VIII, my aim was to prove that it is an area of the city that is in a process of transformation manifested by its physical renewal and the emergence of alternative services. If it is to happen what has been predicted (Balkányi, 2014), District VIII is most likely to become the next 'bohemain' district of the city. The so called creative hubs usually develop in derelict areas in post-industrial neighborhoods or in districts of the former working class, where ethnic diversity is also very often a key characteristic (Füller & Michel, 2014). Based on these preconditions, District VIII indeed has a chance to become the next Seventh that has gone through a massive transformation to the detriment of local residents in the last ten years, which also meant a shift in its image from the dilapidated historic Jewish district to the center of ruin bars and party tourism more recently. This rapid change does not only entail an increased touristic activity, but also the potential gentrification of the territory. Therefore, it is important that both tourism and urban redevelopment are organized in a way that they address the interests and identity of the local community. In the following I reflect on the most important issues in relation to the interpretation of the cultural identity and heritage of District VIII on the three different levels of stakeholders based on the findings of my research.

#1 Making extraordinary out of ordinary – the city-level

"*The tourist gaze of the outsider creates the exotic from ordinary life: the everyday is not simply ordinary – rather it is the site that contains the extraordinary within the ordinary if one is prepared to look.*" (Maitland, 2013:17)

Mainstream tourism in Budapest is now focused on a limited area corresponding to the strictly understood downtown of Pest and the Castle Hill. Given the growing number of tourists in the city and pressure from regional competition, the city of Budapest might find itself in an urgent need of a tourism development strategy. While presently there is a new attraction in the making in Budapest, Liget, near one of the main tourist attraction, the Heroes's Square, there is another option, namely to incorporate new areas on the agenda of tourism. While the main attractions of Budapest are located more scattered as compared to the usually mentioned competitors, Prague and Vienna, there is a tendency of tourism development that predicts its expansion circularly outwards from the city center of Pest (see figure), which in fact corresponds with the ambitions of the municipality of VIII to include Palotanegyed on the mindmap of tourism.
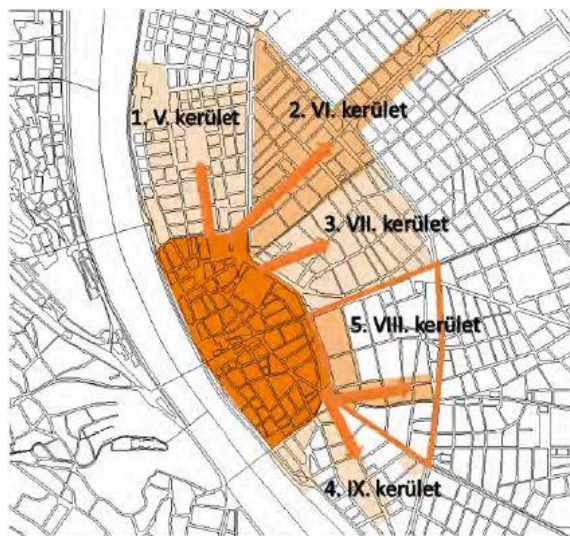
9. Figure: Direction of tourism development of Budapest (Kádár, 2014)

The redevelopment of Palotanegyed, named the 'Downtown of Europe' (Európa Belvárosa) was undertaken in a response to the more developed territories of District VI and VII of a similar position. Since the start of the redevelopment program, Palotanegyed has indeed emerged as an attractive, 'new' area, the 'organic continuation of downtown', claimed by the local municipality (Józsefváros.hu, 2012). The image of Palotanegyed is based on its lively, but livable atmosphere, which is supported by the proactive role of the citizens in the planning of the redevelopment and the organization of cultural programs that makes the revival of Palotanegyed a good practice of urban renewal projects. What remains to be seen is in what way the outer parts of the Eighth can benefit from this upgrading of Palotanegyed. As it was shown before, both parts of District VIII are in the scope of either mainstream or alternative

tourism that propose an opportunity to make a better connection between the two, now rather disconnected parts of the Eighth. Palotanegyed and increasingly the outer units in development possess by now a better infrastructure and renewed public spaces that make them attractive for tourism development. Despite the lack of outstanding attractions in the district, the walking tour companies' activity proved that the extraordinary and exotic that is sought by many traveler or tourist can be found in every area, where interpretative efforts are made either by touristic companies or the local community.

Even among tourists, visiting "tourist zones" is no longer the norm (Maitland, 2013). As it was shown by the shifting recommendations, from must-see sites to hidden gems by mainstream travel agencies, there is a growing demand – although far from universal – to have a backstage experience of a city beyond checking the list of top attractions. Palotanegyed and some of the up-coming outer units might be an interesting destination for tourists looking for a backstage experience that proved to be a preferred direction of mainstream tourism too. The promotion of District VIII as a destination therefore seems to be validated, but one most also take into consideration the life cycle of tourist areas (Butler, 1980) that foresees the 'tourist gaze' to wander on to new areas, when the older lost its uniqueness.

#2 Crossing the invisible borders – the municipality-level

The disconnectedness between Palotanegyed and the outer neighborhoods seems to exist not only in their differing development paths in history and the contemporary social differences. It is also perceived by the residents of District VIII, who do not feel part of the same district, which is a feeling that is even more underlined by the separate urban development planning. While the Integrated Urban Development Strategy of 2015 was committed to ensure an enhanced connection between the different neighborhoods, for instance by drawing 'cultural

routes' throughout the district, this initiative was only partly accomplished. The itinerary and description of four different walks are available on the website of Palotanegyed both in Hungarian and in English, among which there is only one that crosses the boulevard, the others are dedicated exclusively to Palotanegyed.

At first sight there are indeed not many similarities between Palotanegyed and the outer parts. Ideally the urban redevelopment programs will decrease the apparent differences in the physical conditions, but what is even more important is to highlight the already existing connections. On this basis my proposal would be the reconceptualization of the Gallery quarter project that – in its present form – would invite new galleries to the Bródy Sándor utca and its environment to increase the concentration of art galleries in Palotanegyed. Making arts and galleries, however, has a long-standing tradition in the entire District VIII (see the walking tour 'Arts and creation in the Eighth' by Beyond Budapest). Two examples are the Martsa Art Gallery and Garden in József utca (*Csarnok negyed*) and the Százados út Art Colony (*Százados negyed*). The prior is a private gallery established in 1901 that used to host such prominent artists like Béni Ferenczy, Miksa Róth, André Kertész, Géza Maróti and Károly Kós (M. Szűcs, 1999). The gallery is still active and open for visitors with prior registration. It has been also featured in the Cultural Heritage Days in the recent years and in some of the alternative walking tours, however, it is not a well-known attraction, thus it struggles considerably with the costs of maintenance (Vígh, 2012). The latter was founded in 1911 making the Százados út Art Colony the oldest active art colony of Europe. The colony is owned by the municipality, the artists, mainly painters and sculptors are renting the 28 houses from the municipality. The planned renovations and development of the colony have been postponed many times because of financial constraints (Interview with Annus, 2017). As the colony serves not only artistic functions, but it is also the home of the artists, people are allowed to visit it only on special occasions, however the artists also claimed that if a common gallery existed in the territory of

the colony, it could be used to host exhibitions open to the outside audience too (Józsefváros.hu, 2014).

A more recently established gallery in District VIII is Gallery 8, the Roma Contemporary Arts Space operating since 2010 on Mátyás tér in Magdolna negyed. Gallery 8 supports Roma artists and exhibits their creations, along with collaborations between Roma and non-Roma artists (Gallery8, 2017). The project hopes to contribute to the breaking of the negative stereotypes commonly held about the Roma and an equal acknowledgement of Roma art, culture, history and language in the future. Being located in the most segregated neighborhood, the Gallery aims to be integrated in the locals' life that resulted in the multifunctionality of the gallery space, becoming a meeting place for locals (ArtPortal, 2013).

By linking the already existing and the newly founded galleries in the framework of the Gallery quarter project, the desired 'strong cultural brand' of District VIII could be further emphasized, while the cohesion of the quarters could be also enhanced by a concerted promotion of arts creation in the Eighth.

11. Figure: Hidden garden of the Martsa Gallery (Martsa Gallery, 2017)

10. Figure:A house in the Százados út Art Colony (Rostás, 2014)

#3 Promoting cultures by and for the locals – the citizen level

The penetration of tourism is uneven in District VIII. Palotanegyed enjoys a privileged position, while there are 'underused' heritage features, such as the cultural diversity and the artisan tradition (both connected to the neighborhoods beyond the boulevard) that are acknowledged by the municipality, but not promoted on a wider scale (ITS Józsefváros, 2015). It seems that these underused topics are more effectively taken care of by local or bottom-up initiatives in District VIII, as it was shown by the examples of the alternative walking tours operating in the district. Among the unused topics I would like to highlight two that in my opinion receive less attention or support, although in some cases there are already existing initiatives that could serve as a basis for future developments. These topics are: cultural diversity and Roma culture. They are either moderately or non-represented topics compared to their significance in the district.

Cultural diversity

Multicultural districts are to be found in most major and capital cities around the world. Considering the size and location of Budapest in the center of Europe, it is not surprising that ethnic minorities and immigrants are present in Budapest, mainly concentrated in one part of the city, which is District VIII. When people of different cultural origins live side by side, it is either interpreted as a source of conflict or as a cultural asset. Recently both the municipality and citizen associations have tried to raise awareness of the unique cultural richness of the district, however with differing emphasis on either domestic minorities' or immigrant cultures.

The one-day event 'Diverse Józsefváros – Bridge between cultures' has been organized by the Társak a Teleki Térért Association in the last three years with the support of the municipality on Teleki tér (*Magdolna negyed*). This year, on 20 May, four cultural groups (Romanian, Polish, Serb, Armenian) introduced their traditions, gastronomy and living culture to the

audience (Józsefváros.hu, 2017). This event was promoted only on the local news channels (municipality webpage, newspaper, Facebook page), the organizers did not aim to expand it to the city-level, however it is a good example of putting an underrepresented topic on the 'front stage' of the district.

Another initiative was the Népszínház Carnival in 2016, taking place along the Népszínház utca and the neighboring streets (*Népszínház negyed/Csarnok negyed*) that were symbolically renamed to the Quarter of Cultures for the duration of the event. Following the example of the 'Karneval der Kulturen' in Kreuzberg, Berlin, the aim of the Carnival was to promote tolerance and social inclusion towards minorities and immigrants living in Budapest, by making them participate and showcase their culture during the event for a Hungarian and international audience (Kettős Mérce blog, 2016). The event was aimed at a broader audience than only the residents of the Eighth, therefore it was very widely promoted in multiple languages and channels. The program included a carnival march, concerts, food fair and art market, talent show, a fair of local NGOs and sports events. In 2016, one year after the refugee crisis in Hungary, the organizers led by Auróra (a ruin bar-community space located in Auróra utca [*Csarnok negyed*]) explicitly aimed to address the intolerance and negative attitudes towards migrants and minorities (Bernáth & Szeles, 2016), for which the event received not only praise, but much criticism too, mainly blaming Auróra and the similar community spaces for colonizing again another area after District VII and replacing the true identity of Józsefváros with a 'hipsterized' homogenic cultural identity (Békés & Böcskei, 2016).

As the two examples show, the cultural diversity of District VIII is an acknowledged characteristic of the Eighth, however seemingly there is no common understanding who should be comprised in this category. While the presence of domestic minorities is accepted due to their assimilation in the majority society, the Roma and the different groups of immigrants

constitute a more divisive topic in the present society. This study is not meant to discuss this debate, but it is nevertheless important to highlight that these examples of popular events prove the ability to frame and interpret the same space differently, realizing parallel place-making practices. While the Day of Nationalities was held this year for the third time, the Népszínház Carnival was organized only once – although then the organizers were committed to establish a new tradition in the district. I think that we should not choose between the narrower and broader understanding of diversity, rather these 'new traditions' should be ideally merged into one effort to promote the coexistence of cultures in the Eighth.

12. Figure: Népszínház Carnival (Lukács, 2016)

Roma culture

As it was mentioned in the previous section, the representation of the Roma was always problematic in District VIII and very often the negative connotations with the Eighth were (or still are) connected directly to the high share of Roma population in the district (Interview with György, 2017). It is apparent that none of the analyzed development strategy documents of the municipality envisaged Roma culture-related programs in the framework of tourism development. These programs and the supporting organizations however exist in District VIII,

although their continuation is a subject of competing interests (György, 2017). It is illustrated best by the recent eviction of the Roma Parlament from their headquarters in Tavaszmező utca (*Magdolna negyed*) by the municipality in October 2016. The Roma Parlament used to be the center of Roma cultural heritage consisting of a library, art collection and archive of the Roma that organized a great variety of cultural programs attracting the non-Roma audience, too. With the eviction of the Roma Parlament their activities came to an end, while on the following day of the eviction, the opening of a new cultural Roma center was announced by the Ministry of Human Capacities (EMMI, 2016) – on the same site with the same functions, but not by or with the same people who supported the mission of the Roma Parlament from its beginnings in 1991.

While the closure of the Roma Parlament is considered to be a great loss, even a 'tragedy' by many (Interview with György, 2017) (Junghaus, 2016), there is no information on the new center announced by the Ministry. However, similarly to the previous case with 'cultural diversity', the visibility of Roma culture in District VIII also raises the questions of by and for whom it should be interpreted and promoted. The participation of the local Roma communities is essential in any Roma-related projects, which makes the previously discussed Uccu Foundation and their walking tours guided by locals good examples of raising awareness of contemporary Roma life and culture in District VIII. The mission of their walking tours is, in addition, not only attractive for the residents of Budapest, but more increasingly for the foreign audiences that make it a good practice of responsible tourism that is indeed by and for the Roma population in order to deconstruct the negative image of the Eighth.

13. Figure: A group session in the Roma Parlament (Biczó, 2008)

If we go back to Szijartó's interpretation of the front and backstage in the urban space, the divisions are not hard to define in the case of District VIII, the front being represented by the cultural initiatives of the municipality or the ministry and the backstage defined by bottom-up initiatives. In these parallel contexts, the topics of cultural diversity and Roma culture should be handled carefully due to their divisive nature, but nevertheless they should play a greater role in defining the contemporary uniqueness of the Eighth.

One way of creating a more inclusive narrative for District VIII would be to connect the already existing initiatives with each other. There are already attempts for that, for example one of the walking tour companies, Hosszúlépés in the last years offered free participation for its District VIII tour on the International Roma Day (April 8). Another way would be the integration of the underrepresented neighborhoods and topics in larger scale events that have proved successful in raising interest also in the residential neighborhoods of Budapest. The Budapest100 festival is a best practice in this regard that facilitate opening residential houses

and communities for a wider audience over one weekend. Recently the festival focuses on specific areas of the city. District VIII with the participation of its residents could be a potent candidate for the next topic of Budapest 100 that would strengthen local pride in the community of the Eighth, while the visitors could have a firsthand experience of 'most interesting district of Budapest'.

Conclusion

The Eighth is not only a district of diversity and contrasts, but also of competing interests and contradicting intentions. This study aimed to identify and compare the various attempts of defining and promoting a certain local identity, taking different forms from urban redevelopment programs through touristic narratives to local cultural events. Besides the description of these parallel narratives on District VIII, this study aimed to answer the questions of what role tourism can play in advocating for social cohesion and tolerance towards different cultures in the case of District VIII. Given the presence of such initiatives, the study also attempted to position this new kind of tourism in the broader framework of the tourism of present-day Budapest.

The main findings of this study include that although the interpretation of District VIII is very much fragmented between different stakeholders, a shared objective can nevertheless be found, namely the improvement of the reputation of District VIII. The Eighth is presented as a district in development that slowly catches up with the neighboring and better situated districts of Budapest. The district's lively and livable atmosphere is very much emphasized by all the stakeholders, in which Palotanegyed is given a significant role. Two apparent characteristics of the outer units of the district, namely the high number of immigrants and Roma, are however rather neglected in almost every discussed means of interpretation. The promotion of cultural diversity and Roma culture appears to a certain extent in local programs and initiatives, but these topics still seem to provoke much tension in the contemporary society that hinders the inclusion of the affected groups in the mainstream narratives of the district. This tension could be eased by connecting the parallelly existing initiatives with each other or the inclusion of underrepresented neighborhoods and topics in already popular large-scale events.

The 'identity-building' attempts in District VIII coincide with a much desired tourism development in Budapest. This study found that there is a perceivable shift from the front stage experience towards the back stage experience that is, on the one hand, demonstrated by the promotion of the 'off-the-beaten-track' by mainstream agencies and, on the other hand, by the expansion of alternative touristic services in present-day Budapest. Since Budapest as a destination is in need of new areas in tourism and an increased attractivity in the eyes of premium tourists, District VIII might be considered a solution for both interests, Palotanegyed being a cultural hub and the outer parts being a culturally diverse 'exotic area' for the tourist gaze. However, tourism development cannot go to the detriment of the local community, who should be consulted throughout such a process, which is already a practice in Palotanegyed but it should be further enhanced with the help of the newly established civil associations in the outer parts as well.

The approach proclaimed by the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape could be only partly detected in the design of the urban redevelopment projects in Józsefváros, although District VIII represents well the 'historic layering of cultural attributes', beyond the historic center of the city. Cultural heritage-related issues were rather underrepresented in the planning process, while the participation of the local community was at least in theory emphasized in the planning documents of each affected district quarters. As the urban redevelopment project continues in other neighborhoods these days, it is a possible direction for further research to find how the HUL approach could be applied from the beginnings of the planning process in the case of District VIII.

This present study belongs to a growing pool of research projects and artistic initiatives dealing now with the diversity and recent transformations of District VIII. The international research project, DiverCities, focusing on Józsefváros among 12 other European cities or districts, aim

to position diversity as a key asset for the sustainable development in cities. Smart City Budapest started to organize collaborative mental mapping workshops in District VIII to find out how the livability of the district could be increased. A course named 'Mapping the Local' by the Hungarian University of Fine Arts focused this year on the possible representations of District VIII, particularly the area of Corvin negyed that resulted in an exhibition of the created artworks in Gólya, one of the bars in the district. Although not all of these projects could fit in the discussion of this study, the growing interest in District VIII on various levels is a sign of an active process of thinking about the future of the district.

Beyond concerting these already existing efforts and projects, another further step of this research could be an ethnographic field study focusing on the underrepresented cultural heritage topics (Roma and immigrant cultures) that would aim to make a heritage survey of their traditions that are now hidden in the 'backstage' of their private lives. Such a study would support the mission of a greater inclusion of these groups in the cultural-urban landscape of District VIII in the future.

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6. Figure: Walking tour itinerary - Beyond Budapest (made by the author, based on Google
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7. Figure: Walking tour itinerary - Hosszúlépés (made by the author, based on Google Maps)

8. Figure: Walking tour itinerary - Uccu/BUPAP: Uccu Alapítvány (2017).
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10. Figure: Hidden garden of the Martsa Gallery: Martsa Gallery (2017).
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12. Figure: Népszínház Carnival: Lukács, Á. (2016).
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13. Figure: A group session in the Roma Parlament: Biczó, G. (2008). Source:http://epiteszforum.hu/galeria/lebontjak-a-roma-parlament-epuletet/47621 Last accessed: 05/27/2017

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