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PEBBLE IN THE POND

THE SOCIO-SPATIAL EFFECTS OF A PARTICIPATORY LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROJECT IN BUDAPEST

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ABSTRACT

Architecture is an intervention in the existing socio-spatial dynamics of a given society. This intervention can strengthen the status quo or create a new social order by triggering social relations and conflicts, which empowers one social group while oppressing others. This paper offers a deeper insight into the impact of this intervention by analysing a participatory landscape design project in Budapest and the surrounding discourses.

The participatory landscape design project of Teleki Square in the 8th district of Budapest was carried out in 2013 with the involvement of local residents. The project was hailed as a success by the field of architecture, the media, and the local council. However, critical voices drew attention to the fact that the marginalized people of the neighbourhood were not present in the design process and only a quasi-homogenous and relatively more affluent group of people attended the design workshops. While the participating group has been empowered by the participatory design project, the group gained de facto the right to control the accessibility of Teleki Square. In this context the participatory landscape design project can be seen as a struggle for the urban space, where the lay participants circumstantially became the supporters of the ongoing local council-led gentrification in the neighbourhood.

To understand this struggle and the dynamism that the participatory design brought in the socio-spatial conditions of the neighbourhood, this paper uses relational analysis. As opposed to choosing the stakeholders of the design project as fixed analytical units for a starting point of the analysis, the author builds on a relational framework that enables one to grasp the emerging and disappearing circumstantial coalitions between the stakeholders. Looking at the participatory landscape design project as a field of forces nested within the field of the gentrification, the position of the stakeholders can be defined by the different types of capital they possess. This analysis builds on interviews with four stakeholder groups of the participatory landscape design project (local council, architects, 'Partners for the Teleki Square Association' and 'critical intellectuals'), videos of the participatory design workshops and local council documents. The empirical data was collected in 2016–2017.

Keywords: sociology of architecture, participatory design, gentrification, Budapest, social inclusion/exclusion, social (in)justice, slum

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INTRODUCTION

Architecture – as a practice of designing the built environment and the materialized outcome of that practice – is an intervention in the socio-spatial dynamics of a given society (Lefebvre 1991). This architectural intervention often strengthens the status quo. For example, the traditional synagogue architecture for a long time supported the male-dominated worldview of orthodox Judaism by setting up a spatial hierarchy reflecting social hierarchy and separating women from men. In other cases, the intervention helps to create a new social order by triggering social relations and conflicts, empowering one social group while oppressing others. This happened twice in the history of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, which was demolished in the Stalinist era, supporting the atheist ideology of the socialist state, and then rebuilt during the presidency of Yeltsin, supporting religious groups. Nevertheless, the social effects of the architectural intervention to a great extent remain hidden to the observer, similar to the roles and the changing relationships of different actors in the process, like the state, the architects and the civic society.

Figure 1: Map of Magdolna Quarter and the Teleki Square Community Park (Source: Rebeka Dora Balazs)



This article aims to shed light on the intervening nature of architecture, by analysing the design process of the Teleki Square Community Park in Budapest, Hungary (Figure 1). The park, which is located in the Magdolna Quarter of the district, is popular with the locals and well-known in architects' circles. It is one of the few public spaces of Budapest in which the landscape was redesigned with the involvement of local residents. It is a green oasis protected by guards and a massive fence, located in one of the most stigmatized areas of the Hungarian capital that is associated with crime, prostitution, poverty and discrimination against ethnic minorities (Czirfusz et al. 2015). The contrast between the park and its surroundings is astonishing. Inside the park one can find a neat lawn, flowerbeds, comfortable park furniture, toddlers playing with their mums, and retired couples reading and playing chess (Figure 2). Outside the park there is dirty asphalt, migrants gathering in front of a Lagos buffet, Roma youths hanging out on benches and homeless people sleeping under the few trees in the paved area next to the park.¹ This physical contrast is one of the materialized mementos of the social processes and conflicts triggered by the architectural intervention.

Figure 2: Toddlers' playground in Teleki Square (Source: Rebecka Dóra Balázs)



The conflicts can be traced in the opposing interpretations of the participatory landscape design project of the park. The project was considered a great success by the media, the local council, the architects, and the majority of the local participants of the design. According to journalists it was “an exemplary project of social architecture” (Zöldi 2015), and it was not simply a “symbolic, PR-bullshit, but the architects several times sat down [with the locals] for brainstorming-discussing [sic]” (Dobó 2014). For the architects, the project was “one great common experience” (Majorné Venn 2014), while the local council considered it “exemplary community planning” (Józsefváros 2013). The majority of the lay participants talked about the design process and the features of the park with great enthusiasm, interpreting the architectural intervention as their recapturing of the park³. They even established an association named ‘Partners for the Teleki Square Association’ [PTSA] that provides the local residents a legal framework for taking care of the park – and controlling its accessibility. PTSA

1 This description is based on fieldwork data obtained through participant observation in 2016. Assumptions about ethnicity are based on individual observation.

2 The quotes in the article translated by the author, unless stated otherwise.

3 See for example the invitation to celebrating the 1st anniversary of the renovated park on the Facebook page of PTSA (TTTE 2015)

set up strict rules on how to use the park; for instance, it is not allowed to enter after sunset, eat, smoke, or consume alcohol there, and it is forbidden to play football since the grass would be damaged.

At the same time, some lay participants and activists voiced their critique concerning the project. They highlighted that the park was designed by and for the relatively more affluent ethnic Hungarians of the neighbourhood, and neither the design process nor the functioning of the park took into consideration the needs and interests of the marginalized groups, such as homeless people, ethnic minorities and people in poverty. Their critique was well summarized in a blog post by Ivan Tosics, a Hungarian sociologist:

The result [...] is a nice green area for different age groups, developed in a participative planning process which, however, excluded all groups which were considered deviant by the majority population. This has led in practice to a new exclusion: the hated groups have even less access to green space than they had before the improvement of the public square started⁴ (Tosics 2015).

The common characteristic of the lay participants and the activists who criticized the project, and who will be called ‘critical intellectuals’ in this article, is that either they are sociologists and social workers, or leftist intellectuals informed by social sciences. For a while many were members of PTSA. However, the intolerant attitude of the more affluent group towards homeless people, migrants, and other “deviants” led to emerging tensions and heated conflicts, and caused the critical intellectuals to leave PTSA. At the same time, an alliance emerged between the local council, known for its revanchist politics and gentrifying attempts, and PTSA⁵.

These conflicts, tensions and changing relations shed light on the intervening nature of architecture. Indeed, architecture as an intervention evolves from these struggles, “circumstantial coalitions”, opposing interpretations, and their imprint on the physical world (Monterescu 2015). In order to uncover these constitutive elements, and thus to understand the socio-spatial impact of the participatory landscape design and its embeddedness in gentrification, this article looks at the case of Teleki Square from a relational point of view, by building on the field theory of Bourdieu (1985).

Thus, the effect of the participatory design project will be analysed through the changing relationships of four groups of stakeholders: the local council, the architects, PTSA, and the critical intellectuals. With the help of video records of the participatory design workshops in 2013, local council documents, newspaper articles, and interviews conducted in 2016–2017⁶, the article retraces the changing relationships and positions of the four groups during the participatory landscape design project and the development of dominant discourses aimed at making the project socially meaningful (Jones 2011). The first section discusses a relational theoretical framework and the key concepts of Bourdieu, the second section introduces the four stakeholder groups, while the third section retraces the social processes triggered by the architectural intervention, and the development of the dominant discourse on the participatory landscape design project.

4 Ivan Tosics did not participate in the project and he criticized the project from outside. However, his approach resonates with the approach of the groups of intellectuals criticizing it as insiders.

5 The article refers to the right-wing local council that was in power between 2009 and 2019, the politics of which was characterized by revanchism and gentrifying attempts (see for example Czirfusz et al. 2015). In 2019 the opposition coalition won the local council elections. It is as yet unclear if the new mayor and the local council will change the direction of local politics.

6 In the research, 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected members of the four analytical groups, with six women and six men from different age groups. Besides, 14 short interviews were conducted with the passers-by in the park and its surroundings.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RELATIONAL SOCIOLOGY OF ARCHITECTURE

Just as a pebble splashes in the water and the ripples spread out, architecture intervenes in the socio-spatial textures of a society. The circular waves fade away in a few seconds and everything again seems to be intact for the observer; however, in the inner structure of the water a new equilibrium is reached. In order to understand the change caused by the intervention, like the circular waves on the surface, one has to examine the process in its dynamics and reconstruct it from its genesis. By thinking of architecture – that is to say architectural interventions – as a process, it can be seen as a time- and context-dependent production of space (Lefebvre 1991). As Soja writes, “space itself may be primordially given, but the organization, use, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience” (1980, 210).

During an architectural intervention, social positions are strengthened, social relations and spatial practices are changing, and different interpretations of the spatial design compete to become the hegemonic discourse. The dynamics of social relations, spatial practices and the conflicting visions of space develop in interplay with spatial transformations. The transformation of space does not unidirectionally determine social change, nor does social change determine spatial transformation, but rather space and social relations mutually constitute each other (Gottdiener 1985).

In order to understand the socio-spatial dynamics caused by the architectural intervention, this analysis follows a relational approach. Relationalism, as defined by Emirbayer in opposition to substantialism, “sees relations between social units and actors as pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding ongoing processes rather than as static ties among inert substances” (Emirbayer 1997, 289). From this viewpoint, social categories, positions, and spatial meanings originate from these dynamic relationships between social units. Indeed, architecture as a process of intervention is implemented through the constantly changing and mutually constitutive relationship between the participating actors.

To operationalize this relational approach, the following pages will analyse architecture as an intervention by building on the field theory of Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). By this means, the analysis aims to contribute to a tradition that is apparent in the sociology of architecture, marked by the works of Garry Stevens (1998), Kim Dovey (2010) and Paul Jones (2011). The aim of the article is to provide a polychrome picture of architectural intervention, by showing its effects on the local community and its embeddedness in the larger picture of gentrification in the neighbourhood. Thus, the article aims to extend the existing literature on participatory practices in Hungary (Csanádi, Csizmady and Kőszeghy 2010) and on the transformation of urban spaces in Budapest (Bodnar 1998; Boros et al. 2016; Berki 2017).

Building on the concept of Bourdieu, any architectural intervention and thus also the participatory landscape design project of Teleki Square can be seen as a field, specifically a “field of forces, i.e. as a set of objective power relations that impose themselves on all who enter the field and that are irreducible to the intentions of the individual agents or even to the direct *interactions* among the agents” (1985, 724 original emphasis).

The stakeholders of the participatory landscape design (which can be individuals or a group of individuals) are defined by their relative position in the field, and by the sum and the composition of the different kinds of capital – economic, cultural, social and symbolic – they possess. While economic capital (e.g. property rights) can be directly converted into money, cultural capital (e.g. educational qualifications) and social capital (actual and potential networks of relations that the social agents can mobilize) is convertible to economic capital only in certain conditions (Bourdieu 1986). Symbolic capital is the form that the capitals of various sources take when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate (Bourdieu 1989). By entering the field, the stakeholders accept the rules of the game, namely the legally or socially guaranteed hierarchy of positions; however, the stakeholders have the possibility to change those rules.

In the field of the participatory landscape design, the four groups of stakeholders – the local council, the architects, PTSA and the critical intellectuals – can be seen as four classes. Members of a class are characterized by their similar positions in the field and are more likely to possess similar interests, habitus (systems of disposition), and thus lifestyles and taste (Bourdieu 1985; 1984). At the same time, the classes are struggling to ensure their relative position in the field of participatory landscape design by distinguishing themselves from the other classes. They ensure their positions and distinguish themselves by the aesthetic and value judgements they make, like distinctions between refined aesthetics and kitsch, between decent people and deviants, between us and them (Bourdieu 1984).

The four groups, by means of capitals they have collected in other fields and in the field of the participatory landscape design project, struggle over the production of the legitimate vision of the world and the participatory landscape design of the park (Bourdieu 1989, 21). In these struggles, however, neither the boundaries of the group nor the alliances between them are fixed; the relations are fluid and are in constant change. At the same time, social relations, and the divisions and distinctions the stakeholders make are translated into the physical space symbolically and materially (Bourdieu 2000). The distinction between decent people, who deserve to use the park, and people with deviant behaviour, from whom the park has to be protected, materializes in the design features of the park aiming to attract people with decent behaviour (Balázs and Zein 2019).

With these socio-spatial distinctions, the participatory landscape design project fits neatly into the ongoing gentrification of the neighbourhood, marked by the physical renewal of the residential buildings and public spaces. The neighborhood to date is one of the most run down areas of Budapest, characterized by poor quality housing, relatively high criminal rates and a large proportion of marginalized groups. The slow but steady physical and social deterioration of the area can be traced back to the interwar period and the following Socialist times; the transition starting from 1989 worsened the situation. The regeneration of the Magdolna Quarter – and that of Teleki Square – became possible only after EU accession, thanks to the newly available EU funds. The EU funded the Magdolna Quarter Programme [MQP], the third phase of which targeted Teleki Square. The MQP was promoted as a ‘socially sensitive urban regeneration programme’ putting emphasis on the social aspects of urban regeneration and the participation of local people. Nevertheless, Czirfusz et al. (2015) argue that the local council sought to support the gentrification of the neighbourhood under the veil of the regeneration programme. The gentrifying attempts of the local council were supported by selective social policies that tend to racialize and criminalize poverty. These revanchist policies, which are supported by an increased number of local police, force homeless people, prostitutes and drug users into the dilapidated industrial buildings in the edges of the district and outside the district – thus displacing people seen as deviant from the inner areas (Keresztély, Scott, and Virág 2017).

Considering the ongoing gentrification of the neighbourhood, which is implemented as a socially sensitive regeneration programme and at the same time characterized by the racialization and criminalization of poverty, this article argues that the gentrification of the Magdolna Quarter is being constructed within fields of forces like the participatory landscape design. The relational dynamics of the participatory landscape design project of Teleki Square shed light on some local processes that constitute the urban transformation at the neighbourhood level. It has to be noted that neither the relations of the four groups, nor their role in the gentrification are fixed. Between the four otherwise conflicting groups circumstantial coalitions can emerge (Monterescu 2015). At the same time, in the dynamics of the field of forces the beneficiaries and supporters of gentrification could equally become the opponents and subalterns of gentrification.

THE FOUR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS IN THE FIELD OF PARTICIPATORY LANDSCAPE DESIGN

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

It felt like being back in the end of the 18th century. To be honest, I saw such shameful, disgusting, sickening, inhuman environment, Honourable Council, probably only in the Mexican district of the US [...]. There are such people with such an appearance out of whom the 90 % have tuberculosis, I think. [...] In the portals, in the stores, everywhere is 'grovelling'. They lie in everything including their own faeces (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2009).

This opinion – that the conditions of the area are intolerable – seemed to be a shared view of many people with different social and cultural backgrounds. The discourses of the time were marked by the recurring topics of homeless people, the illegal traders of the market, the pubs, and the used hypodermic needles in the grass (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2011b). When the participatory landscape design project was first announced, it was welcomed by all the people of the neighbourhood irrespective of their social background. Even the conflicts analysed here focused on *how* the park was renovated instead of *why*.

The following section introduces the four groups in the chronological order that they entered the field of participatory landscape design, beginning with the local council and the architects, and continuing with the members of PTSA and the critical intellectuals. Besides discussing the power relations between the groups, it also explains their group-forming practices building on the field theory of Bourdieu.

3.1 Local council securing the investment

The participatory landscape design project began on a warm summer afternoon in late May 2013. The workshops started off with the introduction of a man in his early fifties:

The local council decided to share the decisions with you, Ladies and Gentlemen. During the process as you make the decisions together with the local council, the local council will accept these decisions, so it's not merely a survey of opinions but a real decision-making process including the final decision (Milyen legyen a Teleki tér?! 2013).

This man spoke in front of an audience of approximately thirty people, mainly adults and pensioners, in the local community house of the district. He is the leader of RÉV8, a shared company of the Local council of Budapest and the Local council of the 8th district, which is in charge of the development projects of the 8th district. He was a planner of the MQP III and the main initiator of the participatory landscape design project. Looking back to the project, he considered himself a mediator between the local council and the architects, who ensured the background of the participatory landscape design project.

It was the leader of RÉV8 who convinced the local council to accept the idea of the participatory landscape design project. "Initially both the mayor's office and the local council stood against it, but at the end everyone liked it," as the leader of RÉV8 remembers (11 2016, personal communication, August 5).

Even though the leader of RÉV8 tends to present himself and his colleagues as being independent from the local council, as their introduction at the first workshop cited above shows, they entered the field of participatory landscape design as representatives of the local council. The position of RÉV8 in the field of forces was primarily determined by the symbolic capital that the local council transmitted to RÉV8 as a municipally owned corporation. In line with this, this article considers RÉV8 as being part of the local council as an analytical class.

While the leader of RÉV8 and his colleagues rarely appeared rarely at the meetings and preferred to remain observers, the interests of the local council were present throughout the design process and were named in the explicit rules of the game. These rules ranged from the ultimate viewpoint that the renovation of the park was a necessary good; to the financial, spatial, and time limits of the project; and the initial determinacy of the power relations of the field. For instance, the participatory landscape design workshop limited the possible decisions to be made about the future of the neighbourhood to the aesthetic and functional features of the park. In a similar way, the budget of the project and the borders of the site limited the extent of the potential decisions to be made. Finally, in assigning different responsibilities to the architects and the lay participants, the local council influenced the initial system of relations.

The municipal rules of the game were also embedded in a broader field of forces, namely the rules of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund, which to a great extent financed the Magdolna Quarter Programme III and supported the involvement of the locals in urban regeneration (Czirfusz et al. 2015). Nevertheless, the participatory landscape design project only happened in Teleki Square because it was in line with municipal interests. The leader of RÉV8 (I1 2016, personal communication, August 5) explained:

Teleki is a very complicated square. Because its cultural notoriety is quite big, you know, the deterioration was very serious, and still quite a lot of what you could call quasi-white-collar people live there, it was likely that if anybody designs anything, it won't be good.

To put it in another way, the participatory design method served to make the renewal of the park more socially acceptable amongst the dominant residents of the square and later was used to gain a better position for the regeneration programme.

Besides setting up the rules, the local council had another impact on the formation of the field of the participatory landscape design, and thus the architectural intervention, because it was given the choice of an important player in the game, namely the architects. In 2012 the local council launched a restricted tendering process and invited three landscape architect groups, including the Ujirany Group, which won the project.

After the construction work was finished, the role of RÉV8 became less significant in the field of the participatory landscape design and the representation of the municipal interests was taken over by the mayor's office. The mayor maintained a friendly relationship with PTSA and they often used it for political purposes.

3.2 Idealistic architects: Ujirany Group

Ujirany Group [UG] is a landscape architect studio that was established by a group of university friends right after their graduation with the aim of working out the design of the Millenáris Park, a pioneering example of brownfield investment in the 2nd district of Budapest. With this design UG became well known amongst professionals dealing with the built environment, due to their unusual artistic ideas and creativity, which often targeted the more educated social groups, requiring certain cultural competence to understand the design intervention.

UG's position in the field was characterized by the symbolic capital they possessed as licensed landscape architects charged with the management of the participatory landscape design project, the preparation of the final design and the working drawings, and site supervision. This position caused their dependency on a powerful player in the game – the council – which they had to take into consideration when contacting local groups in the preparation phase of the participatory landscape design process. For instance, one of the architects explained:

There was this group in the district that organized programs [...], but they were very oppositionist and offensive, but we had to be cautious, since the local council commissioned the work and we are kind of local council-dependent so we did not dare cooperate with such people, who are against [the work of the local council] (I2 2016, personal communication, May 18).

At the same time, UG's position ensured them greater power over the field as opposed to other players. In the organization of the workshops, apart from accepting the rules of the game that were set up by the local council, UG had a free hand. By setting up the sequences of the workshops, by explicitly and implicitly determining the freedom of decision-making of the local participants, and by moderating the discourse, UG could impose another set of rules of the game embedded into the pre-existing rules of the council. As one of the architects explained, "we told them the rules of the game, it was projected on the wall, that we were aiming to reach a consensus, we were listening to each other, we were respecting each other's opinions, and things like that and of course we had to draw their attention to these from time to time" (I3 2017, personal communication, February 6). With these rules, they already initiated a direction the participatory landscape design process has to take – that is, reaching consensus as an ultimate goal – which is a recurring critique of participatory practice in academic circles (Abrams 2000).

UG, as opposed to the other groups, stepped into the field as an "actual class" (Bourdieu 1985). UG thought of themselves and were recognized by the others as a real group, due to their educational background, their common professional and personal history, and their socially- and legally guaranteed status in the participatory landscape design. During their education and their work they had acquired a "culture of practices", a system of embodied and self-evident actions that are hard to explain to a layperson (Cuff 1992). Through internalized practices, shared meanings and values, UG explicitly and implicitly legitimized, reproduced and distinguished itself from the other groups.

The schedule of the workshops, which was shared with the lay participants, contained a list of planned activities phrased with architectural terminology, like "spatial organization", "functional schema" and "design program" (see the presentation published in Tihanyi 2013). During the workshops, the use of professional terminology served not only the direct reproduction of the group of the architects and indirect reproduction of the field of architecture but also it helped UG in dominating the discourse and in addressing problems from their point of view. This professional terminology gave priority to their embodied normative values gained in the field of architecture, especially the "judgement of taste" (Bourdieu 1984). For instance, as one of the architects explained:

It happened often that [a participant] came up with very... I can say such things that she brought kind of kitschy ideas, can't I? [...] and in these cases they have to be told "OK it is good in some context but our concept is this neutral style and all the chosen elements have to fit this so that there won't be dissonance" [...] And there were two people who had superb taste, so funnily we named them the Design Team (I3 2017, personal communication, February 6).

UG's habit of prioritizing aesthetics and universalizing their measure of aesthetic quality was also reflected in the debate around the sculptures of the park. From the very beginning of the design process, three sculptures were planned to be placed in the park that commemorated the history of the neighbourhood and Earl László Teleki, after whom the square was named. The artefacts chosen by the people of the neighbourhood did not fit into the refined aesthetics that UG preferred, being "genre sculptures"⁷ instead of the abstract

⁷ In the last few years numerous so-called "genre sculptures" appeared in Budapest being supported by the local councils. They depict famous or average figures being engaged in everyday activity, like Ronald Reagan in the Liberty Square or a girl with a dog on the river side. While there are amiable and easily understandable compositions, it is a common critique of people with upper social status that they are clichés and have no underlying meaning (Földes 2014).

ones they recommended. Therefore, UG disavowed these sculptures in every possible forum, denying their responsibility or support for the choice and arguing that it was a decision made by the broader public rather than the participants of the workshop (Somlyódi 2015). This disavowal reflects not only their architectural habitus – which they had to develop in order to be accepted by the professional field – but also their taste for high culture, by which they distinguish themselves from groups of lower social status (Bourdieu 1985). The distinction by taste became even more apparent during the fieldwork, when it turned out that PTSA in fact liked the genre sculptures.

Despite the habitus that distinguished UG from the locals, the architects explicitly tried to demolish the symbolic barriers between them and the lay participants, i.e. as they put it, “taking one’s ego off the table”. When one of the architects said too often during the presentation “we wanted that...” and “we thought that...” another architect drew him aside and reminded him to say “everybody” instead of “we” (Pápay and Tóth 2013). The architects even joined PTSA and one of them continued visiting the weekly meetings for a year after the implementation of the park. Nevertheless, as the intolerant attitude of PTSA came to the forefront, this circumstantial coalition of the architects and the PTSA was broken. The denial of social distance did not demolish the difference between the two groups. Nevertheless, the profits of this denial could be reaped by the architects.

3.3 Partners for the Teleki Square Association and Critical Intellectuals

The announcement and the opportunity to participate in the design project attracted approximately 50 people, out of which 15-20 were active, based on the estimation of the architects. The interviewed participants saw the announcement of the workshops in the local newspaper and on the streets, or were invited by their neighbours. Most of them had already known each other and many had already been active in the public sphere of the neighbourhood – as one of the critical intellectuals explained, it was not the participatory design project that first mobilized them as a group. Despite the heterogeneous social and ethnic composition of the neighbourhood, all of them were ethnic Hungarians and, compared to the neighbourhood average, they were more educated and relatively better-off people. This relative affluence, however, does not mean their existential security; as one of the architects said, “in fact, these people are really poor, but in this country, there is always somebody poorer” (I2 2016, personal communication, May 18).

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

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

The critical intellectuals possess a great amount of cultural capital and a fair amount of economic capital relative to the PTSA – all of them have graduate degrees and work in the non-profit sector (teaching at university or working for NGOs) with secure financial background. In contrast, most of the members of PTSA possess only an undergraduate degree or have no qualification. PTSA members typically work in the service sector, are

retired, or are on disability pension. Many of them live in their own flat; however, at least two of them recently lost the ownership of their apartment.

Furthermore, the two groups can be characterized by their different motivations for participating in the design project. The members of PTSA – typically living in the buildings around the square – wanted to change the socially and physically declining park that was full of homeless people, junkies and dogs. “Since I moved here, I have hoped that the park would be renewed. My flat was also promoted with the promise that something would happen with the park. It has been a recurring topic for 8 years or so,” explained a man in his late thirties on why he participated in the workshops (Teleki téri közösségi tervezés 2013). Furthermore, PTSA members hoped that participating in the design would ensure that the park would actually fit their needs. “I thought, what if it was actually as it was advertised that they would listen to the locals [...] I would also like to sit outside on a bench, play table tennis, if it was implemented in a way that they asked our opinion,” remembered one of the participants, a woman in her forties, who is on disability pension (I4 2017, personal communication, April 12).

On the other hand, the critical intellectuals live further from the park than the members of PTSA, often in the nearby neighbourhoods or even outside the district. Even though from the insider’s point of view, they were also lay participants like the members of PTSA, from the analytical viewpoint their motivations went beyond the actual renovation of the park and distinguished the critical intellectuals from the members of PTSA. The critical intellectuals were concerned instead with working for a better society and intervening in the process of the participatory design: their perception on the participatory design is structured by their knowledge about the revanchist politics of the local council. They interfered with the participatory design “as intellectuals, that is, with a specific authority grounded on their belonging to the relatively autonomous world of art, science, and literature and on all the values that are associated with this autonomy – virtue, disinterestedness, competence, and so on” (Bourdieu, Sapiro, and McHale 1991, 656 original emphasis). As an associate professor of sociology who has a history of civic activism in the neighbourhood explained: “My aim was not primarily to influence the physical appearance of the park or the design of it [...] I went there as a curious observer and an activist who seeks to intervene” (I5 2017, personal communication, February 10). Since he knew the shortcomings of the second phase of the Magdolna Quarter Programme [MQPII], which misused its keyword of ‘participation’ unabashedly, he wanted to bring into the workshops a bit of scepticism and caution toward the local council practices, aiming to put pressure on the local council if necessary.

Another critical intellectual, a social worker working at the time for the Jakab Glaser Memorial Foundation [JGMF] of the apartment synagogue in Teleki Square, aimed to help the architects on a voluntary basis with the involvement of the locals. Ironically enough, before the participatory landscape design project of UG began, the social worker had already been preparing a community organizing project in the square by means of “doing something with the park” (I6 2017, personal communication, March 23). As part of a fellowship program for community organizers, he conducted interviews in 2012 in the neighbourhood to identify three core, local, social problems – identified as racism, gentrification, and crime – and then he left to participate in a six-week-long community organizer training in the US. When he arrived back to Hungary, he learned that a very similar project was already in progress. Therefore, he decided to integrate his own project with the participatory landscape design project of UG and offered them the help of the synagogue, especially after seeing their lack of experience in involving hard-to-reach people. In this work, the social worker was supported by a recently graduated sociologist. “We thought that this thing that they were advertising that there would be a community design project, and they posted what the schedule of it would be, so... this method especially in Teleki Square wouldn’t work... and in fact nowhere else, I think” she says (I7 2017, personal communication, March 19). Therefore, they went around the residential buildings in the square, knocking on all the doors and tried to address people who could not be engaged simply with a poster.

The work of the critical intellectuals for universal and moralistic values is often driven by a guilty conscience, as one case shows (Bourdieu 1985). This critical intellectual is an art historian and university teacher who moved to the neighbourhood after the participatory landscape design project ended and the construction works of the park were finished. She explained why she was motivated to join PTSA:

After half a year one realizes that there are very tragic things happening. But presumably the most tragic is not that [someone tells me that] she inherited a cerebral tumour [...] but why people start telling such things to each other. Anyway, I thought that something has to be done since compared to many people here I'm seen as bloody rich. [...] What is it to me to bake another two pans of cookies and bring them down for the children in the square? [...] Also it was my story of becoming leftist. But I always tell my leftist friends that I will never be such a "real leftist" as they are because... shit, I am wearing a hundred-year-old ring for teaching that I inherited from my grandma. I can't be as angry as they are (18 2017, personal communication, April 13).

The motivations of the critical intellectuals in joining PTSA connected to their motivation of empowering the citizens and of intervening in the politics of the local council as public activists. In this sense they did not think of themselves as part of the community of PTSA. "It's not the thing that it is my life to go down to the [club of] PTSA. Because for many of them [from PTSA] it is their life," explains the art historian (*ibid.*).

In comparison with the other three groups - the council, the UG and PTSA - the critical intellectuals remained a "probable class" in the sense that they did not mobilize themselves towards reaching their goals, even though they knew and liked each other, possessing a similar position in the field of forces (Bourdieu 1985). Some of the critical intellectuals simply decided to leave the field of forces when the conflicts of interests became readily apparent. Others, on online forums or on presentations of the project as a best practice, aimed to change the hegemonic discourse around the park and PTSA (see for example the comments posted to Bardóczy, 2015).

INTERPRETATIONS AND CLASHES

This section discusses the diverging interpretations on the participatory landscape design and the park itself, and the clashes these interpretations caused, as symbolic struggles drawing on different kinds of capital. Furthermore, the analysis shows the way the participatory landscape design project, as a social space, and the park as its physical projection, were embedded in the field of forces of the ongoing gentrification of the Magdolna Quarter.

The struggles of the four groups are focused on two main topics: the aim of a participatory landscape design and social control over the park. These topics, as the frontlines of conflict, brought to the surface the division between the critical intellectuals and PTSA and also brought about circumstantial coalitions between the otherwise conflicting groups.

4.1 "What should Teleki Square look like?" — A simple question triggering multiple answers

By analysing the discourses around the participatory design, it is striking that all four groups defined the aims of the project along different dimensions. The identified dimensions were sustaining the quality of the park, organizing a community, utilizing local knowledge, and empowering the locals.

The primary aim of the local council with the participatory landscape design project was to ensure the sustainability of the park. This aim, however, has to be understood in the broader context of the Magdolna Quarter Programme III. MQP III was a complex regeneration programme that aimed to invest in residential,

community, urban and economic functions, hoping that the effects would mutually reinforce each other (RÉV8 2012). According to the programme, such a synergy could be reached if the investments were concentrated on a relatively small territory and if the elements of the programme connected to each other. In accordance with this, Teleki Square – including the market, the park and two other connecting public spaces – stood at the core of this integrative rehabilitation programme, and its regeneration was seen as a continuation of the redevelopment projects of MQP II spreading out of the neighbouring Mátyás Square. The documents of MQP III explained:

The redevelopment of the neighbourhood will bring about numerous positive environmental changes. Therefore, it will be a better, more attractive urban environment to live in. As a result of the changing image of the neighbourhood, positive changes can be anticipated in the local real-estate market on a medium-term, and higher value-added producing enterprises will appear (RÉV8 2012, 21).

To put it another way, the local council aimed at closing the rent gap by means of changing the landscape, serving as a message for private investors (Smith 1996). In this context, the involvement of the locals can be seen as a “bourgeois civilizing mission”, where the aim of participatory landscape design is to decrease the amortization risk of the investment and to sustain the quality of the renewed public space by means of social engineering – by changing the locals’ attitude toward their environment and inducing the emergence of local networks of relation (Monterescu 2015).

As the leader of RÉV8 (2016, personal communication, August 5) explains:

There is a strong municipal interest that they put in 170 million Forints [in 2013, approximately 570.000 EUR⁸] [in the park] and it should be sustained as long as it is possible. Plus, everyone far and wide pesters the local council that the area is deprived, and everything is constantly breaking down in it. Therefore, it works at full blast [to protect it].

For the local council, the participatory landscape design project was believed to foster individual responsibility for the environment and enhance trust between the lay participants and toward the local council. In accordance with this, the park at Teleki Square was planned to be placed into community care (RÉV8 2012). This community care meant that it would become the responsibility of the emerging community to prevent vandalism and to take care of the park with the financial and practical support of the local council. In this sense, the council considered the project successful. In the opening ceremony, the mayor of the district stated that the value of the square could be measured in its power of organizing a community that undertook both the challenge of protecting the park and of guarding it (Józsefváros 2014).

Similar to the local council, both PTSA and the architects highlighted the concepts of community and sustainability in relation to the participatory design project. A middle-aged local woman argued that it was worth involving the local people, since they would find more satisfaction in occupying and collectively protecting the park that they had designed together. One of the architects also affirmed in an interview:

Of course, the biggest advantage of this collective work is that a common plan emerged. What can be highlighted too is that a community was created, which is also important in this kind of work so that after the park is implemented it will continue to have life and for years and decades it can remain a self-sustaining public space (I3 2016, personal communication, February 5).

Nevertheless, the local council and PTSA defined ‘community’ in opposition to other social groups of the neighbourhood that they considered as deviant. According to their interpretation, participatory landscape

⁸ In 2019, it would be approximately 752.000 EUR, based on the Hungarian Cost Estimation Manual of the Building Industry of 2013 and 2020, and the annual average exchange rate in 2019 (ETK 2013, 2020).

design is a tool for recapturing public space and for excluding the deviant groups from the park. As a member of PTSA, a local man in his thirties explained: “The substance of the participatory design is that the locals step by step retake the space that in fact belonged to them but somehow they forgot about it, they left it and gave away to people – who we exclude now” (Pápay and Tóth 2013). Similarly, the mayor of the district, while highlighting that the renewed park can be a meeting point that strengthens social cohesion, expressed the view that with the exclusion of criminals finally the park could be used by people who deserve it.

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

Apart from the importance of community, the understanding of the four groups on participatory landscape design was very diverse. For the Ujirany Group the community was rather a welcomed side-effect and the participatory method meant the utilization of local knowledge and a break with the traditional top-down architectural interventions driven by capital and the authoritarian image of the architect. One of the architects explained that she started thinking about the involvement of local residents during her master thesis. She said: “What bothered me was that people decide about a future of an area, people who are for example concerned with the viewpoint of investors. And at the same time, they change a place and often create something that does not fit there” (I3 2016, personal communication, February 5).

For her thesis she developed an intuitive system for conceiving a site that requires “time and space for understanding the sense of a place” as she put it. In her mind this system included the people who used a given place so that they could also feel and help to understand these *genius loci*. The more people go out to a place and the more interpretations come up, the better the chance to create something good. From this point of view the involvement of people in the future of a public space had various and equally valid faces, ranging from a conceptual spatial art that makes people think, to an actual participatory landscape design project.

This point of view fits in the general understanding of the field of architecture. The architects tend to look at the participatory design method either as a means for a good design or as a way of fulfilling the general right of users to design their own environment (Jenkins, Milner, and Sharpe 2009). In both cases, the idea of power is taken into consideration in the relations of the architect and users and neither allows for differences between users in terms of power, taste, and interests. Furthermore, architects think of participation as a potential threat to the aesthetic quality of the design and thus they aim to teach people good taste. By design quality the architects not only secure the quality of the final design, appealing to people with upper social status, but also ensure their position in the field of architecture and their position in a broader social space. Another aspect of the approach of architects is the need to reach a consensus, which the Ujirany Group often emphasized during the workshops and when they discussed the project.

As opposed to this, the critical intellectuals took into consideration utterly different dimensions and tried to challenge the idealistic power- and ethnic-blind picture of participatory landscape design. “What I really consider as problematic is that the poor residents of the square and the neighbourhood were left out from the participatory project,” wrote one of the critical intellectuals on an online architect forum (in a comment posted to Bardóczy 2015). He referred to the fact that the project could only address and take into consideration the interests of a quasi-homogeneous and relatively better-off group of ethnic Hungarians, and the viewpoint of the marginalized groups of the neighbourhood could appear only through the lens of the locals that had more capital.

The recently graduated sociologist also assumed that the local councils did not intend to involve the marginalized groups. For her it could be seen in the fact that the council did not assign social workers alongside the architects, despite being aware of the deep social problems of the neighbourhood. In fact, she and the social worker, through their voluntary work, tried to counteract this weakness of the project and talk personally to all residents in the square; however, their attempts were not successful. “Many of them invited us in the flat and listened to us, and of course everyone had an opinion about the square. Though it’s another question how many of them came to the meeting at the end, because for this, one invitation is not enough,” she said (I7 2017, personal communication, March 19). The disinterestedness of the local council in the involvement of marginalized groups made her feel bad, when she tried to involve the locals:

For me it is always an inconvenient situation that I am standing there and want to suck them into something, like “come and participate, how super it will be, we will design the park, which you probably can’t use, because they will nicely arrange it so that you can’t use it,” so I don’t know, it’s like being the devil’s advocate (ibid.).

Considering this, the critical intellectuals understood the aim of the project through the dimension of ‘power’ and ‘exclusion’. For the critical intellectuals a participatory project is inherently political, and its final aim should be to include the have-not citizens and their interests in the decisions about the future of their own environment, a viewpoint which resonates with Arnstein’s critique of participatory projects (1969). From this point of view, the participants, due to their better social position and education, had better chances in the participatory landscape design to be heard as opposed to the marginalized groups, who due to their generally weak position in the social space of the neighbourhood would have needed extra support from the side of the local council.

In general, the critical intellectuals thought that the architects did their best, despite the limits of the project as determined by the local council and the RÉV8. Nevertheless, some of them accused the architects of not making enough effort to involve a more heterogeneous group and of not being well-prepared for the job. As the young sociologist said:

I think if an architect says that he or she can conduct a participatory design project, they should know how to do so [...] I know that it isn’t easy, I know it from my own experience but if I wanted to do a community design, I would look for groups who are doing similar things and perhaps using a method that I can use (I7 2017, personal communication, March 19).

The reactions of the architects to these critiques reflected their ambiguity. Even though the representation of the wider society was an indifferent factor in their theoretical model of participatory landscape design, they seemed to understand the critique of the critical intellectuals. However, the architects highlighted the limits of time and of their professional background in addressing hard-to-reach groups. “We are landscape architects, our job is to design, we’re not sociologists, plus we didn’t really have time, because there was an arrangement, I think we signed the contract in spring and we had to hand in a fat volume of concept plans, so we didn’t really have time for advertising,” explained one of the architects (I2 2016, personal communication, May 18). At the same time, they considered the input of the critical intellectuals during the workshops to be a nuisance in the process of design, as they said “there was this oppositionist opinion leader [critical intellectual], who initially came to the workshops, and his aims were good but then he went crazy because of it and practically he was trolling the workshops” (ibid.).

As opposed to this, the council does not think that the equal representation has to be the substance of a community design. As the leader of RÉV8 (I1 2016, personal communication, August 5) said:

It seems that we should use different methods to involve Aunt Mari, and Uncle Pista, and Earl Józsi at the same time. And the question is, whether it would be a community design? Does it represent the will of the locals? Since in this case many elements appear in the design that reflect our middle-class value system. [...] Participatory landscape design appears as a panacea for people, the purpose of which is to solve all the social problems in the neighbourhood [for] poor people, gypsies, petit bourgeoisie, and bourgeoisie. And during a sweet community celebration and by planting two trees, every problem will be solved. I don't think so.

He is also sceptical that a real multi-cultural community could have emerged. Instead, he excuses the local council and highlights the dependency of the local council on its voters and its party: "Sometimes I tell the Mayor that I would be the happiest if the Józsefváros is being rebuilt logo would be on a poster on which he shakes hand with a Nigerian, a Roma and a Turkish shopkeeper. But then he would be shot. Both by his own staff, his party and the people" (*ibid.*)

4.2. "The Association's Burden" – Social control over the park

While not all groups gave equal importance to involving people from different social backgrounds, none of them denied the apparent consequence of the selectivity of involvement. The homogeneous value system of the members of PTSA is reflected both in the design features that aimed to attract people with decent behaviour and in the strict rules for using the park that were set up by PTSA. The different understandings of the aim of the participatory landscape design traced out the potential alliances and conflicts between the groups, and the way PTSA controlled the park led to ruptures between those groups. This section introduces how the social control over the park was conceptualized in the workshops, and how it affected the physical design of the park.

Originally the park was dreamt of as an inclusive place. The idealistic architects involved with the park recommended that the park should be an open, tolerant and multicultural place, by referring to the history of the area and to Earl László Teleki, the Hungarian statesman after whom the square was named, who was known for his tolerant politics towards different nationalities. Connecting the concept of the design on an intellectual level to the historically built identity of the neighbourhood was considered by the architects to be a measure of a good design and reflected the internalized and shared values of the field of architects. At the same time, the lay participants, irrespective of their capital, supported this idea.

While the starting point of the architects was understanding the historically constructed genius loci, their idealist concept of the park affected the image of the emerging association. As a result, PTSA was envisioned as a tolerant, inclusive, socially sensitive organization that would take care of the park and seek to teach people how to behave. For instance, a local woman in her forties, who was an active member of PTSA explained:

It isn't a question of who and against whom but that why we associate. [...] It should not be this oppressive system; we can't solve the problem with violence for sure. Rather with love, rather with guidance. And if such a value system lies behind [PTSA] and we are able to accept that a scruffy homeless person has the right to come into the park [...] then in my opinion a change can happen (Pápay and Tóth 2013).

From the very beginning, it was a common view of the four groups that a fence around the park, and some kind of a social order, was a necessary precondition for the sustainability of the park. It was also a shared view that this social order – which in this context has to be understood as decreasing the rate of crime and social conflicts – had to be maintained by the people of the neighbourhood. To put it another way, the White

Man's Burden⁹ turned into the burden of PTSA. For example, one of the critical intellectuals, the recently graduated sociologist, argued during the workshops that to prevent crime "it is not enough to have a guard, somehow it has to be organized that every two hours or so in the night two people go around [in the park]; there are methods for doing this" (Pápay and Tóth 2013). She added that at that time she and the social worker were working on fostering this social responsibility. By talking to people of the residential buildings in the square they tried to convince the locals that it would be their task to teach social norms – like not to litter – to others. In a similar manner, one of the architects argued that "I think it is in fact this community consciousness that there will be this [PTSA] and more and more people join it [...] and perhaps it can be educative in a way that people warn others not to throw away the cigarette stub on the ground".

Nevertheless, this social order for maintaining the park involved distinctions between decent homeless people and criminals, between the lovely noise of a playground and the loud group of 'Romanian Gypsies' around the corner, between 'us' and 'them'. This categorization, however, seems to replicate the "vision of division" that the local council aimed to impose on the people of the neighbourhood, which appeared both in the official communication of the mayor's office and the local municipal council's meetings (Bourdieu 1989). This dominant ideology was reflected in the argument of the mayor in a municipal council meeting dealing with the criminalization of homelessness, that "homelessness is not crime, but deviance is" (Budapest Józsefvárosi Önkormányzat 2011a).

With the implementation of the design that had been created in the workshops, these categorizations were becoming imprinted on the physical space and materialized through certain design features of the park that aimed to attract decent people and to exclude homeless people, teenage gangs, and other marginalized groups (Balazs and Zein 2019). The locals thought of functions that would appeal to people with habitus similar to theirs. It can be seen in the fence around the park and in the park furniture that was designed to serve only individuals or companies of two or three people, a tiny playground for toddlers, and the lack of features serving children older than 8 and teenagers. In accordance with the request of the locals, the plans of MQP III determined a separate park for the older children, the so-called FiDo Park, on the other side of the Népszínház Street, which is equipped with a caged area for playing sport, so that the Teleki Square Community Park could remain a place for quiet activities. Furthermore, the decent and quiet way of using the park is ensured by the guard and the strict rules and regulations set up by PTSA and accepted by the local local council.

Thus, the selectivity of the lay participants is reflected in the design features of the park and sets limits to its functionality for different social groups. A casual conversation with a grandmother in the FiDo Park revealed that she found problematic the lack of features for children in Teleki Square and the lack of features for toddlers in FiDo. She said: "If we come to FiDo the 7-year-old is fine but what can the 2-year-old do? Kick the gravel? Then if we go to Teleki the 7-year-old is bored" (I9 2017, personal communication, April 1). Similarly, the tiny playground seems to be dysfunctional for Roma families of lower social status who prefer to go to the playground collectively, with three generations and friends all together. While having a conversation with each other, the adults could take care of the toddlers playing in the sand box. Even though the short single benches were not designed for large gatherings of people, having no other options for toddlers in the close neighbourhood, large families do come to Teleki Square. This exclusion that the design features and the rules imply does not explicitly target the Roma people of lower social status, and PTSA tends to refuse these critiques by the critical intellectuals. Nevertheless, since the local Roma people are more likely to hold lower social status and to possess different habitus than PTSA, de facto they bear the loss of the renewal of the park.

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

The distinctions that PTSA made and the over-controlled idea of the park were unacceptable for the critical intellectuals and led to heated conflicts between the two groups. As the social worker from JGMF remembered, the lay participants then split up into two groups, one group of the critical intellectuals, who drew attention to the interests of the minority groups and the marginalized, and the other group of PTSA, who argued that the mayor did not give the money to support criminal groups and which was characterized by open racism. The vice chairman of PTSA for a long time tried to mediate between the two groups. However, his attempts were unsuccessful, and at the end the critical intellectuals left the association.

Meanwhile the social worker from JGMF also had to make a decision about the future of his own community organizing project. Informed of the intolerant attitude of the [PTSA], his mentors proposed to him two options: either he could continue his work at Teleki Square and step-by-step change the level of tolerance of PTSA or he could restart his project somewhere else. In the end, the social worker gave up the project, and moved to Berlin.

The design features that target people with decent behaviour were supported by the architects, as they were in line with their architectural habitus and upper social status. The strict rules and regulations, however, brought to the fore the different attitudes of the members of PTSA and the architects. When asked about his opinion regarding the rules and regulations, one of the architects explained in an interview:

It bothered me, because we landscape architects imagine it as in the West that you sit outside with your friends with a blanket, a bottle of Beaujolais, baguette and cheese. And then the locals said that it is forbidden to smoke, how fucked up is that and I argued for a long time with the locals but the problem is that they are right and here not the sitting-on-checked-blanket-and-drink-Beaujolais kind of people come, but three vagrant old men sit on a bench and the PET bottles are flying (12 2016, personal communication, May 18).

As opposed to the critical intellectuals, the idealistic architects seemed to accept the argument of the PTSA, suggesting that they were the legitimate users of the park from the architectural point of view. As one of them highlighted in an interview, it can be assumed that the presence of homeless people would discourage decent people from using the park, which would lead to the deterioration of the park again.

It can be said that the aim of the local council to protect the investment and its “vision of division” was co-opted both by PTSA and the architects as well (Bourdieu 1989). Even though PTSA in many aspects did not agree with the politics of the governing party – that is with the party of the mayor and the majority of the local municipal council at the time – and in their weekly meetings PTSA tended to criticize the council, they did try to maintain a good relationship with the local council. PTSA did so with the aim of gaining a better position within the neighbourhood. Their attempts were in accordance with the local council’s endeavours to gain local support for their politics, and thus PTSA had become one of the few non-governmental organizations that was accepted as legitimate by the local council. This circumstantial coalition of otherwise conflicting groups could be traced to the attendance of the vice mayor in the events of PTSA and the informal relations of the vice mayor of the district and the chair of PTSA, demonstrated in gestures like greeting each other by kissing on the cheek.

The architects on the one hand found problematic the tendency of the council to use participatory landscape design as a political tool. On the other hand, being dependent on the local councils as their long-term clients, the architects could not give up the circumstantial coalition with them. In an interview they admitted that “landscape architecture has always been a political tool” (Somlyódi 2015).

CONCLUSION

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

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

The socio-spatial transformations triggered by the architectural intervention are not limited to the spatial unit of the park. The renovation of Teleki Square transformed not only the ways of using the park but also the ways of using other public and semi-public spaces. Being excluded from Teleki Square, the homeless people, the youth gangs, and the drug-users appeared in other less-controlled squares and in the shadows of doorways.

The stakeholders of the participatory landscape design – drawing on their different sets of capital – struggled to *shape the architectural intervention* in line with their values, beliefs, and interest. The local council and the PTSA saw the project as a reoccupation of a place by people who deserve the place. The critical intellectuals aimed to challenge the power- and ethnic blind idea of the participatory landscape design and emphasized the issues of power and exclusion. The landscape architects emphasized the importance of local knowledge, but also attempted to universalize their measure of aesthetic quality.

The ability of the stakeholder groups to shape the architectural intervention was limited by their relative position in the field of participatory design and in other fields. UG’s actions were influenced by its financial dependency on local councils and political actors. At the same time, the opportunities of the local council were limited by its dependency on private investment and politics on larger scales.

At the same time, the stakeholders were *shaped by the architectural intervention*. An important moment of the architectural intervention was the transformation of the habitus of the members of PTSA. Being involved in the design process they started to consider the public space as their own place, where they now had the authority to determine the expected patterns of behaviour so as to fit with their own values. Going around the park, they now warn people to use the park in a way that they as a group consider normal. PTSA’s dominant position in the control over the space has been legitimized by the local council. By contrast, participatory design distanced the critical intellectuals from Teleki Square and strengthened their disconnection from the neighbourhood. Due to their conflicting relationship with PTSA, they started to avoid Teleki Square.

As the habitus of the stakeholders changed, so did the relationships between the stakeholders. Despite the differences between the stakeholder groups in terms of social status and sets of capital, it seemed for a while that a circumstantial coalition could emerge between the architects, the PTSA and the critical intellectuals. However, the different values and conflicting interests of the critical intellectuals and the PTSA led to a rupture between these two groups and increased the social distance between them.

The changing relationships affected the relative positions of the four groups within the field of participatory design, and more importantly their positions in other power fields. The architects and the PTSA could keep a positive relationship with each other for longer, due to their non-conflicting interests. This relationship, which relied on the denial of social distance between the two groups, supported the positive interpretations of the participatory design project, and strengthened the position of UG in the field of architecture.

Similarly, the circumstantial coalition between the local council and the PTSA originated from the field of participatory design, and later ensured both the local council and the PTSA a better position within the neighbourhood. The local council found local support in the members of PTSA, while the PTSA gained the right to step into the field of local politics.

At the same time, the marginalized social groups bear the loss of the participatory design project. As a result of the architectural intervention, the social position of the marginalized groups of the neighbourhood became even weaker. Their weakening position can be traced in the social and physical exclusion from public space. Their exclusion, however, supports the gentrifying attempts of the local council.

This article shed light on the socio-spatial effects of architecture by analysing the case of Teleki Square Community Park from a relational viewpoint. The relational approach enabled a shift from looking at the architectural intervention in an episodic nature to considering it as a situational process, which leaves symbolic marks both on the physical and the social environment.

Furthermore, the relational framework of analysis made it possible to grasp the fluidity of social relations underlying the architectural project. This understanding of the circumstantial coalitions between PTSA, the local council, and the architects demonstrates a new face of the gentrification of the neighbourhood, in which it becomes PTSA's burden to civilize their neighbours while looking forward to the arrival of the gentrifiers. Thus, the article provides a polychrome understanding of the transformation of the neighbourhood as opposed to the black-and-white picture of top-down gentrification led by the local council.

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