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Successful rehabilitation or painful un-homing?

An analysis of government-led displacement in the 8th District of Budapest

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Abstract

Displacement – the process when residents are forced away from their living space – is one of the most pressing urban development issues of present times. Gentrification used as an urban policy tool to provide support for urban renewal and to carry out the rehabilitation of cities is the main displacement-inducing mechanism. However, there is an existing intellectual bias, which leads to an inequality in academic research. Scholars are mostly concerned with the description and investigation of gentrification and not with processes of displacement. This thesis aims to partially fill this gap in existing research and investigates the causes and outcomes of gentrification-induced displacement in the 8th District of Budapest, Hungary.

In the thesis I argue that displacement is a serious issue and must be moderated through regulatory tools and adequate urban policing. Applying Critical Urban Theory and the Right to the City perspective, the study focuses on how the district government is managing displacement. The data of the research is gathered through semi-structured interviews and the analysis of urban planning documents. The findings show that while decision-makers are aware of the problem and consider displacement as a negative process, this view is not always applied in the public policy and the redevelopment projects of the district.

Keywords: *displacement, gentrification, Józsefváros, 8th District, district government*
Word count: 19588

List of abbreviations

CSzP	Corvin-Szigony project
DBC	District Building Code
DLS	Decent Living Standards
FSSC	Family- and Social Support Center
ISDS	Integrated Settlement-development Strategy
NUPS	National University of Public Service
SSIM	Settlement-scape Image Manual
SSP	Settlement-scape Protection act

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1. Introduction

Gentrification has in the recent years not only became a global phenomenon, but it is increasingly used by many urban policy makers and municipalities as a strategy to renew dilapidated neighborhoods, attract affluent, upper-class residents and, intentionally or not, to displace vulnerable, underprivileged societal classes (Lees. et al., 2008; 2016). Through this increasingly hegemonic urban practice, a "vicious circle is created in which the poor are continuously under pressure of displacement and the well-to-do continuously seek to wall themselves in within gentrified neighbourhoods" (Marcuse, 1986, 2). This often carefully controlled and utilized "Back to the City Movement" (Smith, 1979) forces vulnerable and low-income residents toward displacement, loss of spatial attachment and deprive them from their Right to the City (Marcuse, 1986; 2010; Persdotter et al., 2021; Pull et al., 2021).

Recently, "displacement became a goal in itself" (Pull et al., 2021, 9), as a technique of urban governance, sometimes without the goal for gentrification or neighborhood rehabilitation. Displacement is a serious issue, requiring an urgent solution inside the political arena of the city. It is not a form of housing injustice alone, but a painful experience for powerless groups and minorities, which above all entails a removal of basic urban rights and an exclusion from centrality, from the privileged urban space (Marcuse, 1986; Lefebvre, 1996a; 1996b).

In my thesis I am focusing on the gentrification-induced displacement happening in the Corvin- and Orczy Quarters of the 8th District of Budapest over the past one and a half decade. The case study area (*Figure 1*) experienced gentrification since the early 2010s due to large-scale urban redevelopment projects and, later, because of the National University of Public Service campus redevelopment. These rehabilitations are the main driving force behind the new-built gentrification and studentification of the territory. The purpose of the work is to analyze how these non-classical forms of gentrification generate displacement in the inner city and to uncover how the district government controls the issue. To fully understand the urban planning practices utilized by the district government it essential to analyze how the problem is perceived. Displacement will be discussed from a critical perspective, with an underlying presumption that it is always present complementary to gentrification (Marcuse, 1986; Slater, 2012; Pull et al., 2021). New-built gentrification and studentification are unique forms of gentrification, in which there is rising scholarly interest since the mid-2000s (e.g. Davidson and Less, 2005; Smith, 2005). The research is focusing on these two specific processes and their implications to the 8th District of Budapest – called Józsefváros.

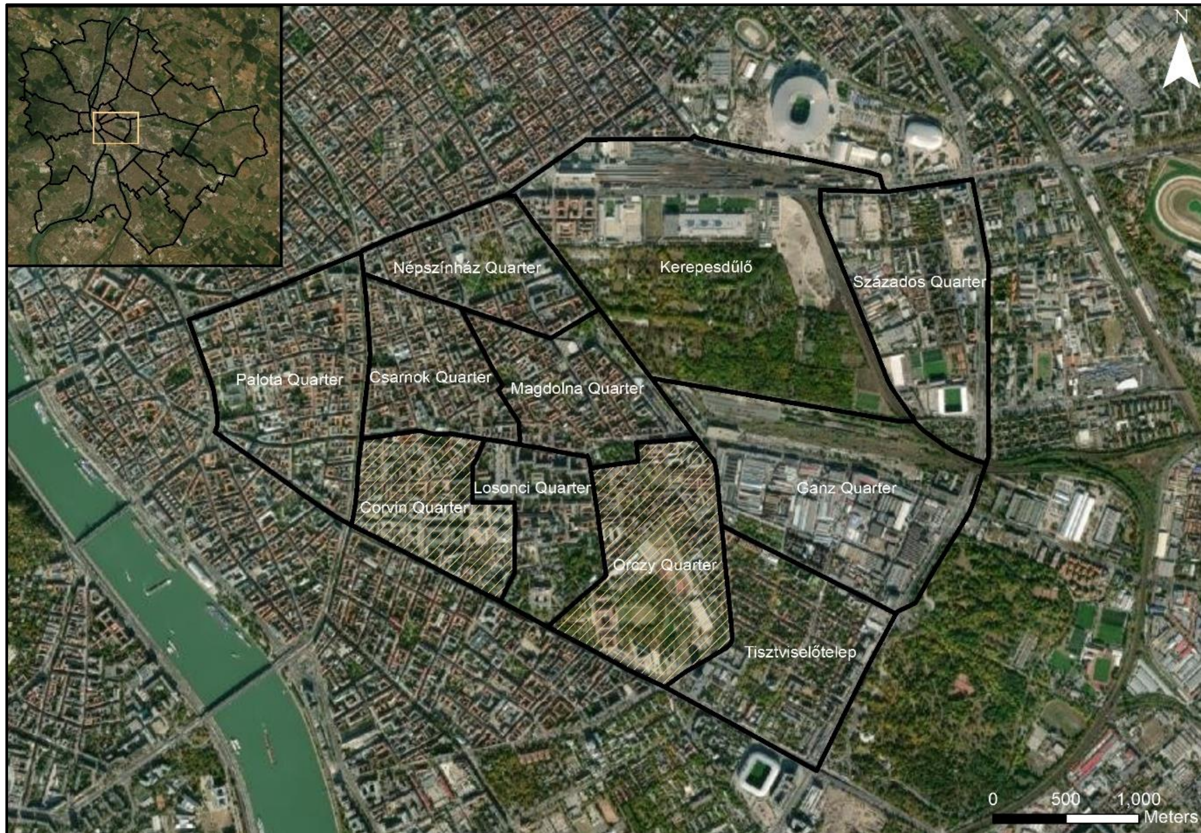

Figure 1. The 8th District of Budapest, with the Corvin- and Orczy Quarters. *Source: ESRI, n.d.; own editing*

The overarching aim of the thesis is to analyze how the issue of displacement is managed by the district government of the 8th District and what strategies are implemented. To investigate how these developments induce displacement and fuel gentrification, the analysis will address the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of gentrification and displacement in Budapest's 8th District?
- How is gentrification and displacement perceived by the district government and non-governmental stakeholders?
- How is the problem of displacement handled by the district government?
- What can be done to control and moderate displacement in the 8th District of Budapest?

1.1 Outline

As the first step to address the thesis' purpose and questions, Chapter 2 presents the theoretical understanding guiding the research. Starting from the general, the concept of gentrification and displacement will be discussed first, then the discussion will move on to the notions of Critical Urban Theory and The Right to the City. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the research

and offers an overview of the methods – document analysis and semi-structured interviews – used. In Chapters 4 and 5 I will closely examine gentrification and displacement in the case study area. Chapter 4 gives a general overview about the historical course of urban development in Budapest (Section 4.1), discusses new-built gentrification and studentification in the Corvin- and Orczy Quarters (Section 4.2), and presents the existing academic literature on displacement (Section 4.3). Chapter 5 exhibits the main findings of the research and contains the analysis of rehabilitation-induced displacement in the case study area. In Section 5.1 the stakeholders' perceptions about urban development is presented. Section 5.2 discusses how these different viewpoints are rooted in different understandings of gentrification and displacement theory – to phrase it simpler: I will demonstrate how the different agents and actors speak about the same issues with emphasizing distinctive aspects of the problem. Section 5.3 presents the current and former state of governmental influence over rehabilitation projects, and how this control can moderate or enable displacement. Lastly, Section 5.4 discusses social housing as a potential solution to the issue of displacement, as well as how social housing is regulated, operated, and managed by the district council. Finally, in Chapter 6, the conclusions are presented, alongside with reflections and potential directions for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will briefly present gentrification and displacement as the two concepts investigated by the research. After these discussions, the two main theoretical frameworks that will guide my work – Critical Urban Theory and Henri Lefebvre's The Right to the City notion – will be presented. These theories will help me to examine how gentrification and displacement materialize at the research area and how the district municipality regulates the process. The logic behind the structure of Chapter 2 is to move from the board, comprehensive concept of displacement and gentrification toward the narrower theoretical notions, which are utilized to understand these concepts.

2.1 Displacement

Before discussing the two main theoretical viewpoints guiding my work it is essential to present the two main processes which I will examine through the case study in my thesis. The first one is displacement, a term generally referring to exclusion from a segment of urban living. The reason why I decided to discuss displacement foremost is that it is not necessary to experience gentrification of any kind to encounter displacement. On the contrary, gentrification is exactly the opposite, which means whenever it happens direct or in-direct displacement materialize (Marcuse, 1986; Zhang and He, 2018; Persdotter et al., 2021; Pull et al., 2021). Furthermore, the order among the two process also reinforces the choice, since displacement always takes place before gentrification (Pull et al., 2021), with the exception of some specific cases of new-build gentrification where pressure of displacement might not be present until the arrival of the first gentrifiers (see Section 2.2).

As I mentioned, gentrification is not a necessary condition for displacement. Climate change, natural disasters, infrastructure development and numerous other causes can lead to it (for exhaustive examples see Adey et al., 2020). In my work I will mainly focus on gentrification-induced displacement caused by rehabilitation projects in Budapest's 8th District.

Displacement has a long history, going back at least to the middle ages when murderers and criminals were exiled from cities. Later the imperial powers used displacement as a tool to get rid of undesirable elements – vagabonds, convicts, or racial minorities. These citizens were often transported to the newly discovered continents, the Americas or Australia (Pull et al., 2021).

The first modern time, widely accepted definition of displacement was created by the Eunice and George Grier in 1978. It can be found in Pull et al.'s work as follows:

> Displacement occurs when any household is forced to move from its residence by conditions which affect the dwelling or its immediate surroundings, and which: (1) are beyond the household's reasonable ability to control or prevent; (2) occur despite the household's having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy; and (3) make continued occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable (Pull et al., 2021, 2).

This definition is a valid starting point for anyone who wants to research the process, although it has some serious shortcomings as both Marcus (1986) and Pull et al. (2021) point it out. The main issues are that the definition does not make a difference between voluntary and involuntary displacement, and that it does not concretize the cause of displacement or the social class affected by it. Furthermore, the definition is narrow in the sense that if one tries to grasp indirect displacement it is less useful.

Peter Marcuse's classic text (1986) is in which gentrification gets entangled in the displacement research. Marcuse wanted to present the links between gentrification, (building or apartment) abandonment and displacement. His starting point was the critique of seeing displacement as a dualistic process which can either happen because of economic factors (e.g.: changes in the rent) or by physical changes (e.g.: damages in the living environment). To be able to analyze the full impact of displacement the researcher should consider all four factors contributing to it. The four factors according to Marcuse (1986, 156; see also Pull et al., 2021) are (1) exclusionary displacement, (2) displacement pressure, (3) direct last-resident displacement, and (4) direct chain displacement. Additionally, a fifth – extreme form – is mentioned by Pull et al. (Ibid.), forced displacement which was specific to the Anglo-Saxon world around the 1980s and described as the technique when landlords made their tenants move out with excessive rent raises and often with performing physical harassment.

By exclusionary displacement Marcuse (1986) meant the situation when a household is unable to move into a specific building by a change in conditions. The change is outside the household's ability to control or influence. It can happen even if previously the household was able to fulfill the requirements of occupancy. Households can be affected by displacement pressure if changes in their living environment – both on the household and the neighborhood level – endanger their ability of staying put and carry on with their tenancy. Displacement

pressure can be considered as an indirect form and can be caused by various actions, such as the gentrification of the neighborhood in which the tenants reside. Direct last-resident and direct chain displacement are somewhat similar, but while last-resident displacement only takes the very last resident of a certain living space into account, chain displacement considers all residents who had been displaced from a specific place over the course of time.

As Marcuse notes a fully-fledged study of displacement, utilizing all four factors, is rather complicated, because statistical sources, censuses or other housing data rarely keep track of each household individually, they cannot follow unofficial changes in tenancy. In short, the displaced people are often disappearing from where census-takers or researchers would go to look for them (Lees et al., 2008). As the Corvin-Szigony project shows (see Section 4.3, 5.1 and 5.2), it is even hard to examine the developments, when the process is well documented and there would be a chance for a follow-up. Moreover, more abstract concepts – such as displacement pressure – are almost impossible to measure with quantitative methods. There are no all-round indicators which can be utilized at the different geographic location to measure the pressure caused by the shadow of displacement. What further complicates research is that gentrification as a process does not work uniformly (Marcuse, 1986; Kovács et al. 2013; 2015), and different types of gentrification induce different types of displacement, which calls for a distinct use of Marcuse's concept.

As Newman and Wyly remarks gentrification's "powerful ability to revitalise communities" and its appearance as "an ideal solution to long-term urban decay" (2006, 26) influences academic research to focus on the description of the process, rather than investigating the issues caused by it. This inequality in research practices is reinforced by the fact, that "it is difficult to find people who have been displaced, particularly if those people are poor" (Ibid., 27). This all lead to the current situation, when while a wide-ranging and exhaustive academic discourse about gentrification exists displacement became a forgotten and rarely analyzed topic.

As it is shown above displacement is a complex phenomenon, calling for a sophisticated research design, and even with a clear theoretical framework and appropriate methods it is difficult to study. This – and the entanglement with gentrification research – are the two main reasons why gentrification-induced displacement is understudied, while tremendous work can be found about neighborhood upgrading or urban revitalization (Pull et al., 2021).

Displacement is a technique to organize capitalist cities, to free up new and new opportunities for capital investment and to recreate the urban fabric, however it is not purely a spatial event (Marcuse, 1986; Pull et al., 2021). To grasp it precisely the socio-cultural aspects

of it should be considered too. The psychological and philosophical perspectives, and the spatiality of displacement are equally important.

In addition, to the four factors of displacement we can speak about political and cultural displacement (Hyra, 2015). Both types are an outcome of gentrifiers appearing and changing the socio-cultural layout of a certain neighborhood. Political displacement refers to the series of action when an ethnic or any other kind of minority losing their political power due to a high influx of new occupants who are outvoting or outpowering the long-term residents. This means that the group is losing their democratic decision-making power, which can lead to indirect displacement or a strengthened displacement pressure. Cultural displacement is a more wide-ranging term, and it does not only include political preferences, but other types of socio-cultural norms, behaviors, and values too. When newcomers become dominant in number, their preferences can prevail over old residents, which can transform the living environment of the neighborhood – services, commercial opportunities, transportation, or the infrastructure (Ibid.).

These non-residential forms of displacement can easily affect people's memories and spatial attachment (Zhang and He, 2018) which can lead to raising tension between long-term tenants and new occupants, which eventually can turn into displacement pressure and indirect displacement. Both processes can be observed in Budapest's 8th District.

The outcome of displacement – whether it is development-, revitalization-, neighborhood upgrading-, or gentrification-induced – is always the same: "the displaced must move". To specific groups relocation is an inevitable outcome and the different scientific explanations do not help, the only thing matters is the pain and suffering, the loss of control, the alienation and marginality that displacement brings (Chatterjee, 2021). The main goal of research should be to "grasp the power-relations behind housing displacement and formulate counterstrategies to empower those who fight it" (Persdotter et al., 2021, 195), and this thesis has the very same aim.

District governments[1] have the power to control and moderate displacement through public intervention or public policy regulations. According to Newman and Wyly (2006) inclusionary zoning, regulatory practice when a given portion of new housing construction required to be affordable by low to moderate income people is one of the main possibilities, which can be utilized by district councils. Private strategies battling displacement include "accepting poor housing quality, coping with high housing cost burdens and/or sharing housing

[1] In my work I will use district government/district council as synonyms. All these terms refer to the district level public administration, while when I talk about the public administration of Budapest, I will use the term municipality.

with other residents" (Ibid., 48-49). Since displacement is a politicized process the solutions to it are also constitute a part of the political arena (Marcuse, 2010). Struggles against displacement can be carried out by organizing anti-displacement campaigns or events demanding rent reductions. The construction or renewal of affordable housing estates is another potential solution (Newman and Wyly, 2006).

2.2 Gentrification

Gentrification is happening all over the world as a global urban strategy. Despite it folds out in different manner at various locations (Lees et al., 2016) the word become a catch-all term used to brand a wide variety of urban processes. As Lees et al.'s definition goes gentrification is "the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential and/or commercial use" (2008, xv). This conceptualization is very strict, and it might seem that some processes would not be considered as gentrification if this definition would be taken word by word. For my research the concept of gentrification is utilized as a "valuable lens" (Ibid., xv) to investigate and criticize urban development, and not as a rigid framework. A broad definition is preferable over a narrow one. With an extensive definition it is easier to avoid theoretical chaos and to identify all the relevant connections between gentrification and displacement (Clark, 2005). In this sense, I am considering any urban development as gentrification if it involves a change in land-use, transformation of the built environment, an influx of people with a higher socioeconomic status or any other kind of residential mobility, and capital investment (Clark, 1992; Clark, 2005).

The globalization of gentrification what Lees et al. (2016) speaks about is not a new phenomenon according to Clark (2005), the use of gentrification as an urban strategy and neoliberal policy tool globally is what is new. Decision-makers worldwide argue that gentrification is a positive process during which neighborhoods are renewed, a more diverse society is created, and better services and institutions appear. However, these arguments are only a way to depict gentrification as a solution for urban decay. While in reality gentrification is commodifying urban space and exploits the poor through unequal power relations (Ibid.).

The term – new-build gentrification – was coined by Davidson and Lees (2005) who examined the urban renewal of London's riverside. Today new-build developments are considered as a widely accepted "part and parcel of the gentrification process" (Davidson and Lees, 2010, 395). It is described as a positive type of gentrification by many authors, where displacement is non-

existent and segregation is reduced by an influx of new residents from diverse social classes, which leads to social mixing and more inclusive urban communities. Another set of urban scholars prefer the term (and theory) of reurbanization over new-build gentrification.

Reurbanization (or residentialization) – a term frequently used in the post-socialist context as well – is the most developed counter-theory (see Boddy, 2007; Butler, 2007) of new-build gentrification. The process is explained as

> the stabilization of inner-city residential districts by increasing in-migration (of new or non-traditional household types with explicitly city-minded housing preferences) and decreasing outmigration after a long period of negative migration balance (Davidson and Lees, 2010, 398-399).

However, speaking about replacement (or social mixing) instead of displacement is gravely problematic. The main argument for reurbanization – an allegedly positive way of neighborhood upgrading – is mostly that displacement is non-visible in quantitatively collected statistical data. Nevertheless, non-visibility does not straightforwardly mean absence (Davidson and Lees, 2010), as Larsen and Lund Hansen (2008) notes in their article about the urban renewal project of Copenhagen's Vesterbro district those who are displaced often not report their change of address official, therefore using only housing census data can lead to erroneous conclusions.

The narrow analytical understanding, the act of reducing displacement "to the brief moment in time where a particular resident is forced/coerced out of their home/neighborhood" (Davidson and Lees, 2010, 400) is also problematic. Furthermore, only analyzing the spatiality of displacement means that the psychological/personal price of displacement and every negativity accompanying it – the "structure of feeling" and "loss of sense of place" (Ibid., 403) – remains hidden from the researcher.

Despite what would all the criticism, counter-theory and inaccurate research say, the shadow of displacement is there whenever new-build gentrification happens, and it materialize both directly and indirectly – through displacement pressure (Davidson, 2018). New-build gentrification has two very distinctive form: (1) new-build housing replacing the old, deteriorated housing stock (direct displacement), and (2) new-build housing emerging in brownfield areas (indirect displacement). In scenario (1) new-build housing stock replaces the old housing estates, which leaves long-term residents without a choice and increase the displacement pressure on those who reside in the surrounding area. While during scenario (2) the greatest issue is that new-build gentrification introduces "a large population into the

[existing] community very quickly" (Ibid., 251-252) and this contributes to the indirect displacement of old-time residents – through the feelings of loss of space, and place –, and sometimes through direct displacement due to increasing rent levels.

From the perspective of the government – either on the municipal or on the national level – this appears as "a common sense solution for neighborhood decline" (Ibid., 254). For this reason, governments and municipalities take an active role in new-build gentrification as a planner, a strategist, and a stakeholder. They operationalize institutional power to shape urban policy and make large-scale urban change happen (Davidson and Lees, 2010; Lees et al., 2016; Davidson, 2018). The concept mostly used where the state is operating under capitalism and there is a competition for residential living. In conclusion, the state mostly using new-build developments to operationalize government interventionism sugar-coated as positive gentrification and social mixing (Davidson and Lees, 2010).

2.3 Critical Urban Theory

My work is guided by the initiatives of Critical Urban Theory which refers to a theoretical approach used mainly by radical, left leaning urban scholars. Critical Urban Theory rejects the capitalistic forms – such as technocracy or neoliberalism – of urban knowledge and instead forms a strong opposition to those. This means that the theory "insists that another, more democratic, socially just, and sustainable form of urbanization is possible" (Brenner, 2012, 11). It can be used to criticize urban inequality, injustice, or exclusion. The "conception can be summarized with reference to four key propositions: critical theory is theory; it is reflexive; it involves a critique of instrumental reason; and it is focused on the disjuncture between the actual and the possible" (Ibid., 14). As Brenner explains Critical Urban Theory is not an exact guide of how one should conduct research but more like a scientific standpoint which can be utilized to examine, evaluate, and analyze urban mechanisms.

It is theory in the sense that it "illuminate[s] the meaning and possibilities of the world in which [urban] practice takes place" (Marcuse, 2012, 25). It is reflexive in the sense that it highlights that all knowledge are contextual and cannot be studied outside of the "dialectics of social and historical change" (Brenner, 2012, 16). Furthermore, reflexivity means that the theory focuses on and criticizes the self-conflicting features of capitalist urban development. Rejecting instrumental reasoning – those which try to reinforce the existing institutional system which controls and manipulates society – within social science, and especially within urban studies will be one of the main theoretical position this work will take on. Finally, the thesis

will try to go beyond the currently used practices and uncover what other possibilities exists which can develop urban rehabilitation into a more inclusive, just, and equal process (Brenner, 2012).

2.4 The Right to the City

According to Peter Marcuse the researcher's main purpose with utilizing Critical Urban Theory should be to implement "the demand for a right to the city" (Marcuse, 2012, 24), the notion introduced by Henri Lefebvre in 1968. Since then, the Right to the City became a viral slogan for social movements fighting against exploitative, oppressive and inequal urban process globally (Mayer, 2012). It is not an addition to the existing liberal-human rights, but a cry for revolution, a political struggle independent from democracy and capitalism (Purcell, 2014). Nonetheless, the Right to the City is closer to a provocative act than to a clear-cut, well-developed urban theory. According to Lefebvre:

> the right to the city is like a cry and a demand. This right slowly meanders through the surprising detours of nostalgia and tourism, the return to the heart of the traditional city, and the call of existent or recently developed centralities (Lefebvre, 1996a, 158).

Lefebvre continues, "[it] cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed *right to urban life*" (Ibid.). From these two extracts it can be concluded that by right to the city Lefebvre meant an equal access to urban centrality. Or with other words – as he clarifies in later works – the Right to the City is "the right to information, […] the rights of the citizen […] and user of multiple services, […] the right to the use of the centre, a privileged space" (Lefebvre, 1996b, 34).

The Right to the City understands politics spatially, and it is against the capitalist commodification of space. It can be described as the de-alienation of the space, the right to use, decide, influence the development, and change of the urban space – conclusively it is the right of participation in the urban politics (Purcell, 2014). In David Harvey's words the Right to the City is a "collective right" (2013, 137), which can be acquired in the urban space, with revolting against the political. It is a call for recreate the city as an inclusive, functional body of politics, as well as a demand to control the capital investment.

It can be also understood as a right to "necessities for a decent life" (Marcuse, 2012, 34) which can be lined up with Decent Living Standards [DLS] first introduced by the *Human Development Report* in 1993. The report mentions decent standard of living as a component to

the access to resources dimension of the Human Development Index. It is described as "the capability of living a healthy life, guaranteeing physical and social mobility, communicating, and participating in the life of the community (including consumption)" (UNDP, 1993, 105). To be more concrete, DLS includes – without being exhaustive – the right to shelter, health care, mobility, democratic decision-making, decent education, and clean water. This rationale can be discovered in Lefebvre's notion too:

> The right to the city recognizes how places enable or disable various human capabilities and freedoms: economic advancement is the main reason people seek access to the city and resist displacement (Turok and Scheba, 2019, 498).

Turok and Scheba continues with stating, that the location of housing primarily determines the citizens access to employment, (public) services, social and infrastructural networks, security and the "sense of belonging" (Ibid., 499). Thus, the right to centrality principally influences and includes all these basic human needs.

The notion unquestionably became a buzzword for scholars, as it can be seen from the discussion above many scholars treated the Right to the City as a "collective and socioeconomic right to housing" (Attoh, 2011, 670; see also Marcuse, 2012), while others treated it as a classic liberty right or a revolt against the political power of the state (see Harvey, 2013). In my view the Right to the City is a radical, rallying cry against current urban planning practices prioritizing profit and business interest over the urban poor. And it can be utilized in struggles for reshaping the politics of the city (Attoh, 2011).

Now, that the notion is established as a right to urban centralities and a right to all the advantages accompanying urban existence – from services, through transportation, to more abstract terms such as exclusivity or the feeling of belonging. As well as a notion for revolt against current urban planning practices, one should take a closer look that whose right to what city is discussed here.

As Marcuse (2012, 34) puts, the demand for a Right to the City means that the citizen can take advantage of the "potential benefits of an urban life", but to whom Marcuse refers as *citizen*? The answer to the question is anyone, who is directly or indirectly oppressed by, anyone who is excluded or exploited from, or anyone who suffers from the inequalities of the capitalist system. In this specific case the answer for whose right is 'the displaced', those affected negatively by the gentrification of the 8th District.

The query what city can broadly be answered with saying city means urban or the right to urban life in this context. It is used as a metaphor by Lefebvre who in later works not always steadfastly cling to this specific wording, but rather use terms with similar meaning – for example right to centrality, difference, or space (see Schmid, 2012, 49). The city or more precisely the urban – how Lefebvre use it often – in this sense is not a geographic location. It is a centrality with privileges, where different socio-economical interactions and encounters happen.

The urban is the place where different processes meet and mix, and something new is produced (Berki, 2015). This idea gave rise to the theory of production of space, what Lefebvre explains in his book *The Production of Space* (1991) and what gave the foundations to Edward Soja's (1996) thirdspace concept. According to Lefebvre urban space and the production of it happens on three different dialectical levels. The first is the perceived space (or spatial practices), the second is the conceived space (representations of space), and the third is the lived space (spaces of representation) (Lefebvre, 1991; Schmid, 2012; Berki, 2015). The lived space is what Edward Soja develops into the *Thirdspace* (1996), which he describes as a combination of both the first and second space, and in that sense both "real-and-imagined". However, what is unique about Soja's concept is that the thirdspace (or lived space) is also the space of resistance (Berki, 2015). It is where the people can confront the government/the power/or the different oppressive authorities, which are strongly represented in both the perceived and the conceived space.

The space of resistance leads us back to the Right to the City, and its connection to the struggle against displacement. Christian Schmid (2012, 43) defines the notion as "the right not to be displaced into a space produced for the specific purpose of discrimination". In his reading the notion is a demand for what the urban can promise to the people, a claim for a certain standard of quality of life. As he continues capitalism turned the urban into a commodity, a space where the capitalist market can thrive and where profit is produced. This "systematic economic exploitation" (Ibid., 55) does not only prevail on the land- and real-estate market, but it incorporates the whole socio-cultural setting of the urban. The urban arena is controlled by the economy, and those who can access it, while doing so limit other members of the society. The Right to the City stands against the process, as it is a common right to influence, shape and change the urbanization process, and a right not to be excluded from this opportunity (Harvey, 2008). To summarize, limited opportunity can be interpreted as a specific type of "displacement and exclusion from centrality" (Schmid, 2012, 57).

2.5 Concluding remarks

The following paragraphs can be read as a statement of purpose, a reflection on why the described theoretical frameworks been chosen by the author of the thesis. These thoughts from Peter Marcuse and Tom Slater are the initial ideas that shaped the goals and intentions of the work. As Slater formulates it, the

> task for critical urban studies is to reject the celebration of gentrification and the denial of displacement by reorienting the debate […] towards a sturdier analytical, political and moral framework which is rooted in housing as a question of social justice, […] and affordable housing as a human right and a basic human need (Slater, 2012, 189).

Housing should not be a financial asset, a way for capitalism to accumulate profit, but it should be a universal right, a right for shelter, personal control, social life, and community connections (Larsen et al., 2016). The rethinking of the topic should happen according to the words of Peter Marcuse:

> if the pain of displacement is not a central component of what we are dealing with in studying gentrification – indeed, is not what brings us to the subject in the first place – we are not just missing one factor in a multi-factorial equation; we are missing the central point that needs to be addressed (Marcuse, 2010, 187).

Studying gentrification should steer clear from describing the process, from the supply- or demand-side explanations. It should be engaging into analyzing displacement, and then the roots of the problem must be exposed. After, the possible actions should be considered and questions concerning displacement must be “answered in the political arena” (Marcuse, 1986, 175). In my opinion, there is still a long and rough road until all these proclamations become reality, but a step towards these goals is to uncover the specificities of the displacement and gentrification of Budapest’s 8th District.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, first, I will briefly discuss the ontological and epistemological positions guiding this thesis, then I will discuss my methods and sources in detail. The structure of the chapter is influenced by the views of Jonathan Grix about the "building blocks of [social science] research" (2002, 180). I will describe what kind of information is out there about displacement in the 8th District, and how I acquired and extracted it. Then I will discuss the exact and precise procedures I used to obtain, classify, and analyze the data. Finally, I will present the sources I built my research on.

3.1 Theory of science

The ontological understanding of this thesis is greatly influenced by critical realism, described by Andrew Sayer in his book, *Realism and Social Science* (2000). As Sayer notes in the introduction of his work "realism is the belief that there is a world existing independently of our knowledge of it" (2000, 2). He continues to explain how critical realist research is not interested in finding general truths or catch-all explanations; rather, it is trying to understand the world around us and the mechanism shaping it. In my view, a critical realist perspective – or rather a perspective with the elements of critical realism – is an exceptional tool to research displacement, since the process is difficult to generalize, and its appearance differs at each locality and neighborhood.

Critical realism distinguishes three parts of the observable world, the *real*, the *actual*, and the *empirical*. As Sayer explains, the *real* is everything that exists, a "realm of objects" with their structure and power. This can be translated as the entirety of processes and developments at play in the 8th District. The *actual* means when powers are activated, for example it can be understood as the district government's power to displace residents. Finally, the *empirical* is the "domain of experience". For the thesis, the *empirical* is understood as the perceptions and information conveyed by the analyzed documents and interviewees (Sayer, 2000, 11-12).

In my work I am aiming to identify the "casual mechanisms [of displacement] and how they work [in the 8th District]" (Sayer, 2000, 14). It means that I try to uncover how the district government's decisions, gentrification, and displacement are linked together, and how these mechanisms work in the specific context of my case study. However, it is paramount to note, that my work cannot be considered as a true critical realist research. The aim is not to identify

and analyze structures, mechanisms, and events (Ibid.), but to use critical realism as guide to uncover information about displacement in the 8th District.

Another social theory influencing the work is Marxist geography, which is a radical and critical explanation of spatial processes unfolding during capitalism (Gregory, 1994). It is radical because it rejects the prevalent capitalist modes of knowledge production and critical because it searches for new approaches to acquire spatial knowledge. The paper's focus is on spatiality, and how displacement exists in the geographic space of Józsefváros. The Marxist interpretation is also reinforced by my theoretical framework, which utilizes radical, leftist thinkers and concepts. Furthermore, the dynamics of displacement are the easiest to understood as a process unfolding between different societal classes, where the more influential or wealthier class exploits the poor. Ultimately, both gentrification and displacement are best to understood from a Marxian perspective since these processes are involving capital investment in the built environment and class struggles.

3.2 Research design

It became clear at the beginning of the research, that these ontological and epistemological understandings require qualitative methods to extract knowledge. The aim was to uncover social injustices happening in connection with urban developments (Pull et al., 2021).

Initially I was interested in exploring the structures and mechanism influencing displacement in the 8th District and investigating the perceptions of the urban poor. The original research plan included in-person approaches – fieldwork and narrative walks –, but due to the travel restrictions applied by the Government of Hungary, these methods became impracticable. Therefore, the goal of the research was changed to evaluating the district government's role in controlling, moderating, or enabling displacement, and document analysis and semi-structured interviews (see Section 3.3) were chosen as research methods.

Only evaluating the perspective of the district government does not give an all-round understanding of the topic. However, it is important to note that in the current situation – with an ongoing pandemic – in person research was an unethical choice, and identifying residents, who experienced displacement was not a possibility.

3.3 Methods

The alterations in the research purpose meant that document analysis and semi-structured interviews became the best methodological fit. In the following, I will briefly present these

methods, discuss their shortcomings and the difficulties the research faced. Alongside these, I also carried out an extensive literature review evaluating the current state of gentrification and displacement research in Józsefváros. Most of the statistical data presented in the thesis is acquired through reviewing previous academic works, as well as by obtaining it from interviewees, who are in the possession of planning documents of the two examined rehabilitation projects.

Document analysis is the procedure of systematically reviewing and assessing printed and online materials. Similarly, to other analytical methods in qualitative research, empirical knowledge is acquired through the interpretation and evaluation of the (Bowen, 2009). In my work the utilization of document analysis as a method was twofold. On the one hand, I used urban planning documents (see Section 3.4) to provide context for my analysis, and to contextualize data acquired through interviews. On the other hand, documents were used to provide a better understanding of the perception and control of displacement in the 8th District and to guide the topics of the interviews.

Rapley argues that documents are situation- and context-based, and it is crucial for the researcher to understand “how people create, use and speak for documents” (2007a, 98). I was interested in my interviewees’ reactions, when I highlighted how the information communicated by them related or contradicted the statements of the urban planning documents. It was almost as important to analyze what was omitted from these documents as the evaluation of the contents of these scripts (Rapley, 2007a).

Document analysis gave easy access to exact and non-influenceable information since most urban planning documents selected were available through the district council’s website. This could have caused a selectivity bias since I only worked with documents available online and did not carry out an extensive research after other, non-uploaded sources. This would have required in-person research, which was impossible in the current situation. Besides the method is feasible and efficient even during an ongoing global pandemic (Bowen, 2009). The documents were first skimmed and then the relevant parts, chapters and sections been identified. Then these extracts were further analyzed and compared to the information obtained through interviews and the evaluation of previous academic research.

Semi-structured, qualitative interviews were used to complement the literature review and document analysis and to acquire new information from stakeholders who participated as planners, decision-makers, or investors in the rehabilitation projects. Different actors and organizations who researched, experienced, or dealt with displacement in the 8th District were also selected. The method primarily was chosen because semi-structuredness helped to gain

control over the interviews and discuss topics relevant to my research purpose, yet it left room for the interviewees to direct the conversation onto topics which they find meaningful from the aspect of displacement.

Rapley (2007b) considers qualitative interviews as an umbrella term, categorizing social encounters happening between a researcher and an interviewee. In my opinion, the research classifies as qualitative work because I was not only interested in the plain data given to me, but also in how the information was communicated and the non-verbal elements of the interaction. Instead of "a one-size-fits-all structured approach" (Mason, 2018, 112) my goal was to tailor-fit the interview questions to every participant individually. The aim was to understand the theoretical and empirical standpoints of the interviewees in order to uncover the greatest amount of information possible. I did not have a fixed set of questions or a previously designed interview guide, but rather a list of discussion topics "tailored" to the respondents. During the interviews I asked questions about these topics and did follow-ups on the various things raised by the participants, which gave them the possibility to shape the course of the conversation according to what they believe to be essential to mention (see Rapley, 2007b, 25).

The transcription process started with identifying subjects and answers relevant to the research question. Then I further analyzed the parts consisting the information and categorized the extracts into four different groups, which later became the sections of Chapter 5. These parts were thoroughly examined and were used as the main source of empirical evidence. As I mentioned before, I compared the data to the information acquired through analysis of urban planning documents. In doing so a comprehensive understanding of displacement in Józsefváros was achieved.

3.4 Sources

After presenting the methods used during the research, I will introduce the specific documents used, and actors with whom interviews were conducted. The aim was to interview a wide variety of stakeholders involved with rehabilitation projects and displacement in the 8th District. The list of stakeholders participating in the research includes current and former board members of Rév8 Ltd., the public-private company initially established to manage the Corvin-Szigony project, but later became the general urban planning company of the district. Interviews with former and current district council representatives were also conducted, as well as an interview with the current mayoral advisor. The goal was to interview those district

council representatives who have a territorial connection[2] to the case study area and I also wanted to include delegates from both the side of the mayor and the opposition parties. Eventually only two current representatives responded to my invitation, one representing the liberal and one the social-democrat party, both supporting the mayor. This means the opposition parties are not represented in the research. Similarly, neither the current mayor, nor the previous one – who was in office during the planning and implementation of the Corvin-Szigony project – were able to participate. Additionally, I was able to conduct interviews with the director of the district's Family- and Social Support Center, an architect from Futureal Ltd. – the real estate developer of the Corvin-Szigony project –, and members of Gólya Community House – a cooperative association offering social support to residents –, as well as members of a public policy research institute working with housing injustice and displacement. This mixture of interviewees allowed me to present deeply different views and perceptions on the topic of gentrification and displacement.

As mentioned in Section 3.3 all urban planning and revitalization documents are available online. Unfortunately, the site does not have an English version and the documents only exist in Hungarian. The research worked with three different types of documents: decrees, ordinances, and strategies. In the first category belongs the Settlement-scape Image Manual (SSIM, 2017), which aims to preserve and protect the organic settlement-scape through recommendations and the presentation of best practices. The document demonstrates the Józsefváros' expectations – as a community – towards the shaping of the built environment. Both the District Building Code (JÓ-KVSZ, 2004; JÓKÉSZ, 2007) and the Settlement-scape Protection act (SSP, 2016) are ordinances. The former provides the legal basis for constructions, urban redevelopments, or any kind of urban planning interventions in the district, while the latter aims to protect the local architectural values through regulatory tools and requirements. The Integrated Settlement-development Strategy (ISDS, 2015; 2020) belongs to the category of strategies and the purpose of the document is to define the district's long- and medium-term development goals, and to display these as a coherent target system. None of the previous studies, that I encountered, mentioned the usage of these documents as resources. The interpretations presented in Chapter 5 are based on my own translation and analysis of the said scripts.

[2] In the Hungarian district government system representatives are elected on the level of quarters or smaller territorial areas, and not on the level of the whole district.

4. Case introduction

The 8th District of Budapest – called Józsefváros – is my main research area. I will primarily focus on two neighborhoods located at the south border of the district, the Corvin- and Orczy Quarters (*Figure 1*). These two localities are prime examples for gentrification in post-socialist cities (Hegedüs and Tosics, 1991; 1994; Kovács, 2009; Boros et al., 2010; Kovács et al., 2013; Czirfusz et al., 2015; Kovács et al., 2015; Kubeš and Kovács, 2020), as well as studentification (Fabula et al., 2017), and gentrification-induced displacement (Jelinek, 2010; Czirfusz et al., 2015; Combs, 2021). The aim of this chapter is to analyze gentrification – with special attention to new-build gentrification and studentification – and displacement on the neighborhood-level, and its city-wide implications.

Chapter 4 consists of three sections presenting different aspects of gentrification and displacement in Józsefváros. The first one (Section 4.1) offers a historical overview of gentrification in Budapest. It introduces historical processes and preconditions for gentrification both on a city-wide and district-level. The second section (Section 4.2) offers a closer analysis of the 8th District, with special attention to the Corvin- and Orczy Quarters' new-built gentrification and studentification. Lastly, the third section (Section 4.3) focuses on previous research about displacement in the case study area.

4.1 Overview of urban development in the inner-city of Budapest

As Luděk Sýkora writes in his work "Budapest is perhaps the most often discussed example of gentrification in a post-communist city" (Sýkora, 2005, 91). He continues with noting that the urban renewal process started in the 1980s, before Hungary's transition to market-capitalism and democracy in 1989. Since then, the city experienced "various forms of physical and social upgrading" (Kovács et al., 2015, 252) which were the results of market-led urban development and municipality-initiated projects.

The deterioration of inner-city housing – what subsequently became a precondition for gentrification – started after World War II. The damaged housing stock was never adequately restored and due to the severe housing shortage larger apartments were split up without increasing floor space or quality (Czirfusz et al. 2015; Kocsis, 2015). During the 1970s and 1980s the socialist government tried to fight the population decline of the city drawing in people from the countryside with the promise of low-skilled job and the allegedly better living

conditions. Parallel to this, the construction of large-scale socialist housing estates began (Kocsis, 2015).

At the same time, the middle-class moved out from inner-city locations, including various neighborhoods in Józsefváros, due to the run-down housing stock. The downturn was a result of upgrading and revitalization plans that were never carried out. The numerous reasons why these projects failed included the two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the housing shortage after World War II. The growing number of better-off, middle-class citizens who left the inner-city also meant that Budapest slowly became far more segregated than any other socialist city (Ibid.).

1968 marked the beginning of the construction of the Szigony Street housing estate (on the left of *Figure 2*), which was planned to be the flagship of revitalization, and it is the only socialist housing estate in the city center up until today. However, high demolition costs and state indebtedness led to only 4000 newly constructed apartments instead of the planned 55000 (Czirfusz et al., 2015). Furthermore, the quality and comfort of the new-build housing barely exceeded the level of the existing (and demolished) stock, which meant that people were relocated into apartments with almost the same conditions (Ibid.; Kubeš and Kovács, 2020) as they lived in before.

Figure 2. Diversity in Józsefváros – new-built condominium, renewed social housing and the Szigony Street housing estate. *Source: Sándor Csudai photography*

The initiative by the state to stop Budapest's population decline with relocating people from the countryside into the capital led to a slow increase in the number of Roma residents. The phenomenon started at the 1950s, and by the 1970s and 1980s, it reached its peak (Combs, 2021). Nevertheless, without a proper solution to the housing shortage, newcomers – mainly Roma citizens – were stuck in slum-like settlements in the outer districts of the city. The government implemented a relocation program which aimed to dismantle these neighborhoods and forced the residents to move into centrally located areas. However, the poor condition of inner-city housing meant that the project resulted in the relocation of slums instead of disassembling them (Kocsis, 2015). Józsefváros – where most Roma citizens were moved – became "the least prestigious inner district" (Ibid., 7) as a result. This can be understood as a double process at work. Because of racist/chauvinist views and policies in the governmental level Roma were moved to the least attractive neighborhoods of the inner city, and due to the very same views the presence of many Roma residents meant that the status of the neighborhood went down further.

As it is shown in *Table 1* the proportion of Roma in Józsefváros was higher than the city-wide average during the last three population census. In fact, these numbers can be even higher, if we consider that those who identify themselves with the Roma ethnicity are usually only the 30-40% of those citizens who are perceived as Roma by their environment (Ladányi, 1992; Pénzes et al., 2018). Moreover, it is important to note that after the transition around 40% of the Roma citizens living in Budapest resided in the 8th District. This percentage decreased during the next twenty years, because the total number of Roma citizens increased city-wide, while in the 8th District their number stagnated (see *Table 1*). These two conflicting processes can also be viewed as an indirect evidence of the displacement of minorities from the 8th District (see Combs, 2021).

Table 1. The number of citizens and number of Roma citizens in Budapest and in the 8th District.

	Budapest			8th District		
	1990	2001	2011	1990	2001	2011
Total number of citizens	2,016,774	1,777,921	1,729,040	92,386	81,787	76,250
Number of Roma citizens	8,123	12,266	19,530	3,141	2,771	3,050
Proportion of Roma citizens (%)	0,40%	0,69%	1,13%	3,40%	3,39%	4,00%

Source: HCSO, 2013; own compilation

The main foundation for gentrification "was the mass privatization of housing and the skyrocketing value gap[3] in the old inner-city neighbourhoods" (Kovács et al., 2013, 25). The district governments were organizers of the privatization of housing and acted with extensive authority. This and a non-existent city level regeneration framework led to diverse forms of gentrification, and Budapest became an "urban laboratory" (Ibid., 26) for renewal processes.

Before continuing with the detailed history of privatization, it is important to note that the public administration of Hungary is constituted by two levels – municipal- and regional councils. The district governments are considered municipal councils, while the municipality of Budapest has authority on both the municipal and the regional level (HNA, 2011). This means that district governments have extensive control over municipal level legislation, which includes decisions about social housing, building permits and urban rehabilitations – if they are in accordance with the municipality's urban planning documents.

The privatization of the housing stock – a key element for future redevelopments (Hegedüs and Tosics, 1994) – started before the transition, during the late 1980s and accelerated further during the 1990s. District councils

> could formulate their own housing privatization policies. Given the general lack of resources, the newly established district governments were in most

[3] Value gap is a term coined by Hamnett and Randolph (1984, 1986). It represents the difference between the value of a property if it is vacant/unused and the financial worth of it if it is tenanted or used according to the best possible mode (Clark, 1992).

> cases eager to carry out an excessive privatization in order to reduce social subsidies and generate income (Kovács et al., 2015, 258).

The process was conducted in a "give-away" (Ibid.) manner, which meant that sitting tenants could buy their apartments for a relatively low price. It was a desirable investment for those who had the financial means to afford it: there were no restrictions on resells, the value gap was wide, and the apartments were in the center (Nagy and Timár, 2012; Czirfusz et al., 2015; Kovács et al. 2015). This also meant that the most dilapidated housing – with the poorest tenants – remained in public hands. The run-down condition of housing and the inadequate living conditions were later become arguments used by the district government of Józsefváros, who exploited the vulnerability of the urban poor through revitalization- and gentrification-induced displacement (Kovács et al., 2013).

The insufficient financial status (of district councils), the missing legal framework (about the legal status of block of flats) and the non-existent city-wide program for regeneration made the implementation of renewal projects difficult for the district governments (Kovács et al. 2013, 2015; Czirfusz et al., 2015). This was partly resolved in 1994 with the state legislating the Act on Condominiums, which gave legal status to apartment buildings, and in 1996, when the municipality of Budapest established its urban regeneration framework (Kovács et al. 2013). These meant that gentrification and urban renewal started to happen in a more controlled manner at a larger scale. Various – district council-owned – revitalization companies were set up, and the districts of Budapest took control over redevelopment through private-public partnerships and urban policy making (Kovács et al., 2013; 2015). Thus, the large-scale urban renewal of Budapest is mainly labelled as "organized gentrification" – a term coined by Kovács (2009) referring to the dominance of regeneration programs initiated by district councils through self-owned revitalization companies (see also Boros et al., 2010; Jankó, 2012; Kovács, 2009; Nagy and Timár, 2012; Kovács et al. 2013; 2015). Classic- and new-build gentrification, as well as studentification is also present in smaller pockets of the inner city (Fabula et al., 2017; Kubeš and Kovács, 2020).

In the section 4.2 I will discuss how these historical processes influenced the gentrification of the Corvin- and Orczy Quarters. The focus will be on two different rehabilitation schemes – the Corvin-Szigony project [CSzP] and the National University of Public Service [NUPS] campus redevelopment.

4.2 Gentrification in the 8th District

As it was mentioned in Section 4.1, gentrification in Budapest is a widely researched topic, and when it comes to examples studies often mention the 8th District (Kovács et al., 2013; Czirfusz et al., 2015; Kovács et al., 2015; Fabula, 2017; Kubeš and Kovács, 2020; Combs, 2021) – specifically the Corvin-, the Magdolna- and the Orczy Quarters. Yet, these locations are very different from each other. The Magdolna Quarter program often labelled as a prime example for social revitalization (Kovács et al., 2013; Kovács et al., 2015; Horváth, 2019), the CSzP is a government-led new-built rehabilitation (Kubeš and Kovács, 2020), while the signs of studentification can be traced in the Orczy Quarter (Fabula, 2017). In this section I will present the two latter in detail.

The gentrification of the 8th District started shortly after the transition in 1989, in the inner-city locations private initiatives dominated, while outside the Grand Boulevard the district government took the leading role (Kocsis, 2015). The area along the north-side of the Üllői Road was renamed Corvin Quarter, and in 1998 the district council "set up a share-holding company called Rév8[4] to organise urban renewal in […] [this] specially designated area of the district" (Kovács et al., 2013, 29).

Rév8 coordinated one of the largest urban development projects in Europe (Kocsis, 2015), a perfect example of new-built gentrification, stretching over 22 hectares of the district (Szabó, 2017; Futureal, 2018). The agreement between the district council and Futureal – the project developer – included an offer from the former

> to demolish existing poor quality public housing stock and to relocate the tenants in exchange for upgrading the urban fabric and providing amenities for middle-class people" (Czirfusz et al., 2015, 64).

With the words of György Alföldi, the former CEO of Rév8, the CSzP "established the three main pillars of development in the district" (Alföldi, 2010). With policy tools it superseded prostitution and criminal activity from public spaces, it started to renewal of the housing stock, and it attracted further private capital investment.

[4] Rév8 Ltd. later became the sole rehabilitation company of the district. It is in the shared ownership of the Municipality of Budapest, and the district council of Józsefváros.

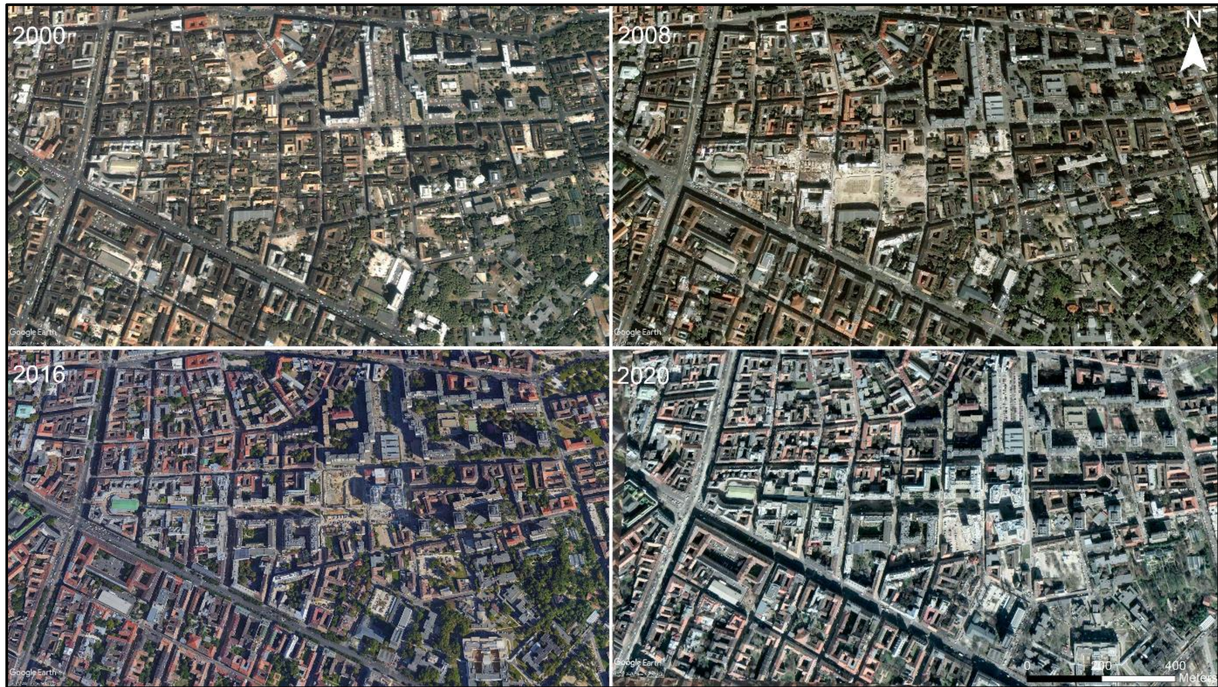

Figure 3. Historical change of the Corvin-Szigony project area. *Source: Google Earth, n.d. a; own editing*

According to Czirfusz et al. (2015) and Combs (2021), the district secured around 2 billion Hungarian Forints, roughly 5.5 million Euros, in exchange for the project area while the actual development costs are estimated to be around 850 million Euros, from which 72 million was public investment. The costs covered the demolition of 1100 apartments from which 70% was social housing, and the construction of 2700 new flats, a mall – Corvin Plaza –, and 130 thousand square meter of office space (Futureal, 2018). After the redevelopment – which process is well illustrated by the satellite images of *Figure 3* – Corvin Quarter became a sellable capitalist product instead of a segregated, stigmatized neighborhood (Zubreczki, 2017).

The outcome of the rehabilitation was manifold. As Kovács et al. (2015) notes long-term residents constituted only 38% of the inhabitants in the area after the rehabilitation – a clear sign of urban mobility and displacement. The fact that most of the newcomers were "[y]ounger and better educated than long-term residents" (Ibid., 263) points toward classic definitions of gentrification (Lees et al., 2018, XV) and it signals the existence of the process in the area. Alongside these better-off middle-class residents, foreign investment – to secure long-term profit – can also be observed. These eventually led to the relocation of the population through (involuntary) displacement, and the rise of displacement pressure around the district (Kubeš and Kovács, 2020).

While the Corvin Quarter went through a complex redevelopment process, the Orczy Quarter remained one of the most stigmatized area in Budapest (Czirfusz et al., 2015). The district government lacked the funding for revitalization and drawing in private investment to renovate the housing stock was almost impossible due to the negative reputation of the neighborhood. An extra complication is that the neighborhood accommodates "a large part of marginalised populations displaced from other, developing areas" (Czirfusz et al., 2015, 68).

Besides the run-down housing stock, the Orczy Quarter is one of the most culturally diverse neighborhoods of the city. Some parts of it experienced above average residential mobility and localized private redevelopment and gentrification, while other parts did not change physically, nor socially in the past five decades, additionally there are those areas which experienced a significant influx of displaced people. Nonetheless, the quarter has at least one major advantage – its attractiveness to students "who can benefit from the great variety of rental dwellings and the affordable prices" (Fabula et al., 2017, 163). Józsefváros is the home of five universities – from which the two most important are Semmelweis University and the NUPS – , while other nine have at least one of their faculties in the district. The specialty of the Orczy Quarter is that most of these can be found within walking distance.

Kocsis Máté – the mayor of Józsefváros between 2009 and 2018 – is "a prominent representative of the governing party" (Czirfusz et al., 2015, 69), which seemed to be contributing to the district's ability to secure public investment to revitalize the Orczy Quarter. The NUPS campus redevelopment – started in 2012 – is the most well-known of these projects. The change in the built environment caused by the development is visualized by *Figure 4*. After securing the funding for the project Kocsis stated that "Józsefváros should become a rebuilt university town, instead of a neglected ghetto full of criminals" (Józsefváros, 2012). The district government considered gentrification (and studentification) as a favorable policy tool for rehabilitation (Czirfusz et al., 2015; Fabula et al., 2017), as it is clearly shown by this revanchist statement. The overall prestige of the neighborhood might be increasing, but the high fluctuation of tenants and the large proportion of students negatively affects the social cohesion and the residential community. Finally, studentification utilized as a public policy tool can cause exclusion and displacement through increased rent prices.

Figure 4. Historical change of the National University of Public Service campus redevelopment area. *Source: Google Earth, n.d. b; own editing*

It is yet to known how gentrification will transform the sociocultural fabric of the district in the future. The financial crisis of 2008 reduced the pace of the process since investments has been halted for a while, but

> the recent economic upswing in the region [Central and Eastern Europe] suggests that the tempo of gentrification will speed up considerably in the coming years (Kubeš and Kovács, 2020, 2604).

As a final thought, Józsefváros is often labelled as a "laboratory and also best practice for Budapest and beyond" (Kovács et al., 2013, 31), still we should not forget that behind the renovated facades of gentrification or the pleasing green grass between two brand new university buildings there is another story, a narrative about exclusion, pain, and displacement.

4.3 Discussions on displacement in Budapest's 8th District

There is no conclusive agreement about the scale and intensity of displacement in the 8th District. Although most scholars acknowledge displacement as a process directly or indirectly connected to the gentrification of the district, some of them refer to displacement as a lesser problem, since it is only happening in small, isolated pockets (Sýkora, 2005; Kovács et al.,

2013; 2015). One the other side, there are researchers who recognize that displacement in any form, and indifferently from scale, is an unjust and unequal urban process, mainly affecting the most vulnerable citizens, thus the workings of it should be uncovered (Jelinek, 2010; Czirfusz et al., 2015; Fabula et al., 2017). Even though the common understanding is that the rehabilitation of Józsefváros leads to displacement, there are only a "handful of critical analyses of the mechanisms and outcomes [of displacement]" (Czirfusz et al., 2015, 56) and those are mostly written by master or doctoral students (for an exception, see Combs, 2021).

The goal of the section is twofold, on one hand I will review and criticize existing scholarship on displacement in the 8th District. On the other, past developments and the current state of displacement is presented. The academic work discussing the topic is classified into three groups, as follows: (1) studies that mention displacement, but do not engage the problem critically, (2) works which acknowledge the importance of displacement on a descriptive level, and (3) the very few critical studies. By critical studies I mean those which are in accordance with Brenner's (2012) conceptualization about Critical Urban Theory. Therefore, scholarship introducing and discussing a topic in a descriptive manner are distinguished from reflexive, analytical research. In the first part of the section these, descriptive studies are presented. These three groups will be discussed individually, followed by crucial analytical highlights at the end of the section.

Researchers who belittle the importance of displacement in Budapest often argue that the process affects very few people in post-communist cities, as residents have usually been able to become owner-occupiers during the mass-privatization of public housing. A supporting claim for this argument is that when owner-occupancy is the dominating form of tenancy, residents are less vulnerable to displacement. Sýkora argues that

> despite a number of unlawful cases of forced evictions in post-communist cities, tenants enjoy formal protection. Eviction is not a common mechanism behind displacement and gentrification. In rental stock, landlords interested in property refurbishment with an aim to lease or sell it for higher returns usually have to offer tenants replacement flats within city limits and attempt to come to an agreement to speed along their removal. This can be realised for the whole building, which is usually the work of institutional investors and developers (Sýkora, 2005, 99).

Sýkora's explanation of the relocation process is a classic example of what Schmid (2012, 57) calls "exclusion from centrality". The above quote shows that the main issue with discourse about gentrification in Central and Eastern Europe is that authors are more concerned with presenting gentrification, than with investigating displacement. They are aware of the process, sometimes they even encourage fellow scholars to investigate it in-depth (Kubeš and Kovács, 2020), but somehow the pain of displacement did not become the central component of research in the area (Marcuse, 2010).

Another issue is that the scholars only consider direct last-resident displacement as displacement and they fail to investigate another – sometimes easily visible – forms. The following extract is a good example for this one-sidedness:

> Regarding residential mobility swift displacement of long-term residents and robust gentrification remained limited in some smaller pockets of poverty where state-led regeneration programmes were carried out. In these neighbourhoods (e.g.: Ferencváros, Józsefváros) large-scale demolitions also took place including local government actions to disperse low-income marginalised groups (especially the Roma) into other districts of Budapest or even beyond the city boundaries (Kovács et al., 2015, 261).

Researchers often make confusing allegations about displacement. They tend to conclude that displacement is not a serious issue in Budapest, because it is only happening on a limited scale. On the other hand, they mention serious issues, such as exploitative strategies of local governments or racial bias. The problem is that they acknowledge these issues in their work, but they do not engage them critically. Furthermore, only focusing on direct last-resident displacement limits the evaluation of the damage done to narrow explanations. This potentially leads to misinterpretation of the different sociocultural and socioeconomic processes.

Studies that recognize and distinguishes different types of displacement (Marcuse, 1986), yet do not engage the issue critically, are equally problematic. It is unacceptable for any critical study to state that "some people can be pushed out from a revitalizing area by rising prices and they usually move to more affordable housing in different parts of the city" (Sýkora, 2005, 99) and then carry on with concluding that the move out is voluntary and happens simply because some of the residents cannot afford to live in the gentrified area. This does not only show an author's dissatisfactory knowledge about displacement, but also blurs the unjustness and destructiveness of displacement. To summarize, describing displacement without critical analysis can often lead to wrong assumptions and questionable conclusions.

There is a small number of authors who see displacement as a potential problem, although in their respective works a complex analysis of the process and its connection to gentrification is missing. These authors mainly operate with quantitative information about – for example – residential mobility, proportion of long-term residents, or minorities. Through these works a general understanding of displacement can be acquired, but the critical focus is on gentrification.

It is often claimed that long-term residents in the 8th District are a minority. In 2015, 62% of the population was newcomers, who were "[y]ounger and better educated than long-term residents" in general according to Kovács et al. (2015, 263). The high proportion of new residents and the increased residential mobility are both clear signs of displacement (Fabula et al., 2017).

As it is noted by Kubeš and Kovács (2020) the displacement process is gentrification-induced. It started with the early "organized gentrification", which was led by district governments, and aimed to restore physically the dilapidated, socially segregated, and marginalized inner-city areas. The renovation by demolition forced long-term residents to move involuntary and the later appearance of better-off residents and new-build housing meant that the process become exclusionary. Households were unable to move back to their previous residential area even if they wanted to (Czirfusz et al., 2015; Kovács et al., 2015). Besides, households with similar economic power to those who have been displaced are also incapable to move to the neighborhood, which means that the area become inaccessible for a particular societal group. In addition to this, Fabula et al. (2017) states that the increased property and rent prices – caused by the studentification of the Orczy Quarter – are inducing displacement pressure and eventually physical displacement.

Another recurring topic is how city-wide mass displacement was prevented by owner-occupation and levelling-out policies by local governments (Kubeš and Kovács, 2020). While mass displacement is yet to occur, it is important to remark that pockets of displacement "flourished", particularly around government-initiated rehabilitation projects. These localities in Józsefváros were/are mainly inhabited by Roma residents, who were/are inevitably endangered by relocation. Systematic and critical research to follow up on the displaced is missing, but "it is very likely that many of them, including numerous Roma families, ended up in similar or worse conditions" (Czirfusz et al., 2015, 64).

The handful of critical studies aim to grasp the injustice, the racial bias, and the consequences of displacement in Józsefváros. In his research Jelinek concludes that "[r]elocation and its negative consequences are not treated by the local government either as a complex social or as an important 'personal' problem" (Jelinek, 2010, 107). According to him the district council's main goal is the urban renewal on the neighborhood-level, and gentrification is the tool utilized. Meanwhile, those who suffer the consequences of the process – low-income dwellers, many of them Roma people – are very rarely get help from the social institutions of the district government. The "bureaucrats do not recognize the extent to which relocation changes their [displaced tenants] life" (Ibid., 112), and instead of handling displacement with complex solutions, tenants are offered little actual help through generalized communication and responses.

As I stated above there is a connection – embedded in the socialist past's path-dependency – between the proportion of government-owned housing and the number of Roma population. As Jonathan Combs (2021) writes in his study – about racial policing in Józsefváros – this condition and the way the district council selected housing units to be put on the blacklist for privatization meant that the renewal and displacement were racially biased. It is hard to interpret that process any other way than that at the same time with renewing the district, the council also wanted to clear out a part of the district's population deemed as undesirable. Public statements – made by Máté Kocsis – are the factual evidence for these claims. The former mayor labelled the renewal of the Orczy Quarter as the born of a "new university town", instead of a "ghetto full of criminals" (Fabula et al., 2017). I will return to the question of institutional management of displacement in Section 5.3.

Displacement in the 8th District is severe in some localities, while less visible in others. Nevertheless, the process excludes vulnerable, ethnic or poor citizens from the right to the urban centrality. It claimed to be accompanied with stigmatization and racial biases, and it is insufficiently covered by academic researchers. Research trying to give an in-depth analysis of the various developments around displacement is essential. In the following chapter I will highlight how displacement perceived, understood, controlled and being moderated by the district government.

5. Displacement in the Corvin- and Orczy Quarters

In Chapter 4 I presented the key characteristics of gentrification and displacement in the Corvin- and Orczy Quarters. In this chapter, the discussion will mainly focus on the problem of displacement and how it is perceived and managed by the district council and the non-governmental stakeholders of Józsefváros.

The material, which I build this discussion on, is acquired through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and agents, as well as by analyzing key city planning documents of the district (see Section 3.3, 3.4). I structured my data around key topics which were mentioned by the different interviewees. These subjects provide a frame for this chapter and each of them will be discussed individually in the following sections: perception of gentrification and displacement (Section 5.1); different understandings of displacement (Section 5.2); governmental control over displacement (Section 5.3); social housing and displacement (Section 5.4).

The main finding of the research is that most stakeholders agree about displacement being a negative process, an issue which needs to be addressed by the district government. However, the opinions and solutions considered to be the best are radically different. This difference, explained in Section 5.1, is rooted in the different understandings of what should be treated as gentrification or displacement (see Section 5.2). Section 5.3 discusses how displacement was approached by the district council and it concludes that while preventive measures were taken a systematic and complex solution is yet to be utilized, thus displacement potential remain a problem in the near future. The solution promoted by the district government is the renewal and upgrade of the social housing stock (see Section 5.4), disregarding the fact, that the practice induce displacement at one location and reduce it at another. It can relocate the problem, but cannot solve it, so it should not be regarded as a solution alone, and other measurements should be taken.

5.1 Perception of gentrification and displacement

How gentrification and displacement are perceived by the individuals, institutions or organizations determine their attitude towards the problems, which ultimately guide how they will manage displacement and the obstacles connected to it. During the interviews, this perception (at least partially) predestinated how interviewees responded, and it outlined two 'opposing sides' – the side of those who consider the district's large-scale rehabilitation

projects a success, and those who believe in more inclusive and socially sensitive rehabilitation. It is important to note that although this two-sidedness can generally characterize the data, none of my interviewees – nor the planning documents – could be exclusively allocated to one 'side'.

5.1.1 "The most successful revitalization in Eastern Europe"

Stakeholders who classified rehabilitations as successful tended to belittle the importance displacement and emphasized that those who had been "relocated" were able to stay within the administrative boundaries of the district (Interview B). These actors have strong ties to the Corvin-Szigony rehabilitation project, either by planning, managing or being a district council representative during the implementation of it. Their answers did not take the pain of displacement and the violation of the right to centrality into account. Arguments often included the "positive effect of gentrification on the local economy" (Interview D and E), as well as on the social diversity of the area (Interview A, B, C). As the mayoral advisor remarked "the economy, the society, and the culture" of the district declined, and the question was "if the socially mixed nature off the territory can be kept up" (Interview B). In his reasoning the "district council stopped and reversed ghettoization and segregation" by demolishing and redesigning the CSzP area. He concluded that slumification is a process that homogenize the same way as gentrification does and the district government's goal was to stop this negative development to preserve middle-Józsefváros as a "mixed population neighborhood" (Ibid).

This aspect is also emphasized in the Integrated Settlement-development Strategy [ISDS] (2015) and its revised version (2020). Both documents mention gentrification as a process that can induce displacement, but more importantly, as a positive force which will help the 8th District achieving greater social diversity. The Orczy Quarter is categorized as a neighborhood yet to experience the "positive impacts" of gentrification:

> The housing stock is expected to experience change in the future to a greater extent than before. This will lead to a raise of the residential mobility in the quarter. The social rehabilitation of the area should focus on that the relocation of the residents is happening with ensuring the housing integration and affordability (ISDS, 2015, 99; 2020, 126).

The documents continue with listing the hoped-for benefits of gentrification and discussing how the National University of Public Service campus redevelopment can accelerate the existing moderate studentification in the area. The project is expected to mitigate segregation, increase local, residential consumption and "positively affect the property value

in the adjoining area" (ISDS, 2020, 62). The increased residential mobility or displacement is not discussed. In conclusion, the potential positive effects of gentrification presented valuable to the district's development, while displacement is overlooked.

The vocabulary, the reasoning and the concealment of displacement are similar to what one can find in the works of Lance Freeman (Freeman and Braconi, 2004; Freeman, 2005; 2009). In their work analyzing New York City Freeman and Braconi concludes, that while displacement is happening connected to gentrification it is not a rapid process put more like a slow residential turnover (Freeman and Braconi, 2004). In another article Freeman (2005) mentions new services and amenities as well as economic development as a positive supplement to gentrification. He concludes that while gentrifiers can bring negative processes to a neighborhood – such as displacement – they also can be "good neighbors".

According to Slater (2012) the methods used in these studies led to false results because not all displacement is visible through the used censuses. The problem is that while "Freeman is aware of problems that gentrification can bring to disinvested neighbourhoods […], he does not *foreground* those problems from a policy perspective" (Ibid., 180). Similarly, to Freeman my interviewees were mostly aware how and why gentrification affects the 8th District negatively, but from their urban redevelopment perspective the emphasis was placed on the putative positive values brought along by gentrification.

While the gentrification of the Orczy Quarter is only a possible future, the Corvin Quarter is seen as a neighborhood where gentrification has already excreted its beneficial effects:

> To sum up, the settlement-redevelopment project carried out at the most valuable, centrally located but deteriorated area of Józsefváros has achieved its goals. The territory successfully caught up to other inner-city localities with similar aptitudes and became a livable and unique district of the city (ISDS, 2020, 66).

Alongside of classifying it positive, the redevelopment project and the gentrification it induced is presented as "the only viable solution" (Interview A). This narrative uses the district government's insufficient economic situation to motivate the demolitions and the new-built development. According to the mayoral advisor, the district council had to exploit the aptitudes of the territory to exit a challenging monetary situation (Interview B). However, as one of my interviewees – who considers gentrification as a negative process – mentioned, the narrative becomes questionable when one starts to examine the "cleansing-like project elements" – such as the lack of inclusionary zoning (see Section 5.4) or the lack of district-owned social housing

in the area after the rehabilitation (Interview H). Instead, the data points toward the conclusion that gentrification is seen as a positive public policy tool and a desirable outcome of the district government-led rehabilitation projects.

Gentrification's ability to stabilize a declining area was also mentioned by employees of Rév8 Ltd. (Interview A and D) and Futureal (Interview E). The narrative considers the CSzP as a way to "improve the image of the district", "solve problems related to crime", drug usage or prostitution, and to "solve the social housing crisis and the housing shortage" – at least partially – in Józsefváros (Interview A, B, D). As a former board member of Rév8 Ltd. admitted, the project management "calculated with [the possibility of] gentrification from the start", but [because of the poor economic situation of the district council] "decided to see [and deal with] the problem of displacement differently from the international standards" (Interview A). The development aimed to stabilize the "neighborhood's status" and "abolish poverty" in the area (Interview B and E). Yet, solving the *housing question* in place was not the intention, "the residents did not acquire new housing within the project area, but the district boundaries" (Interview A). I will return to the topic of social housing in Section 5.4.

Gentrification is seen as a positive process by these actors, which with the necessary administrative control and with an adequate number and condition of social housing does more help than harm. Besides, displacement is seen as "marginal" or "non-happening" (Interview B, E). However, this is not exclusively the result of a positivistic, revanchist approach to urban developments, but a consequence of the theoretical approach towards displacement represented by these actors.

5.1.2 "Rehabilitation without any critique"

Opinions on the 'other side' – consisting of current district council representatives and non-governmental agents – were critical towards the rehabilitation processes. This side struggles to formulate criticism, because the actors did not take part in the rehabilitation project, and "for outsiders" information is "hard to acquire" and often "incomplete":

> There are those on one side who took part in the planning process and oversaw the rehabilitations. And there is the media [reporting about the redevelopments] who treat it [the rehabilitation] without any critique or negative voices. The main problem is that no one talks about those residents who are displaced, those who are now in a worse situation than they were before. […] This is what we wanted to represent in our work (Interview H1).

As his colleague added the purpose of their academical work about rehabilitations in the 8th District was to ask, “if it [rehabilitation] can be done differently” (Interview H2). The different perception did not root only in different scientific theories (see Section 5.2), but also in the necessity felt for critically evaluate public policy decisions, and to show that – on the contrary to what the planners of the CSzP state (Interview A, B, D, E) – rehabilitations can be done differently in the future.

Both current district council members interviewed expressed that they are “not content” with the implementation of the CSzP and the NUPS campus redevelopment (Interview F and G). However, as decision-makers they feel that since most of the decisions were made before their mandate there is very little in their power what they can do. As one of them remarked “you can try to slow down the process with *braking*, but in my opinion, it is more important that you make the right decisions *controlling the switches*” (Interview G).

As the current council representatives noted the problems should be handled by “complex, socially-sensitive rehabilitation programs” (Ibid.) instead of new-built, large-scale developments. What happened in the past was “not a solution, but the relocation of the social problems and with it the urban poor” (Interview F). Both displacement – as Marcuse (Section 2.1) described it – and the loss of centrality (Section 2.4) were brought up numerous times during the interviews. They agree that urban redevelopment is a necessity, but it should be carried out with the “participation of the residents”, in accordance with “their needs and life goals” and without causing a “massive outmigration” from the district (Interview F). Instead, in the past rehabilitations were executed without trying to prevent displacement. As a result

> these people [the residents] were first moved out from the district, then they moved to the agglomeration, eventually to the countryside, and now no one knows what happened with them. […] They just drifted farther away from the centrum of the country (Interview G).

The views that the current district council members expressed are more in line with a critical understanding of urban redevelopments, still these different theoretical understandings are yet to ‘make an appearance’ in the urban planning documents. Both the Settlement-scape Protection act [SSP] and the Settlement-scape Image Manual [SSIM] were adopted by the district’s legislature in 2017, while the District Building Code [DBC] was reviewed in 2007. The ISDS was revised in 2020, with Rév8 Ltd. being the main entity working on it (ISDS, 2020, 3). It is unclear why does the document refer to gentrification and the redevelopment

processes as positive and fundamental public policy tools utilized to renew the district's housing stock, public spaces and image.

These deficiencies are surprising, since the current council representatives could have been influenced the contents of the revised ISDS. When asked about it the council members' narrative resembled what was communicated when asking the former board member of Rév8 Ltd. about the CSzP (Interview A). The district government's "limited room for maneuvering" (Interview G), "legislative problems connected to the COVID-19 pandemic" and the "lack of will and capacity" from other council members were mentioned (Interview F).

The current state of public policy documents is indisputably unsatisfactory from a critical perspective. Displacement is hardly addressed by them, but at least the views and understandings of those who have the power to change or recreate these scripts changed for a more complex and sensitive understanding of the "pain of displacement" (Section 2.5). In this sense, the criticism of rehabilitation processes in Józsefváros (Interview H, see also Combs, 2021; Czirfusz et al., 2015; Fabula et al., 2017; Jelinek, 2010) have partially achieved their goal. The current legislation views displacement differently, but the different perception is yet to materialize in actions taken or in a distinctive urban planning.

5.2 Different understandings of displacement

In the previous section I outlined the 'two main sides', which primarily differed from each other in their understandings of displacement and gentrification. I argued that the 'side' who assess gentrification as a "positive public policy tool" (Section 2.2) was the one dictating the direction of rehabilitations in the district (Interview A and B). The conclusion of section 5.1 was that the current legislation has a completely different understanding of displacement (Interview F and G), but it is yet to seen in practice or public policy documents. In the following I will further analyze the change in understandings, which are now more in line with Critical Urban Theory perspective (Section 2.3), with a focus on the right to centrality (2.4) and a Marcuseian displacement narrative (Section 2.1).

During the interview with the mayoral advisor, he remarked that in his view using gentrification as a "swear word" – talking about criticism regarding the rehabilitations – leads the researchers astray:

> Why do they see it [the CSzP] as gentrification? If I want to be malicious, this is the superficial opinion of middle-class youth who does not have actual knowledge about the area. All of it [the opinion] is based on inaccurate and

> poor-quality academic work. […] The real question is if I can stop the deterioration of a territory and keep it as a socially mixed area (Interview B).

I would like to highlight the two important points of this quotation. First, the district government's narrative includes gentrification as the main process, that started in connection with the different rehabilitation projects. Both in policy documents (see ISDS, 2015; 2020) and information shared by the interviewees displacement is treated as a secondary mechanism, which is controlled by keeping those residents who acquired a substitute apartment within the administrative boundaries of the district (Interviewee B, C, E). Second, "social mixing" and the "upgrade of the social housing stock" is often argued as the two central components of the rehabilitations (Interview A, B). I will investigate the latter further in Section 5.4, while this section is devoted to the analysis what the stakeholders understood by gentrification-induced displacement and social mixing.

As an interviewee stated, "during our project relocation [to other districts] was not the goal, we tried to keep the people inside the 8th District" (Interview C). This is an often-emphasized argument (Interview A, B, E), but it does not make displacement a lesser issue. In addition to this the ISDS also fails to present a complex understanding of displacement when the CSzP is discussed:

> Since the demolitions connected to the investment were carried out in the 2000s, displacement is not expected in the future. Thus – in the absence of another quarter with the same aptitudes – it is anticipated that in the future will not be any negative effects connecting to the development of the [Corvin] quarter (ISDS, 2015, 113).

This excerpt shows that the district council in the past only calculated with direct last-resident displacement. What is unusual, since interviewees – who took part in the CSzP – mentioned that they knew about property and rent prices raising throughout the district because of the project (Interview A, D, E, H). Not addressing this issue and seeing it only as a positive economic outcome shows a lack of critical perspective about displacement. Ultimately, a raise in property or rent prices can be correlated to a raise in displacement pressure (Lees et al., 2016).

When asked about how gentrification strengthens displacement pressure in the district a common answer was that the mechanisms cannot be identified in the district (Interview B and C), and one respondent even noted that the "upward effect [talking about the increasing property prices]" is a "win-win situation", since those residents who do not wish to stay in the

district are able to make a "financially advantageous" decision and "cash out" from their apartments (Interview E). Nevertheless, this opinion is only based on those residents who are owners of their apartment and does not consider the existence of the rental market. As a current liberal council member noted, those residents who are unable or unwilling to financial adapt to the situation are facing displacement, and the "raise in property prices can be considered as a clear sign of a gentrifying neighborhood" (Interview F).

Finally, "getting a better-quality apartment" was also mentioned continuously, as a "winning factor" (Interview B, C, E). According to the director of the Family- and Social Support Center [FSSC], this is a "socially positive effect", which help families reach a "better situation" (Interview C). However, from a right to centrality (Section 2.4) perspective, improved living conditions does not necessarily mean improved quality of life (for arguments about comfort level and displacement see Combs, 2021). A "better quality apartment can be located in a worse area", where the displaced are excluded from services, quality education or adequate healthcare, which can be found at the more centrally located neighborhoods of the district (Interview H2). Unquestionably, relocation to outer territories of the district can lead to an "exclusion from centrality" (Section 2.4) and all the benefits which comes with the access to the urban core.

Similarly, to the new-built gentrification of the Corvin Quarter, the potential studentification of the Orczy Quarter is not considered to be a major displacement-inducing force (Interview D and E). Both policy documents and interviewees, as well as urban researchers (see Fabula et al., 2017), deemed the present moment too early to determine what effects studentification – connected to the NUPS campus redevelopment – will have. Both ISDS (2015, 2020) mention the possibility of displacement, and the district government's responsibility in controlling and moderating it. Seemingly there is an agreement between 'both sides' that the rehabilitation of the Orczy Quarter and the campus redevelopment project should be carried out without the relocation of people or residential mobility outward from the district (Interview A, B, G). However, – from a critical perspective – intensions alone are inadequate, what will be crucial in the coming years is to see how these notions are put into practice and how public policy documents are formulated to support the prevention of displacement.

Social mixing was a scientific theory behind the design of the CSzP (Interview B), although it is questionable if the poor can return to reside in the project area. Instead of creating a "mixed-use" city center (Interview D), the CSzP area became an "upper-class" neighborhood inhabited by "foreign students, wealthy expats and the economic elite" (Interview F). Furthermore, it is often argued that social mixing strengthens local community, improve

services, and helps residents to access better urban networks and contacts (Lees et al., 2008). There is no decisive evidence existing for a stronger local community, nor better services. As a current social-democrat member of the district council told me because of the drastic "population exchange" it is hard to build an "8th District identity" in the neighborhood (Interview F). Similarly, "better services cannot be connected clearly to the rehabilitation of the area" (Interview H2), or at least there is no scientific evidence pointing to this outcome.

Chaskin and Joseph argue that social mixing or mixed-income communities often seen as positive solution for urban renewal. Social mixing is a

> public policy that harnesses private capital and market forces to attract higher-income residents and generate neighborhood revitalization while attempting to reduce segregation and foster inclusion. […] Changes include a significantly improved built environment, lower levels of crime, more […] supportive services, […] better access to surrounding neighborhoods, the promise (over time) of better neighborhood amenities, and new neighbors (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013, 481).

Beyond the expected 'positive' effects listed above, policymakers believe that inclusive communities reduce segregation and develop a diverse society (Davidson, 2018). Many of these arguments were mentioned during my interviews with a former board member of Rév8 Ltd. (Interview A) and the mayoral advisor (Interview B). In their understanding an "unorganized residential community was dissolved", and a new, better and more diverse one was born (Interview A). The achieved "social mix" and "diversity" are two components which are seen as an indicator of the success of the redevelopment (Interview A and B).

However, there are a variety of research arguing that social mixing is not reducing isolation or segregation (Davidson, 2018), besides – Lees et al. (2008) notes that – there is poor evidence that gentrification helps social mixing. In accordance with this, Larsen and Lund Hansen (2008) present social mixing as a tool *used by* the emancipatory city thesis (see Lees, 2004), which is meant to be a positive process and can improve the opportunities of urban poor, yet it is mostly used to conceal displacement and emphasize the positive sides of gentrification.

A further problem that can be identified from the interview data is that the district council had a shallow understanding of displacement before and during the implementation of the rehabilitation programs. From Marcuse's four factors of displacement (Section 2.1) only direct last-resident displacement was identified by decision-makers during the redevelopment projects and the importance of the process was belittled. As Chatterjee explains in her work,

the outcome of displacement is always the same, “they [the displaced] must move” (2021, 38). This is a fact, which cannot be changed with using different definitions or names to gentrification and displacement.

To conclude, different analytical frameworks does not make displacement a lesser issue, the process exists regardless of decision-makers theoretical understanding or the labels used to describe it. Displacement is happening because of gentrification in the 8th District, and research should focus on exploring the different aspects of it in order to build criticism and to propose alternative solutions to limit and moderate the issue. From a critical perspective the acknowledgment of the problem by current council members is crucial, yet meaningless until action is taken or urban planning documents are changed. The district government’s power should be exercised to reduce the adverse effects causing displacement. Without inclusive public policy and guidelines limiting their exposure to the process, the urban poor remains vulnerable to displacement.

5.3 Governmental control over displacement

As it was mentioned at the end of Section 5.2, district councils have a significant role controlling rehabilitation projects. This means that they can determine how developments are conducted and managed with the help of various regulatory tools. It would be naïve to assume that these tools can force private capital to retreat, but with the necessary adjustments to public policy district governments can act in the interest of residents – the voters who elected them. In this section I will examine how governmental control has been exercised over displacement, and what regulatory tools have been used to manage the issue. First, I will discuss data acquired by interviews about the topic, then an analysis of the three main regulatory documents – the DBC, the ISDS, and the SSP – of the district council will follow.

During the CSzP Rév8 Ltd. employed a team of social workers, sociologists, and human geographers to “prepare residents” for the relocation, “find a substitute apartment suitable for their needs” and to “manage the complex tasks” (Interview A). This socially sensitive perspective is “unique and exemplary” for urban renewal projects in Hungary (Interview H1). Unfortunately, it did not become a district-wide standard, applied to every rehabilitation project, rather remained an exception practiced only during the district’s pilot rehabilitation project.

Despite the unique and perceptive attitude, it is important to note that “even though Rév8 Ltd. did not pressure tenants into accepting monetary compensation, they also tried to kept

tenants unaware of their powerful negotiation position" (Interview H2). A bottom-up movement, including numerous tenants – who are unwilling to move out – would have been a major obstacle in the way of the rehabilitation program. Nevertheless, it is impossible to conclude from the data if this was an intentional misuse of power against residents or just an inaccuracy in planning.

In the present times, the assistance of people who are facing displacement or experiencing displacement pressure is in the hands of the FSSC. The institution "conducts social work with those people, who live in areas under rehabilitation initiatives" (Interview C). Additionally, the neighborhood's district council representative can offer support for those vulnerable to displacement, although "there is no central directive how to deal with relocation or displacement. The actions taken depends on the representative's personal attitude" (Interview F). However, if a council member decides to assist residents, they can still face complications, since the economic and social affairs belong to two different institutions, and the "bureaucratic process of information exchange are often slow and ineffective" (Ibid.).

Another aspect of moderating displacement would be to follow-up on the citizens who are moved out from an area due to a rehabilitation project. Regarding this topic the opinions expressed were exactly the same, the interviewees believed that it would be beneficial for all parties to develop and keep contact with the displaced. Nonetheless, "the lack of monetary resources" (Interview A), "the lack of manpower" and "the deprioritization of the task" (Interview D), as well as "other issues that requires the attention of the district government" (Interview F) means that no follow-up research was/is realized. If the displaced stayed within the administrative boundaries of the district, and the family is assisted by the FSSC it is possible to assess the aftermath of displacement, but even in these fortunate situations "follow-ups hardly ever happen" (Interview C).

The district government's regulatory tools are rather limited – building permits are not anymore in their legislation –, but "in the DBC they can set the main direction for rehabilitations" (Interview D). There is two district-wide building code accessible on the council's website[5], Both were accepted before the implementation of the CSzP and the NUPS campus redevelopment. These documents do not include regulations aiming to control displacement – such as inclusionary zoning or requirements for investment into social housing (Section 5.4). This is "not uncommon" in the Hungarian municipal system, since these documents are only "treated as general regulatory frameworks" and the different rehabilitation

[5] https://jozsefvaros.hu/

projects have their own administrative documents (Interview A). Although, if a "complex", "socially-inclusive" understanding and conduct of rehabilitations is desired by the district council (Interview F, G), it would be essential to include some basic principles in these documents.

Both ISDS (2015, 2020) refer to displacement in the Orczy Quarter as a process that should be avoided:

> [The goal] is to stop social segregation, decrease exclusion, and launch integrated programs. During the planned campus redevelopment projects, the displacement of lower status citizens should be prevented. If the prevention fails, the slumification of the Magdolna Quarter will potentially accelerate, which would ruin the achievements of fifteen years of rehabilitation (ISDS, 2020, 93).

It is remarkable, that the possible displacement of residents in the Orczy Quarter only matters if (or when) it endangers other rehabilitation programs, and it is not treated as a harmful process by itself. Withal, the conclusion that displacement connected to the CSzP is not expected in the future – since the demolition and construction was finished – is even more shocking (ISDS, 2015). As I already mentioned in Section 5.2 this shows that even if there is intent from the district government to moderate displacement, the inaccurate understanding of the problem means that this complex issue is not addressed properly.

The least about displacement (or gentrification) can be found in the SSP. Neither the word displacement, nor gentrification is presented in the script. The Orczy Quarter is only mentioned when the Orczy Garden – area of the NUPS campus – is listed as one of the "historical landscape, or garden" of the district (SSP, 2016). Similarly, the Corvin Quarter is only represented by a list of protected buildings which can be found in the neighborhood.

It is important to remember that the results are not surprising, since these documents traditionally work as a "general framework", and not a comprehensive, detailed regulatory script (Interview A). However, displacement should be dealt with from the general level through to the detailed, localized regulatory frameworks. In the future decision-makers should revise these documents in order to create a complex, socially inclusive solution to the problem of gentrification-induced displacement.

5.4 Social housing and displacement

In the last section of Chapter 5 I will discuss social housing as solution for displacement. The interview data suggest that, while the perceptions of gentrification-induced displacement (Section 5.1) are different, there is an agreement that social housing is a possible solution for the problem. It was mentioned as "the only tool that the district government has in order to moderate displacement" by a current, socialist member of the district council (Interview G) and it was described as good practice by many current and former member of the legislation (Interview A, B, C, D, F, G). On the following pages this view will be presented with a focus on its connections to the case study area.

First, I will analyze the CSzP which was referred to as "the largest social housing program in Eastern Europe" by the mayoral advisor, when his opinions were asked about the district's rehabilitation strategy (Interview B). Second, the information acquired about the Orczy Quarter and its ongoing social rehabilitation project will be presented. Most of the respondents thought that it is almost impossible to compare the CSzP with the NUPS campus redevelopment since the goals, the financing and the outcomes were completely different, but in my view social housing is a ground for comparison as both projects were/are used to "secure capital to upgrade the district's social housing portfolio" (Interview B, F, G). Lastly, I will offer an overview of social housing – a policy tool to moderate displacement, and its representations in urban planning documents.

The CSzP is seen by many as a rehabilitation which offered the Józsefváros the possibility of renewing the social housing stock. As a former board member of Rév8 Ltd. – who actively took part in the planning and construction phase of the project – told me the district council's "main goal was to exchange the 700 deteriorated apartments existed at the area of the [then] Corvin Promenade" and to abolish the neighborhood as the "recipient of poverty in the inner city of Budapest" (Interview A). In their interview, both him and the current mayoral advisor, a district council member with the socialist party during the rehabilitation, stated that the focus was "not only on upgrading the social housing stock, but to grant these people [the displaced tenants] better living conditions, and housing" (Interview A and B). A current board member of Rév8 Ltd. added "the aim was to ensure better living conditions for tenants, and to make sure social problems are not relocated" (Interview D). These arguments can also be found in the first version of the ISDS which states that "the project aims to provide sustainable social housing for those in need" (2015, 51).

Displacement and relocation to different apartments is presented as the only viable way for the district council (Interview A). The upgraded quality of living and the argument, that the apartments offered to the tenants are "better", "renovated" or "more comfortable" than the old, run-down housing stock was often overemphasized (Interview A, B, D, E; see also Combs, 2021). However, concentrating on the social housing side of the rehabilitation project alone makes the arguments greatly one-sided. As I remarked in Section 5.2, "a better apartment does not necessarily ensue better living conditions" (Interview H2), hence the discourse that the CSzP was successful because tenants received better quality exchange apartments is rather fragile from an academic point of view.

It is believed by many – mainly those who were involved in the early years of the CSzP –, that the only decisive indicator of displacement is if the families could stay within the administrative boundaries of the district (Interview B). It is often mentioned that from those households who requested an exchange apartment only 19 had to move out from the district. However, it is worth mentioning that from the 946 households who were affected by the first phase of the CSzP only 439 requested exchange apartments, 19 acquired both an exchange apartment and payment, and 488 households were compensated in cash (Interview A, B) [6].

If we accept "relocation within the administrative boundaries" as the only decisive factor, the renewal of the social housing stock of the district through a large-scale, new-built urban redevelopment project can be considered as a success. However, since there is no information about the current living conditions and location of those who received money in exchange for their tenancy rights it is irresponsible to state that the CSzP did not induced large-scale residential displacement. Furthermore, declaring the project successful evaluating it only by the quality of social housing is misleading.

It is true that a deteriorated territory was transformed into a "lively", "mixed-use", "modern" quarter of the City (Interview D), but the transformation also induced large-scale displacement of the poor (Interview H) and created an area in the heart of the 8th District, where the housing conditions are "exclusive", "non-diverse", and "elitist" (Interview F, G, I). Upgrading the run-down social housing stock to "better quality apartments" with "higher comfort level" is indisputably a positive result from the district government's perspective and an urban planning success (Interview E). Yet, the project developer – Rév8 Ltd. – and the district government are missed out on opportunities which could have strengthen the state of

[6] The information was provided by sharing the planning documents of the CSzP, which are in the possession of the interviewees.

social housing – such as inclusionary zoning or the construction of condominiums for social housing purposes. I will return to these arguments briefly at the end of this section.

Similarly, to the former district council representatives and board members of Rév8 Ltd., the current representatives and board members seen rehabilitations as a possibility to "secure income" from which the social housing stock can be upgraded (Interview G). This is represented by the handling of the Orczy Quarter rehabilitation project, where in exchange for the (empty) lots handed over to the NUPS, the district government secures funding from the state. Although the general "indecisiveness [about which lots they desire] of the state and the university board makes the planning of the social rehabilitation project unpredictable" (Interview D).

To eliminate the problem Rév8 Ltd. decided to designate a "contact zone" between the development area and the Orczy Quarter, where the plots for possible development are located. This area is not included in the social housing projects, which means that "the housing market is freely shaped by private capital" (Ibid.). This deregulation suggests that "contact zone" tenants are exposed to the market-based process of gentrification and displacement (Section 2.3 and 2.4).

In the rest of the Orczy Quarter the district government tries to renew their social housing stock through purchasing new apartments, or renovating existing property (Interview B, F, G). Besides the lack of financial resources, the "institutional separation" of social and economic matters in the district further complicates the developments (Interview F). To solve the problems the "establishment of a district-owned non-profit social housing agency" is currently underway (Interview G). Additionally, the existing housing stock "is being renovated with the available financial resources" in order to "improve the quality of social housing and to provide new social rentals to the citizens" (Ibid.). A current socialist member of the district council added that in exchange for plots to redevelopment the current legislation requires social apartments in the new-built housing estates. However, "most of the marketable lots were sold during the early 2010s without including the construction of social housing as a condition for new-built developments" (Ibid.), which means that the district council has a limited amount of property that can be utilized.

Social housing is heavily presented in both versions of the ISDS (2015; 2020). As it is formulated in the documents "the [district's] long-term goal is to offer good quality and attractive housing options to a wide stratum of society" (ISDS, 2020, 22). To realize this objective, the documents highlight that it is "essential to make as many apartments habitable as possible", and to create a real estate management system which is "resilient" and "self-

sustaining" (ISDS, 2020, 22). Furthermore, both ISDS include a list of options, which the district offers to residents to help the "optimization and upgrade of the social housing portfolio" (ISDS, 2015, 30). These are the following: (1) financial support for condominium renovation, (2) financial support for the quality preservation of apartments, and (3) personalized debt management solutions.

The documents are clear proof – confirming the words of the current district council representative – that social housing is considered an effective way of battling displacement by the district government. As the revised ISDS states the main goal is "to offer affordable and fair housing in the district" (2020, 92). The document remarks that this is outstandingly important in those quarters where rehabilitation projects are inducing gentrification and displacement. As the ISDS concludes the district government's main responsibility is to "ensure the quality and the renewal of the social housing stock, while keeping the rental and utility costs affordable" (2020, 119).

It is unquestionable that the district government emphasize the importance of social housing in urban planning documents, although there is some room for improvements. If "affordable" and "attainable" social housing is seen as "the solution, which controls displacement" (Interview G), then it would be reasonable to describe more clearly how the district council plans to use social housing as a tool moderating displacement. Nonetheless, only the two ISDS describe the district's social housing strategy and neither documents explain in detail the presumed connections between social housing and displacement (ISDS, 2015; 2020).

Social housing is utilized as a tool for limiting displacement by the district council. However, a new proposal[7] submitted to the Parliament on the 11th of May 2021 could mean that district government-owned social housing in its current form will soon cease to exist. The bid would offer tenants an option for purchasing their housing if they acquired their tenancy rights before the 31st of December 2020. Tenants would be able to obtain ownership of their apartments paying 10 to 30 percent of the properties market value. Similarly, to the Right to Buy policy, this law would dispose the positive results achieved through careful management of social housing in Józsefváros and could induce large-scale direct and indirect displacement (Larsen et al., 2016).

The two fundamental concerns are the moral problem of seizing the wealth of the district councils and the practical issue raised by the possibility of external actors acquiring the tenants'

[7] Available online: https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/16223/16223.pdf

residency rights. The former is embedded in the concept of the proposal, which would mean that the property wealth of the district governments is expropriated. While the latter could have been done by affluent actors, who would finance the acquisition of the properties in exchange for a pre-emption right, which would offer them the opportunity to buy the apartments after the residents become owners.

As the mayoral advisor stated the proposal can lead to the "revival of the housing/apartment mafia", and it is feared that residents – as a part of the process described above – would sell their apartments below the market value (Interview B; about the housing mafia in Hungary see Kirk, 2013). With insufficient monetary compensation for their property, they would only be able to purchase a new apartment which offers worse living conditions than their current accommodation. This fear might seem excessive and groundless, but it is important to keep in mind that social housing tenants are mostly belong to vulnerable societal groups, with limited knowledge about their rights and opportunities.

Ultimately, the proposal would abolish an essential pillar of the social welfare system: affordable social housing. The anti-poor, exclusionary process can eventually lead to large-scale residential displacement and the violent withdrawal of the Right to the City (Section 2.4). I contacted my interviewees after the proposal was submitted and asked them about the anticipated consequences of the law for the 8th District. Both current district council representative expressed their unease about the bill passing in the Parliament, which would be a "tragical outcome", and could cause "unforeseeable damage" both to the district's social policy and economic situation (Interview F and G). Eventually, displacement could "skyrocket again" and everything the "district council achieved with the rational management of social housing would be lost" (Interview G). As the mayoral advisor added the focus should be on "preventing the loss of tenancy rights" and on "avoiding and investigating the possible forced buyouts" (Interview B).

As I mentioned, it is problematic that while displacement is considered to be a negative process, urban planning documents hardly include frameworks or policy tools which can be used to 'battle it'. Both inclusionary zoning and the construction of social housing estates were mentioned as ways to restrain displacement and provide affordable living conditions in the district (Interview F and G). As Newman and Wyly remarks "inclusionary zoning, housing preservation and new construction [of social housing estates] can complement the market rate and high-end affordable housing development and rehabilitation" (2006, 51-52). These policy tools can be utilized to control displacement and to achieve more diverse and livable urban communities. Nevertheless, without implementing these measures in public policy and urban

planning documents, the notions only remain empty words. In the future the district council of Józsefváros should not only work on the creation of a district-owned non-profit social housing agency, but also on including and using other regulatory tools – such as the ones listed above – during their rehabilitation projects and in their urban planning documents.

6. Conclusion

The Corvin- and Orczy Quarters have experienced non-classical forms of gentrification – mainly new-built gentrification and studentification (Section 4.2). These processes induce displacement and affect the most vulnerable social groups of the district. It is problematic that the media, the decision-makers, and academic research are occupied with reporting about the state of gentrification, while displacement is often overlooked (Section 5.1). The investigation into the issue – which causes serious social problems and exclusion of the urban poor (Section 2.4) – and how the district government handles it, is the aim of this thesis.

The stakeholders interviewed consider displacement as a severe issue, yet the actions and measures taken by the district government did not reflect these views. Urban planning documents mainly present gentrification as a desirable urban policy tool and emphasize the positive effects of social mixing (Section 5.1 and 5.2). The current council representatives stated that although they understand the significance and the consequences of displacement, they were unable to act properly because of other pressing social issues requiring their attention and the limited administrative opportunities the district government has in hand (Section 5.3).

The complex, socially sensitive method to support residents facing displacement – initiated throughout the Corvin-Szigony project – did not become a district-wide standard to limit the damage done by relocation. In addition, tenants are mostly unaware of their powerful negotiating position, which could have been utilized through the right of refusal of moving out from their apartments. A grassroot movement resisting displacement is missing in the 8th District, and the district council seems to be keeping tenants in the dark about their possibilities to oppose rehabilitation projects. Although, controlling and moderating displacement is seen as a central social matter by key actors, the issues of displacement are not addressed in urban planning documents or in actions taken (Section 5.3).

The upgrade and renewal of the existing social housing is considered to be an instrument, which can successfully reduce residential mobility. However, the current practice of securing income for the renewal of social housing by handing over district government-owned lots for rehabilitation projects mean that a vicious circle exists. Capital is secured for the upgrading of the housing stock on the one hand, while on the other hand new developments are accelerating gentrification. Therefore, the upgrading of social housing spatially relocates and reproduces the problem of displacement elsewhere, within the administrative boundaries of the district (Section 5.4), instead of limiting the issue. The problem cannot be managed through social housing initiatives alone.

With the new draft bill's acceptance by the Parliament in sight – which would grant tenants a Right to Buy – (Section 5.4), there has never been a more pressing moment to expose the roots of displacement, propose solutions and then utilize the political arena for resistance (Section 2.5). If social housing is not a viable way to solve displacement anymore the council of the 8th District should consider other regulatory tools for moderating the issue. Inclusionary zoning and the requiring the construction of condominiums for social housing purposes during future rehabilitations can be a starting point for a revised urban planning framework (Section 5.4). Nevertheless, a new, socially sensitive understanding for urban planning and improvements in the utilization of displacement-limiting regulatory tools are indispensable.

Having drawn the conclusion that, the district council of the 8th District should improve their urban planning practice and use a wider variety of regulatory tools to limit displacement, I would like to reflect on the possible directions of future research. To understand the mechanism and structures better (Section 3.1) – the driving forces behind displacement –, academic research must investigate the motives and reasons of private capital, and their role in displacement-inducing rehabilitation projects. Furthermore, an analysis of the social- and housing policy of the state government would help to understand displacement happening in the 8th District better. A more comprehensive understanding of the issue is the foundation of effectively taking action and supporting residential resistance against displacement in the inner-city of Budapest.

7. Sources

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Interview B, mayoral advisor, 12th of March 2021

Interview C, director of the Family- and Social Support Center, 14th of March 2021

Interview D, board member at Rév8 Ltd., 15th of March 2021

Interview E, architect at Futureal Ltd., 13th of March 2021

Interview F, district council member, 14th of March 2021

Interview G, district council member, 20th of March 2021

Interview H1, founder and member, policy and research center, 21st of March 2021

Interview H2, founder and member, policy and research center, 21st of March 2021

Interview I1, cooperative member, Gólya Community House, 28th of March 2021

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