

## 5.5 WORKERS' HOUSING ESTATES AND THEIR RESIDENTS: CONSTRUCTIONS OF SPACE AND COLLECTIVE CONSTITUTION OF THE SUBJECT

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Scholarly and popular publications on the subject as well as common usage in Luxembourg employ the term *Kolonie*<sup>82</sup> as a synonym for workers' housing estates. In France and Belgium they are known under the term *cit  ouvri re*, in Germany they are referred to as *Arbeitersiedlung*.<sup>83</sup>

Workers' housing estates owe their existence to the mining and smelting of iron ore in the southwest of Luxembourg, the Minette, which during the industrial take-off since the 1880s increasingly attracted international, national and local enterprises. After the First World War, these merged or were incorporated – if it was German capital – into other companies (see Quasten 1970; Trausch 2000). The most important representatives of company housing in Luxembourg included the following industrial enterprises: ARBED (*Aci ries R unies de Burbach-Eich-Dudelange*), GBAG (*Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks A.G.*), HADIR (*Hauts Fourneaux et Aci ries de Differdange-St. Ingbert-Rumelange*).

The enterprises' aim in establishing workers' housing estates was to settle a controllable 'workers' force' in close proximity to the plants and in this way minimize the contact with 'company-damaging' practices and discourses. At the same time, this system provided workers and their families with convenient accommodation. The deliberately planned short walking distance to the workplace connects with the paternalistic control by the company and shapes the residents' production of space and their social practices.

A special feature of the Grand Duchy is that an estate was not designed as a segregated spatial entity but annexed to the already existing residential structure (see Hudemann/Wittenbrock 1991) or else was supplemented by urban roads built later – an exception being the village Lasauvage that was wedged between steep hills (see Fleischhauer 2013: 10). Geographically, these residential structures can be found in Luxembourg in places where heavy industry established itself.

The present case study deals with the question of how the current estate residents we interviewed – all of them former workers in Luxembourg's steel industry – narratively represent the everyday subjectivation (see section 5.1) they experienced during the time of their employment. Can one deduce from these

**82** | This paper deals only with workers' housing estates. A further aspect, which however transcends the scope of this study, is the spatial separation from the civil servants' estates. Also in terms of design and size of the houses for civil servants and those for workers, the enterprises established a distinct hierarchization.

**83** | Prominent examples are the *Cit  de Butte* in Villerupt, the *Bois du Luc* in the Borinage and the *Margarethenh hen* in Essen.

communal experiences and memories a collective constitution of the subject and identify this as a particular form of blue-collar culture<sup>84</sup>? What effects does this constitution of the subject through everyday behaviour have on the construction of space? Furthermore this paper wishes to fulfil a desideratum that was formulated during the 4<sup>e</sup> *Assises de l'historiographie luxembourgeoise* (see Caregari *et al.* 2012) and which consists in not only examining the estates from an economic-historical and architectural perspective (see in particular Lorang 1994), but also in taking a closer look at the 'inner life' of the residents and their individual experiences and perceptions. Historical contextualizations and architectural typologizations here only serve to contribute to a better understanding of the subjective perception and use of space.<sup>85</sup>

The study's empirical basis consists of the qualitative guided interviews which were conducted with nine contemporary witnesses: men between the age of 57 and 75, in the period from May to October 2013; the conversations lasted on average one hour. The evaluation of the integrally transcribed interviews followed the heuristic categories according to Reckwitz (2008: 75ff.): subjectivation/subjectification, practices, (cultural) codes, practical knowledge, discourses, artefacts/materiality.

The sample of interviewees comprises current or previous Luxembourg residents of different workers' estates<sup>86</sup> of the Luxembourg Minette. The microsociological perspective gives us insights into everyday culture. The subject is not considered as the product of a particular environment but is examined under the premise that "the knowledge that [subjects] appropriate in the course of their

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**84** | "But blue-collar culture is, as we know, more than merely a culture of need and deprivation, even though it is frequently that too. My understanding of blue-collar culture continues to constitute 'those manifestations of the proletarian way of life and the workers' movement that express values and are as such are transmittable'" (Tenfelde 1991: 21f.). (Personal translation of: "Aber Arbeiterkultur ist bekanntlich mehr als Not- und Mangelkultur, wenn auch immer wieder auch das. Ich verstehe nach wie vor unter Arbeiterkultur 'diejenigen Manifestationen der proletarischen Lebensweise und der Arbeiterbewegung, die Werthaltungen ausdrücken und als solche tradierfähig sind'.") In line with this quote, life in a workers' estate should not merely be identified with a "culture of need and deprivation" but also include the examination of values.

**85** | A bibliography on the subject of company-owned housing in the Greater Region can be found in Caregari/Lorang 2013.

**86** | The following selection was made in order to take the diversity of this form of housing into account: *Cité Raty* (Lasauvage), *rue de l'industrie* (Oberkorn), *rue Dr. Welter* (Esch-sur-Alzette), *Saarbrécker Kasäre*, partly demolished (Esch-sur-Alzette), *Kazebierg*, demolished (Esch-sur-Alzette), *op Barbourg* (Esch-sur-Alzette), *Cité Emile Mayrisch* (Schifflange), *Kantine HADIR*, converted (Rumelange), *Brill* (Dudelange).

socialization [can] in practice be confirmed but also confused or contradicted”<sup>87</sup> (Buschmann 2013: 141).

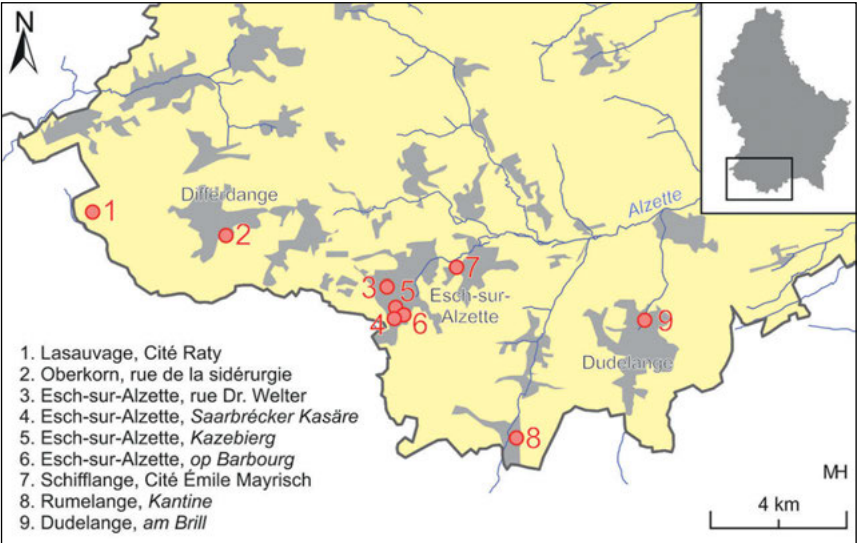


Figure 1: The Minette region with its settlement structures (as per 2013) (design: Laure Caregari, realization: Malte Helfer)

5.5.1 Hierarchy and Homogeneity

This section deals with the social control exerted by the company over the estate while also exploring the latitude of individual agency. The relationship between control and individual latitude, i.e. between subjectification (the perspective of attribution) and subjectivation (the perspective of appropriation) should not be regarded as dichotomous. It is their overlaps, points of encounter and interweavings that determine the constitutions of the subject. The social practices of the estate residents are inherent to the formation of the subject. This human behaviour reinforces and legitimizes the social space of the estate.

Social control continued to be exerted after the Second World War, only that it changed from an explicit to an implicit form. The residents were not autonomous with regard to the furnishing and possible alterations of the estate house; each of the interviewed contemporary witnesses mentioned various authorities that needed to be reported to in case of damage, refurbishing plans or moving house. It was the company that exercised the power of decision over when and to what

87 | Personal translation of: [Dass] “das Wissen, das [Subjekte] sich während ihrer Sozialisation aneignen, in der Praxis also einerseits bestätigt, andererseits aber auch irritiert oder konterkariert werden [kann].”

degree changes could be carried out – changing the wallpaper, the colour and quality of paint work, new floorings etc.:

“I still remember their names, the people who came to us. That was Brosius and Deden. Two of them. Must have been Germans. Must have been people from the early times of the German estate. They always came round when there was something that needed to be done. And then the ARBED replaced it. I can also remember that they laid new floors after the Second World War.”<sup>88</sup>

The ‘inspector’ who came by to check remained the exception in the estate after the Second World War. From this period on, an explicit and direct disciplining of the estate residents by the company seemed less necessary. By that time, the practice of turning to an administrator or clerk had already been internalized by the estate residents – even though they were resigned about the procedure’s inordinate length and unavoidability.

“When we had something that was broken, for instance when a window was broken, then we went up to the workshop. Then we said in the joinery: ‘Our window is broken.’ [...] But usually it was a department at the plant. That was the *Service Logement*, let’s call it that. Then they came. It took a while, though. What was his name again? [...] No matter what needed to be repaired in the houses, whether the roof was damaged. Then you went to the overseer or to the office [...] of the mine. That was the *Chef-Bureau*. Then he made a call to the mine: ‘This and that in that house.’ And then it took a while until they had the time to do it. Then two men came round. Then, for instance, the roof was repaired. That’s just the way it was.”<sup>89</sup>

**88** | Personal translation of: “Ech weess elo nach, wéi déi zwee geheescht hunn, déi bei eis komm sinn. Dat war de Brosius an den Deden. Zwee. Dat mussen nach Däitscher gewiescht sinn. Dat mussen der nach vum Ursprung vun den däitschen Kolonien gewiescht sinn. Brosius an Deden. Déi sinn ëmmer an d’Haiser kucke komm, wann eppes ze maachen ass. An dann huet d’ARBED dat frësch gemeet. Ech kann mech och erënneren, si huet nom Zweete Weltkrich nei Biedem gemeet.”

**89** | Personal translation of: “Wa mer eppes futti haten, zum Beispill wann eng Fënster futti war, da si mer eropgaang bei d’Atelieren. Dann hu mer gesot bei der Schräinerei: ‘Eis Fënster ass gebrach.’ [...] Mä gewéinlech war et och ee Service vun der Schmelz. Dat war de Service Logement, loosse mer dat esou nennen. Déi sinn da komm. Dat huet da gedauert. Wéi huet dee scho méi geheescht? [...] Egal, wat et war an den Haiser, ob den Daach futti war. Dann hutt dee beim Steiger oder am Bureau [...] vun der Minière... Do war ee Chef-Bureau. Dann huet deen op d’Schmelz telefonéiert: ‘Dat an dat ass an deem Haus.’ An dann huet dat gedauert, bis datt se dann Zäit haten. An da sinn se komm zu zwee Monn. Dann ass dat, zum Beispill um Daach, gefléckt ginn. Dat war eben esou.”

All interviewees connected life on the estate with a certain degree of special awareness or even dissociation: subjectivation techniques formulate a clear idea of exceptional situations (e.g. insecurity) which became an everyday experience, as the following speculation about the assignation of a name shows:

“-We always called the [estate] the barracks, or in my time it was the Revolver Ally.

-Revolver Ally? Why Revolver Ally?

-Someone said it at some point, and it stuck.

-Was there a reason for it?

-No, I don't think so. Maybe at some point two guys got into a knife fight over who of the two should kick out the parson.”<sup>90</sup>

This quote in connection with the expression “kick out the parson” makes clear in how far space can be considered a result of various kinds of practices. It is the combination of practical knowledge – in this case the implicitly shared knowledge of the tendency towards anticlericalism – and the awareness of its cultural significance that, for the subjects, charges the social space of the estate with meaning.



*Figure 2: The Saarbrécker Kasäre aka Revolver Ally in the 1930s (Photo: Photothèque of the city of Luxembourg)*

This knowledge constitutes itself around the daily routine, which is in turn closely interwoven with disciplining techniques of equal treatment. All estate residents are subjected in their daily lives to the principle of homogeneity established by the

**90** | Personal translation of: “Mär hunn et [d’Kolonie] ëmmer Kasäre genannt oder zu menger Zäit war et d’Revolvergaass. -D’Revolvergaass? Firwat dann d’Revolvergaass? -Dat hat op eng Kéier ee lancéiert, an do war et dat. -Gëtt et dofir e Grond? -Nee, ech mengen net. Villäicht sinn der mol zwee Stéck mam Messer unenee gaang, wee vun hinne soll de Paschtouer erausgeheien.”

company – the same houses in interior and exterior design, the same possibility to grow vegetables and keep animals etc. This practical knowledge also creates an awareness for the non-observation or the circumventing of the rules established by the company:

“My mum had done the laundry. There was no power in the laundry room, so my dad rigged up something primitive. It almost killed my mum. And then they came from the mine and they set up something solid.”<sup>91</sup>

Asked about the practice of allocating houses within the estate, one interviewee answered:

“We did that ourselves. Later you went to the ARBED, to L. I think he was called. Like I said, that was 50 years ago. Then they went to him and said: ‘Mine [the house] is too big, and he’s got lots of children. I’ll swap with him.’ - ‘Sure, that’s fine. You can move tomorrow.’ The rent, that was always... Every house paid the same amount.”<sup>92</sup>



*Figure 3: Match of the Red Boys against a British team. In the background, the estate in Oberkorn in 1910 and the ropeway for transporting iron ore (Photo: Collection Erny Hilgert)*

**91** | Personal translation of: “Meng Mamm, déi hat d’Wäsch gemaach. An der Wäschkichen, do war kee Stroum, do hat mäi Papp eppes Primitives gezwaft. Meng Mamm ass bal do leie bliwwen. An do sinn déi vun der Mine komm, an déi hunn eppes gemaach, wat Kapp a Fouss hat.”

**92** | Personal translation of: “Jo, mer hunn dat vun sech aus gemeet. Herno bass de op d’ARBED gaangen, bei den L., mengen ech huet dee geheescht. Wéi gesot, dat si 50 Joer hier. Da sinn se bei dee gaangen, dann hunn se gesot: ‘Meng ass ze grouss, an heen huet vill Kanner kritt. Ech tauschen mat him.’ - ‘Jo, et ass gutt, hei. Muar kanns de plënneren.’ Den Hauszëns, dee war jo ëmmer... All Haus huet datselwecht bezuelt.”

This practice was exclusively tied to the system of estate allocation. The fact that there was a specific point of contact on the part of the land-owning company, combined with the “behavioural routines dependent on know-how and held together by practical ‘understanding’”<sup>93</sup> (Buschmann 2013: 289), makes it possible to identify the estate as a socially homogenous space.

We see, nevertheless, that social disciplining can be further expanded. Concerned about the ‘work force’ and thus about its own profits, the company not only intervenes in the sphere of daily life and food production, but also attempts to extend its educational influence to leisure-time and after-work culture. This can, however, only succeed if the company is the only authority with “ownership” in the place and has a monopoly on the organization of daily life. The following example illustrates the expansion of the estate as a complex of practices:

“No, there was no private house here. We didn’t have that, because everything here was MMR [S.A. *Minière et Métallurgie de Rodange*]. This side up to the hill... This side is France. But all that was MMR. Even the baker, who was on this side. The *Economat*<sup>94</sup> that was there. The pub that was there. All that was MMR. They paid their rent, as was the custom. Then this pub which is on this side... Because during the week, they closed at eight pm. Then everybody got chucked out. They had to go to work in the morning, so you couldn’t sit there till eleven or twelve. Or that one got drunk. Out at eight. Only Saturdays were they allowed to stay longer because they didn’t work on Sundays. That was the law here. That’s the way it was.”<sup>95</sup>

**93** | Personal translation of: “Als *know-how* abhängigen und vom praktischen ‘Verstehen’ zusammengehaltene Verhaltensroutinen.”

**94** | “With the shop [*Economat*], a similar logic was at work to that of the houses: considering the insufficient number of retail stores in the industrial zone, its task was to provide the essential basic products to the workers and their families and above all prevent too strong a pricing pressure that could have affected the salaries” (Commaille 2004: 371). (Personal translation of: “Der Kaufladen [*Economat*] unterlag einer ähnlichen Logik wie die Wohnungen: Angesichts der unzureichenden Zahl von Einzelhandelsläden in den Industriezonen war seine Aufgabe, den Arbeitern und Familien die unentbehrlichen Grundprodukte zur Verfügung zu stellen und vor allem einen zu starken Preisdruck zu verhindern, der sich auf die Löhne hätte auswirken können.”)

**95** | Personal translation of: “Nee, et war iwwerhaupt kee Privathaus hei. Dat ass et net hei ginn, well alles, wat hei war, war MMR. Déi Säit den Hiwwel... Déi Säit ass jo Frankräich. Mä dat ass alles MMR. Souguer de Bäcker, wou déi Säit war. Den Economat, wou do war. D’Wiirtschaft, wou do war. Dat war alles MMR. Déi hunn hire Loyer bezuelt, sou wéi et eben hei war. Well déi Wiirtschaft, wou déi Säit ass... Well an der Woch ass déi um aacht Auer owes zou gemaach ginn. Dann ass all Mënsch erausgeflunn. Si hu misse mueres schaffe goen, da war et net, fir bis eelef, zwielef Auer do hänken ze bleiwen. Oder datt ee voll war. Um aacht Auer eraus. Just samschdes konnten se méi laang, well se sonndes net geschafft hunn. Dat war gesetzlech hei. Jo, dat war esou.”

If we take the construction of a complex of practices a step further in its logic, then we are faced with cultural codes. Insights into this interface between practice and constitution of the subject are often narrated using comparisons or episodes and are linked to a specific terminology:

“But I was at the school once. And the doctor said ... He checked the teeth, and the girl, the assistant sat there and then she read: ‘Ah, you’re from the *Féckerei*, my boy?’ Yes, and then he explained to the secretary: ‘The German mines, they were closely connected to the *Fugger* system, you know.’ And it seems they also called these houses *Fugger* houses. *Fugger*, that was someone in Germany who gave houses to his people. And they could also buy them from him. And these estates were called *Fuggerei*. It’s also possible that the seven houses here were called *Fuggerei* because they were built by people from Aachen. And *Fuggerei* changed to *Féckerei* [...]. And that’s the origin of the name. *Kazebierg* or *Féckerei*.”<sup>96</sup>

We can safely say that the practice is marked by a stable ‘system’ of constants. These are appropriated and applied in the complex of practices of the ‘estate’ in assigning names and in the daily routines. In the interviews they form a *dispositif* of institutional subjectifications, pragmatic considerations and discourses, decodable by the respective estate residents.

The constitution of the subject as a relationship of both analytical categories is expressed through the knowledge of subjectification systems, while it also generates elements of subjectivation. One accepts the choices of lifestyle and housing provided by the company, at the same time pointing to the lack of alternatives regarding other ways of life. As accompanying semantics for the description of the social space, the statements often end on a resigned note: “That’s just how it was”, “That was the law”, “We were glad to be here”, “What more can you expect from life?”<sup>97</sup> The estate’s residents’ appropriation of space results from bridging the gap between the individual living conditions and fitting into a collectivist living environment through everyday practices.

**96** | Personal translation of: “[...] Mä ech war eng Kéier an der Schoul. An do huet och den Dokter gesot... Do huet en Zänn kontrolléiert an d’Meedchen, d’Assistentin souz do, an do huet e gelies: ‘Ah, kënnst du vun der Féckerei, mä Jong?’ Jo, an do huet heen der Sekretärin erkläert: ‘Déi däitsch Schmelzen, déi waren jo ganz mat deem Fugger-System do verbonnen.’ An wéi et schéngt, hunn se déi heiten Haiser och Fugger-Haiser genannt. De Fugger war jo een, deen an Däitschland senge Leit Heiser ginn huet. An si konnten och bei him kafen. An déi Citéen hu Fuggerei geheescht. Elo kann et och sinn, dass déi siwen Haiser hei Fuggerei geheescht hunn, well et vun der Aachener gebaut ginn ass. An aus der Fuggerei ass dann eng Féckerei ginn. [...] An dat ass, wéi den Numm hierkënnt. Kazebierg oder Féckerei.”

**97** | Personal translation of: “Dat war eben esou”, “Dat war Gesetz”, “Mär ware frou, datt mer hei souzen”, “Wat wëlls de méi hunn?”



### 5.5.2 Architecture and Technical Installations

This section deals with the ensemble of material objects and its effects on spatial constructions and specific constitutions of the subject. This thematic category comprises the living conditions and the perception of the estate house as such, while also dealing with the technical installations of the company. The aim is to establish the boundaries between the estate and the materiality of the work place, for the technical installations of the heavy industry are closely connected to the estate's environment due to their proximity to the workers' private living quarters.

All interviewees were able to deliver a detailed description of the distribution of rooms and the layout of their estate house. As different as the various 'estate systems' may have been, the estates themselves were uniform in their simplicity. The following narrative is representative of all comments on this subject:

"The houses had four entrances. Two on the side of the road, where the *Kazebierg* began and two on the other side. There was no road, there was only a path [...] There were separate entrances [...] They were not big houses. When you opened the door you had a kitchen. You opened the door and you were immediately in the kitchen. And then you're on your left, then you were in the living room. [...] And then upstairs, two bedrooms. They were all like that. I mean the parents' bedroom and the childrens' bedroom. And considering that there were a lot of children... [...] The toilets were outside, until shortly before the Second World War. Those were little houses for two families. Here was ours. And when this was built, a stable was added, and there was also a toilet in that. [...] You could keep an animal in there."<sup>98</sup>

The descriptions are all value-neutral and there are no discernible differences regarding the specific architectural type of the estates. The exterior architecture, be it the austere barrack type, the symmetrical cottage or the playful garden city concept (see Caregari/Lorang 2013: 52f.), is not reflected in the interior design and thus did not have any disciplining effects on the estate residents.<sup>99</sup> But the

**98** | Personal translation of: "Déi Haiser haten véier Entréeën. Zwou op der Säit vun der Strooss, wou de Kazebierg eropgaang ass, an zou déi aner Säit. Do war keng Strooss, do war nëmme Wee. [...] Et ware getrennten Entréeën. [...] Et waren keng grouss Haiser. Der hat eng, wann Der d'Dier opgemeet hutt, Kichen. Der huet d'Dier opgemeet, da war Der direkt an der Kichen. An da sidd Der lénks, da war d'Stuff. [...] An dann uewenop zwee Schlofzëmmer. Dat war alles esou. Dat heescht d'Eltereschlofzëmmer an d'Kannerschlofzëmmer. A vu dass vill Kanner do waren... [...] D'Toiletten, déi ware bis kuerz virum Zweete Weltkrich dobaussen. [...] Dat waren esou Haisercher fir zwou Familljen. Hei war fir eis. A wéi dat dote gebaut ginn ass, do ass e Stall bäikomm, an do war och eng Toilette dran. [...] Do konnt een en Déier halen."

**99** | This is also noted by the contemporary witness Marcel Kieffer: "I certainly didn't know much less than my adult contemporaries about the architectural style and about the historical dimension of our estate (Kieffer 2006: 308)." (Personal translation of: "Vom

materiality of the interior layout of the estate house plays a role insofar as it puts all residents on an equal level. This in turn stimulates the sense of identification.



*Figure 4: The Cité Émile Mayrisch in Schiffflange in the 1950s (Photo: private)*

In addition, all interviewed estate residents, whether asked to do so or not, listed the family names of other estate residents. The enumeration did not go beyond the boundaries of the estate. This shows that the subjectivation is not only determined by the socio-professional identity of the workers employed in the heavy industry, but also by intensive neighbourly relations, which means that this 'doing identity' is interwoven with 'doing space'.

For the estate residents, materiality is not limited to their living structures. The specific aspect of walking proximity obliged the residents to permanently deal with the materiality of the companies' technical installations. The interlinkage of private living environment and economic production site had the effect that no boundary was established between both forms of materiality:

"I must tell you something about the tips. It was not nice of the ARBED how they dealt with these tips. Because what they did with these tips, when there was a crisis... then they created a reserve tip. And this tip, it was so big that the iron ore stones almost flew right into the houses. It almost reached up to here. They totally destroyed the soil. Everyone had a garden there. That's the way it was in the estates. Everyone. But then they just filled it up, garden and everything that was in it. And then, when things were going better, it was stripped again, the tip. Then it was needed again in the smeltery, the iron ore, I mean. Then you could clean up your garden again. Remove all the stones. That wasn't very nice of..."<sup>100</sup>

Architekturstil wie auch von der historischen Dimension unserer Kolonie wusste ich sicher nicht viel weniger als meine erwachsenen Zeitgenossen.")

**100** | Personal translation of: "Vun den Typpe muss ech Der och eppes zielen. Dat war net fein vun der ARBED, wéi se mat deenen Typpen ëmgaangen ass. Si huet eis nämlech déi Typpen, deemno wann elo eng Crisis war... dann ass erëm ee Reservetyp ugeluuet ginn. An deen Typ, dee war sou grouss, dass d'Minettsteng bal bis an d'Haiser geflu sinn. En ass



Figure 5: The estate Kazebierg beside the technical installations of the Usine Terre Rouge in the late 1920s (Photo: private)

The interviews also reveal the emotional perception which contributes to a permeability between domestic and work environment. The immediate proximity imposed by the company was considered immutable and could become part of subjectivation:

“What I found far more interesting than football were all the installations. All the installations of the mine... the loading site of the Collarts<sup>101</sup>... where you could watch from the street where the train went to and when it was tipped and so on. And on the other side, the division of the ARBED... from the Pierre Kersch Street there was a footbridge across the mine division of the ARBED to the *Ledigenheim*<sup>102</sup>. And I stood quite often on this bridge. I spent a lot of hours there, just watching the trains. That was fascinating. The empty ones that left, that had different locomotives. The full ones arriving, and so on. The full ones that were then taken out of a station, that were then driven to the crusher. And were later parked in the empty station. And later the whole manoeuvre began all over again. That was fascinating. I think I was definitely shaped by this...”<sup>103</sup>

da ganz heihinner komm. D’Äerd hunn se all futti gemeet. Jiddwereen hat e Guart do. Dat war jo an de Kolonien. Jiddereen. Mä deen hunn se dann zougetippt, de Guart an alles wat matdrann stoung. An dann wann et erëm gutt gaang ass, ass deen erem opgebaggert ginn, deen Typ. Dann ass et ërem gebraucht ginn an der Schmelz, d’Minett. Da konnts de deng Gäret erëm an d’Rei setzen. D’Steng eraus huelen. Dat war net ganz fein vun der...”

**101** | Charles and Jules Collart operated the smelter in Steinfort and owned mines in Esch-sur-Alzette and other places (see Pagliarini/Clemens 2009).

**102** | The *Ledigenheim* in the Hoehl in Esch-sur-Alzette was built for workers who were unmarried or separated from their families.

**103** | Personal translation of: “Dat, wat fir mech méi interessant war wéi de Fussball, dat waren déi ganz Installatiounen. Déi ganz Installatiounen vun der Mine... De Collarten hire Quai. Wou ee vun der Strooss aus konnt kucken, wou den Zuch gefuer komm ass, an wann

These material objects, today for the most part demolished or lying waste, evoke memories of everyday contexts. They are named, incorporated and convey “cultural capital” to the estate residents.<sup>104</sup> With their – positive as well as negative – comments, they identify themselves as belonging to a particular group which was constrained or fascinated by the materiality. Tips, loading sites for iron ore and mine locomotives create microhistorical identity symbols. They possess, on a smaller scale, an aura<sup>105</sup> similar to that of the furnace silhouette on Belval<sup>106</sup> for instance – the beacon landmark of an entire region.

The materiality is closely connected to the existential basis of the estate. While the technical installations were the precondition for the estate being erected in the first place, they also constituted a threat to the living environment: “Then the houses were pulled down. Because they built the agglomeration with the crusher plant in the 50s.”<sup>107</sup> The estate was dominated by a materiality subjected to purpose, which in the case of modernization measures, production increase or non-profitability could diminish or eliminate the human living environment.<sup>108</sup> The specific circumstances of ownership – all estate land and technical installations belonged to the company – allowed the expansion of technical installations into the estate’s complex of practices. The result was that the constitution of the subject prevented the construction of an everyday boundary.

e gekippt ginn ass. An esou virun. An op der anerer Säit, de Betrib vun der ARBED... Vun der Pierre Kersch-Strooss ass eng Passerelle fortgaang iwwert de Grouwebetrieb vun der ARBED an d’Ledigenheim. An ech stoung zimlech oft op déier Bréck. Ech hunn zimlech vill Stonnen do verbruet, fir just den Zich nozekucken. Dat war faszinéierend. Eideler, déi fortgefuer sinn, déi ënnerschiddlech Lokomotiven haten. Déi voll, déi komm sinn, an sou virun. Déi voll, déi ewech geholl gi sinn aus enger Guare, déi op de Brecher gefeuert gi sinn. An herno an déi eidel Guare gestallt gi sinn. An herno ass de ganze Manöver rëm vu vir ugaang. Dat war faszinéierend. Ech mengen, ech sinn definitiv geimpft ginn...”

**104** | “Cultural capital can be acquired [...] in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously. It always remains marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition which, through the more or less visible marks they leave [...] help to determine its distinctive value. It cannot be accumulated beyond the appropriating capacities of an individual agent; it declines and dies with its bearer” (Bourdieu 1986: 241-258).

**105** | Contrary to the theory of materialism in Walter Benjamin’s 1936 essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Benjamin 1968 [1955]): despite its serial reproduction, the artefact does not lose its aura, but instead enhances it through its historical testimony.

**106** | Central production site of Luxembourg’s steel industry (see Knebler/Scuto 2010).

**107** | Personal translation of: “Do sinn d’Haiser afgerappt ginn. Well se déi Agglomeréierung mat der Brecheranlag an de fofzeger Joren gebaut hunn.”

**108** | The looming deceleration of industrial production and the beginning tertiarization of society induced the enterprises to shed their estates at the end of the 1960s for cost reasons.

### 5.5.3 Conclusion

Statements about the constitution of the subject in Luxembourg's workers' housing estates are always connected with examinations of isolated but homogenous spatial entities. The estate has to be seen as the alternative to regulations or interventions by the state in company policy. The common denominator is, similar to France, the attitude towards the workers, "consisting in an unswerving [paternalism] which however allows for significant variants."<sup>109</sup>

The spatial perception of the estate residents in the interviews is consistently shaped, on the one hand, by the model of sovereignty of unequal relations (see section 5.1) – the company determining what is permitted and what is not – and by the practice of concentration of one socio-professional category, on the other. This mixture of hierarchy regarding the company and equality between those dominated is also confirmed in the statements. The intensive preoccupation with the other estate residents is based on the principle of equality. This is expressed in the fact that even after sometimes several decades, all the families of the estate are recalled by name. The disciplining hierarchy is exercised everywhere via the design and size of the houses – but not via the architecture itself – and through the control over everyday practices with the help of the possibilities provided by the company for performing them.

Analogous practices exhibited by estate residents can be regarded as overarching constants, since they are connected via implicit knowledge and cultural codes more so than other 'urban residents'. If something needed to get repaired, or a house swapped, one knew which authority to turn to. A further indication for a specific and demarcational spatial awareness is the terminology used for the estate.

Another observation common to all samples is that none of the interviewees failed to mention the perceived proximity to the technical installations. Even more so than the estate, these are charged with emotions that create a sense of identity and, if perceived favourably, are converted into cultural capital. The boundary between work and domestic environment becomes obsolete through the emotional perception that the housing estate and mining, i.e. the smeltery and steel mill, belong together.

The analysis permits us to identify the subculture of a comprehensive blue-collar culture that produces a specific complex of practices, subjectivated by a paternalistic principle of governmentality. This subculture generates the place of the estate as an expression of collective disciplining through equality and materiality.

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**109** | Personal translation of: [Welche in einem] "unerschütterlichen [Paternalismus] besteht, der aber oft beträchtliche Varianten zulässt."