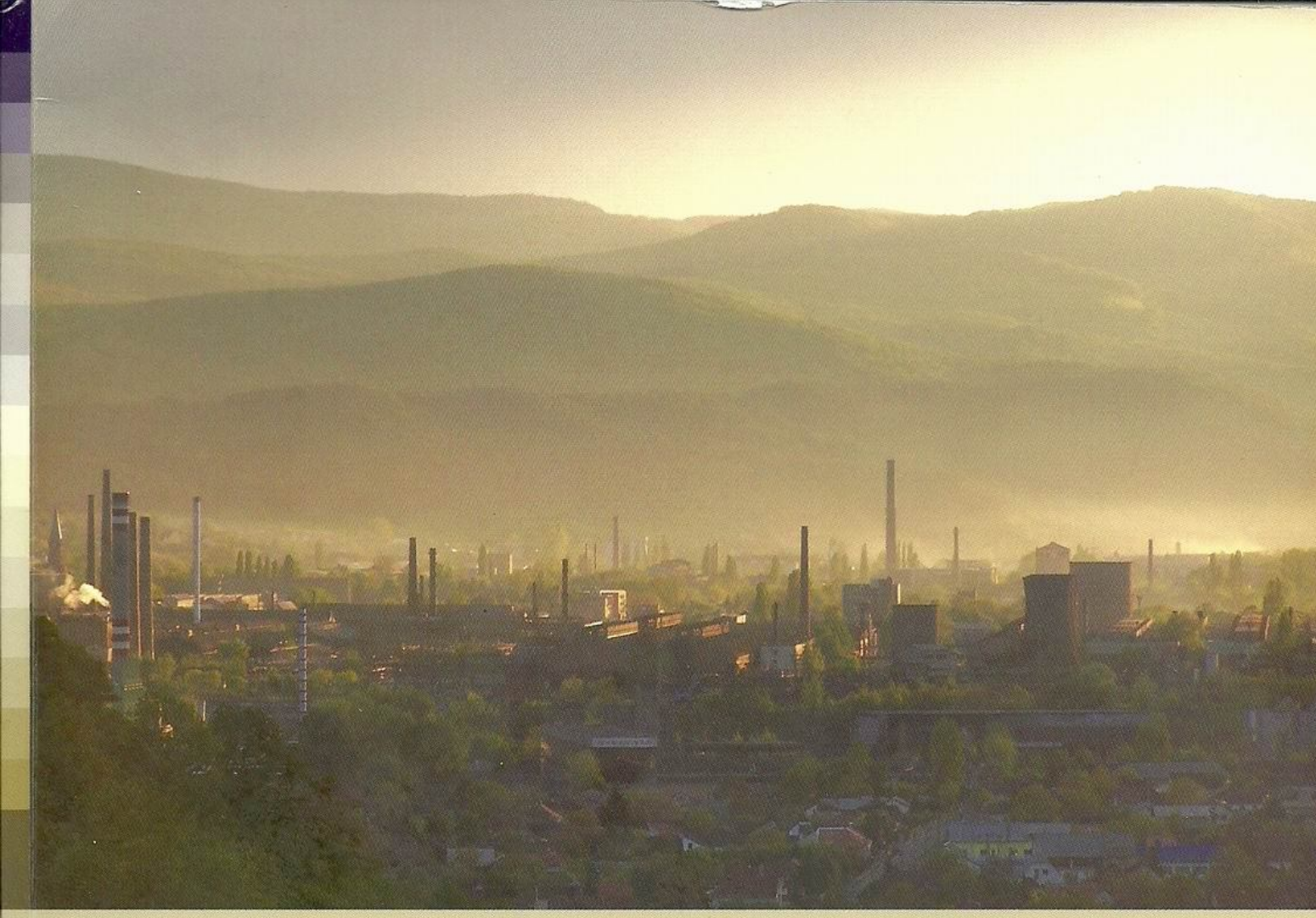

GROWTH, DECLINE AND RECOVERY

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL REGIONS IN TRANSITION

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'The factory has no meaning for us any more ...'

Similarities and differences in the identity coming from the industrial environment in the case of workers from Rudabánya and Diósgyőr

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There are a lot of workers' colonies in Hungary, however, we can find surprising differences in the mentality of their inhabitants. The paper aims to explain the differences in the scope of a comparative case study based on cultural anthropological fieldwork. The surveys were carried out in one of the districts of Miskolc, in the colony of the ironworks in Diósgyőr between 1996 and 1999, and in a miners' village in Borsod County, in Rudabánya between 1994 and 1999. The aims of the fieldwork were multidimensional. First, it wanted to record the social and cultural heritage of old workers' communities, found in the collective and personal memories of people living in those areas, in order to save data. Secondly, it tried to chart the deep structures of present-day conditions, that is, how and how far the sets of the past and the material remains of mining and metallurgy had an effect on the present, and how far the built industrial environment influenced people's everyday life and their life strategies.

Aims and methodology

There are a lot of workers' colonies in Hungary either we take it within the old, historical boundaries of the country or the present ones. We can find surprising differences in the mentalities of the colonies' inhabitants. These differences require explanation talking either about colonies in the capital city, in a town or in a village, or about an elite or a mass colony. This work takes on this task in the scope of a double, comparative case study.

The starting point of this study was the partial result of two cultural anthropological fieldworks. These surveys were carried out, on the one hand, in one of the districts of Miskolc, in the colony of the ironworks in Diósgyőr between 1996 and 1999, and, on the other hand, in a miners' village in Borsod County, in Rudabánya between 1994 and 1999.

The aims of the fieldwork were multidimensional. In the first place, they would have liked to put down the social and cultural heritage of old workers' communities, found in the collective and personal memories of people living in those areas, in order to save data. Secondly, they tried to chart the deep structures of present-day conditions, that is, how and how far the sets of the past and the material remains of mining and metallurgy had an effect on the present, and how far the built industrial environment influenced people's everyday life and their life strategies. The fieldwork examined if workers' communities could be seen as a kind of factor forming culture besides the geographical and regional sameness. In my study, through the example of these two settlements, by pointing out similarities and differences, I try to call attention to the typical lifestyle of the communities living in a built – but nowadays unfunctional – industrial environment, and I also try to investigate how far this lifestyle has been influenced by this environment.

The chosen conversationalists, in both places, were interviewed by different techniques. I put the questions to my subjects in a series of informal conversations. Items were processed by an anthropological, analytical system named Anthropac.

Questions and answers

The groups of questions, referring to six topics, were connected to mentality, and each of them was measured on a double – a positive and a negative – scale:

- *The presence or the lack of personal mythology*: how far the elements connected to the built industrial environment can be discovered in manifestations which are considered mythical in the personal course of life, and how people relate to these elements.

- *The acceptance or the denial of the present*: how far a person regards the present industrial environment natural, and to what extent he or she can accept it.
- *The acceptance or the denial of the past*: memories stemming from the industrial enviroment, the written and narrated past how far and with what kind of relation constitute an organic part of a person's life.
- *Adherence to or refusal of the built industrial environment*: supposing he has got a choice, how much a person sticks to the present environment, how and how far his or her memories and personal mythology play a part in this decision.
- *Positive or negative collective memory*: how a person relates to the visual and cultural elements experienced as collective memory and knowledge in his or her narrations, in the material manifestations of his surroundings, in photographies as well as mementos and anecdotes.
- *Pride of or shame about the built industrial environment*: how positively or negatively a person relates to his or her extended environment, and how strong this relation is.

The answers showed a surprising double picture (Fig. 1). It is remarkable that each answer given by the inhabitants of the ironworks' colony got the positive side of the diagram. On the contrary, the answers from Rudabánya's inhabitants gave almost the precise reflection of this on the negative side. The biggest difference appeared in the case of positive collective memory. Almost all inhabitants of the ironworks' colony recall the past as a pleasant communal memory (89.52 per cent), while in Rudabánya this rate is much lower (32.4 per cent). On the other hand this relation turns over in the case of negative collective memory that is how far the community members comprehend the past as a negative experience. Three times more people have negative opinion in Rudabánya (37.6 per cent) than in the ironworks' colony (12.48 per cent).

There is also a big difference, almost in the same rate, in the cases of the acceptance of the past and the adherence to the industrial environment. The inhabitants of the ironworks' colony accept the past by far the highest rate (95.75 per cent), and although this rate is also the highest in Rudabánya (49 per cent), this is even much lower than the ironworks' data. More than the half of the inhabitants in the ironworks' colony (57.32 per cent) sticks to the industrial environment, while this rate is insignificant in Rudabánya. The number of people who refuse the industrial environment is much closer, though the

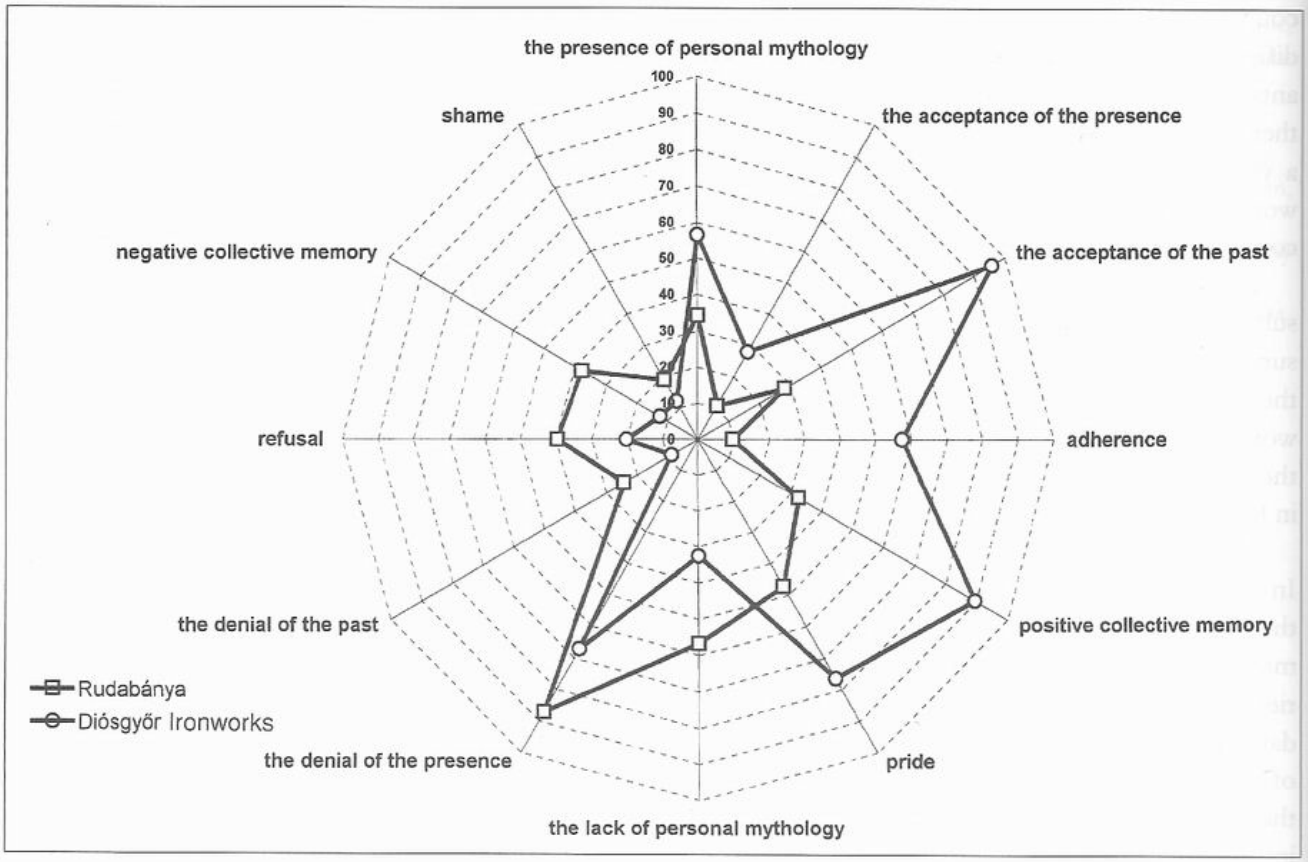

Figure 1. Attitude to the built industrial environment. (Copyright, József R. Nagy, 1999)

rate is a bit smaller in the ironworks' colony (20.12 per cent) than in the case of the Rudabánya colony (39.44 per cent).

There is a significant number of people among the inhabitants of the ironworks' colony in Diósgyőr (76.4 per cent) who are proud of their environment when they talk about it to strangers. Only half of the interviewed people feel the same (47.12 per cent) in Rudabánya. The difference between the two examined communities is the lowest in the case of the sense of shame. Practically, people feel shame about their environment in the same rate in Rudabánya (18.9 per cent) as in the ironworks' colony (12.6 per cent). Appearance in personal mythologies has interesting measures. The rate of lack in Rudabánya is techniqually the same (56.6 per cent) as the presence measured in the ironworks' colony (56.4 per cent), while the rate of lack in the ironworks (32.52 per cent) is almost equal to Rudabánya's presence (34.22 per cent).

Dissatisfaction can be revealed in both places in the case of the acceptance of the present. Data are equal in proportion, but the rate is lower in the ironworks' colony (27.81 per cent) than in Rudabánya (10.67 per cent). This is also true in the case of the denial of the present: lower rate in the ironworks (67 per cent), higher in Rudabánya (87.1 per cent). As the denial is much bigger than the acceptance of the present, it shows that people in both places are dissatisfied with the present, and the past arises more positively in the mind of those who were interviewed. The low value of the denial of the past also proves this fact, the rate of which is much higher in Rudabánya (24.12 per cent) than in the ironworks (8.66 per cent). The rate of the denial in the ironworks – which is the lowest of all measured rates, while the rate of the acceptance is the highest – shows that people living in Diósgyőr are definitely proud of their past.

Different mentalities

Apparently, nothing can give reason for the radically different mentality, which appears in the results. Both the ironworks' colony in Diósgyőr and the colony in Rudabánya ran an analogous developmental course on the surface. The formation of both colonies and both factories of heavy industry, the ironworks in Diósgyőr and the iron ore mine in Rudabánya, can be put at roughly the same date.

The railway-building fever all over Europe at the end of the nineteenth century laid excessive claim to rails and railway equipment in Hungary as well, which could not be fulfilled by the country's ironworks of that time. So in 1867, the government decided to establish an ironworks which could satisfy these demands. The choice fell on Diósgyőr, due to the old tradition of iron production there even at that time.[1]

Similarly, the prosperity of heavy industry in the nineteenth century started to improve iron ore mining to a large scale in Rudabánya, where only a small-scale production had existed up to that time. In 1880, production started in a traditionally industrial settlement. Rudabánya was one of the oldest mining places in Europe and a prosperous mining town in the Middle Ages.[2]

This comparison can be noticed in the composition of both the ironworks' and the iron ore mine's workers. Since there was a lack of experts for getting serial production started and for safe operating at both places, they tried to procure them by recruiting from other areas of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, mainly from the German-speaking population. In this way numerous workers with foreign language and culture came to both workplaces, where colonies were built up for them.

As colony constructions started at the same time, housing estates seem to be on the same techniqual level, built in the same style. It is typical of both colonies that they tried to become independent and separate from their surroundings. They established their own social, medical and educational network,[3] which was qualitatively much more developed than that of their surroundings. It is peculiar to the level of the separation that the colony of the ironworks tried several times to become an independent community, and to secede from Diósgyőr.[4]

Hierarchy appearing in the lifestyle, which hierarchy was the same as positions at the workplace, is typical of workers in both colonies. This group structure, which was almost like a caste system, appeared in everyday life, in formalities. That is, what kind of flat people live in, what clothes they wear, who greets the other first at meetings, what kind of cultural and health service they can visit, and so on. These signs showed both in the ironworks' colony and in Rudabánya where a person was in the social hierarchy.

Trade endogamy that nearly came into force can also be observed as a sameness in both colonies. Cer-

tain industrial-miner dynasties[5] having specialised knowledge and experience married practically just among themselves, and they tried to avoid to get married to an outside party. According to anecdotes, the metalworker masters settled in Diósgyőr were willing to disclose their specialised knowledge only to their relatives. Those, who would have liked to learn, had to marry in a master's family.[6] The reflection of this behaviour can be also observed among the miners in Rudabánya, who were German people of peasant origin, as they brought wives from their old residence, Dobsina.[7]

The inhabitants of both colonies, the two companies experienced together the effects of prosperity and recession in iron industry. If we compare the numbers of workers in the two large-scales, we find that the number of workers and the size of production changed in the same way in their rates, but because of different sizes, the nominal values were different. Favourable and then stagnating conditions at the turn of the century, the boom after the outbreak of the First World War, the Treaty of Trianon, and the decennial recession as a result of the worldwide slump, the repeated prosperity before and partly after the Second World War, the forced improvement during the socialist era, and the final downfall after the change of regime in the end, all had the same effect on both companies.

Microcultural factors for explanation

With full knowledge of the sameness listed above, it is strange, why the present mentalities of the two colonies are so sharply different. Beyond samenesses, let us pay our attention to those microcultural factors implied in their stories which could cause present-day conditions.

Basic differences can be revealed in the process of planning and making up the two colonies. While the ironworks' colony was planned on a big, homogeneous, roughly horizontal field with classic network shaped street system (see Figure 1 in Judit Dobák's paper), the colony in Rudabánya had explicit pile settlement type following maximally the configuration of the terrain, which determined the construction considerably (Fig. 2). In contrast to the balanced, separated, clearly and well arranged space of the ironworks' colony, that of Rudabánya looks random, disordered, and confused in the eyes of the outside observer.

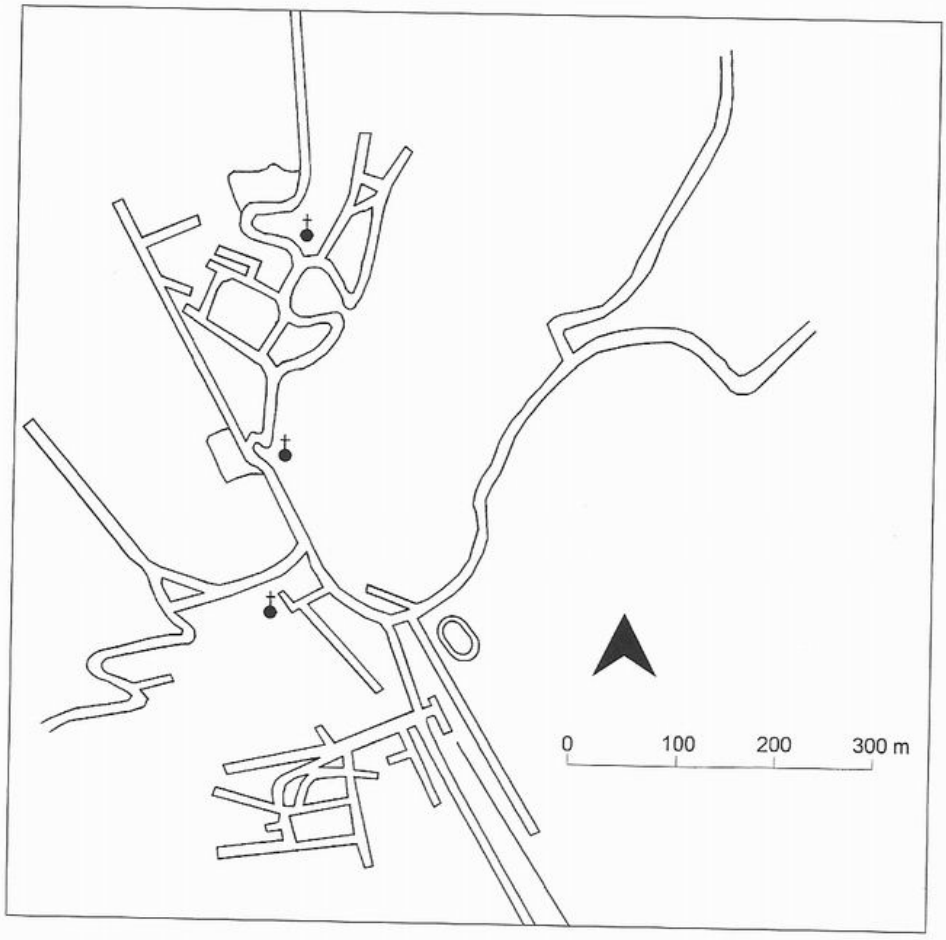

Figure 2. The map of Rudabánya. (Copyright, József R. Nagy, 1999)

As spaces of settled construction in general, colonies can also be devided into two main groups: sociopetal space, which brings people nearer together, and sociofugal space,[8] which removes people from each other. Naturally, it is very important to add that strength putting people in touch with each other in one culture can appear as removing strength in another one. It is all the more so because colonies were built for mainly German-speaking experts and their families settled in Hungary by architects who were also German-speaking. So this mass village form, which was forced by geographical conditions, could become sociopetal space for the original Hungarian peasant in-

habitants, and colonies with the same shape became sociofugal space for the settled German miner-craftsman strata. Microcultural components, which promoted community creation in one place, had exactly the opposite effect in the other place.

The proof of that there are two different kinds of approaches to space among people settled in Rudabánya is that while an inhabitant of peasant origin, who settled in 1942, found the colony's settlement 'exciting, interesting' and 'cosy', a settled German person of peasant origin experienced the same as 'a gipsy mass'. This kind of duality cannot be observed in the case of the ironworks' colony, as all of the interviewed people there expressed positive[9] opinion about the settlement of the colony. According to their views the clearly and well arranged built space promoted and later strengthened the formation and the function of a community

While nothing points to that these differences would be based on the village-type settlement or the small size of the colony. Other miners' and workers' colonies in the neighbourhood with almost the same size and the same environment – Ormosbánya, Rudolftelep – did not show these signs.[10] Moreover, opposite elements of mentality, similar to the ironworks' colony, could be revealed in these places.

The fact, that the inhabitants who moved out from the colony because of their retirement, financial strengthening, or for some other reason, returned to the acceptable forms of living and space, also proved the existence of microcultural elements and their functioning in spite of the assimilation process. In the case of the ironworks' workers, this is practically the same with the arrangement of their flats in the colony. Usually the appearance, the form and the architecture of their own built house are the same as well as those of the buildings in the colony. Opposite to this, people moving out from Rudabánya choose a basicly different type of living estate. Neither the building practice of the local peasant population, nor the forms experienced in the colony arises for them as a model to be followed. They formed their living place similar to miners' settlements with German inhabitants and differing from peasant houses in Rudabánya.

There is also a strong difference in the expansion of the two colonies, and stemming from this, in their inner structure. The ironworks' colony, due to finite space, achieved its present extension in 1907, although afterwards there were some minor buildings and improvements. Later the expansion of the colony finished, and flats for the workers of the ironworks were not built there. This could not happen in Rudabánya as it was enclosed with large unbuilt areas. Buildings, one after the other, continued till the 1970s, and stuck their part of the colony to the settlement. We can say – with small exaggeration – that the ironworks' settlement had enough time to form into a community, to shape its own public memory, and to integrate the built industrial environment into the microculture, as its territorial development had finished. Contrary to it, the inhabitants of Rudabánya were tied up with receiving further and further insettled people.

This difference will become bigger if we consider the internal social structure of the colonies. We can say about the ironworks' colony that a diffuse structure came into existence in its stratum in compliance with the architect's design. Positions taken in the work hierarchy did not become a power which segregates regions, yet they were evident for the inhabitants from several signs – from the size of the house and the garden belonging to it, and their inside and outside forms, and so on. Closed districts of clerks, directors, and workers did not develop. In contrast to this, in Rudabánya, the expansion stages of the colony indicate for what type of manpower the houses were built. Some part of the colony was built for the elite, mainly German experts of peasant origin, others for the unskilled manpower. The parts of the colony built next to each other, which can be separated geographically, constitute isolated morphological-social segments within the settlement.[11]

There is also a prominent difference in the reception of the two colonies by the 'original settlers'. As a director's letter from the beginning of the 1880s gives proof of this, workers from the peasant inhabitants 'leave without regular notice and discharge-paper and with the absence of the employed farmhands' accounts and behave in an ostentatious manner against miners who continue working'.

German immigrants of peasant origin, making up the expert elite in Rudabánya, arrived at a totally new environment. They could not continue their home lifestyle, based on civil values of miners, and fashioned during centuries. Removal means large qualitative deterioration for them. They were living definitely like a lord in their original residence, as long as they had a job. They did not pay taxes, and they had a wide social network.[12] The local inhabitants in Rudabánya received them unwillingly, and treated them like vagrants, while looked at themselves as members of a

Figure 3. A part of a street in the ironworks' colony in Diósgyőr, in 1999. (Copyright, József R. Nagy)

higher culture. This mentality can also be observed today as one of my peasant informants said: 'miners aren't real men, because they dig upwards from below while we do downwards from above'.

All this was not noticeable in Diósgyőr. On the one hand the colony was built in a basically deserted area, and on the other hand the local inhabitants received the immigrants with proper sympathy. There were citizens' acquiescence and acceptance opposite to peasants' self-respect. The fact, that the colony's inhabitants did not need to leave their home apart from going to work, because the colony made arrangements for self-sufficiency, can contribute to it. So there was no opportunity to confront. During the fieldwork, all my interviewed subjects agreed that there was no such disagreement either between the colony and the town, or between the inhabitants of different nationalities living in the colony.[13]

The problem of leading a monoecious or a double life arises here as well. A person's attitude to his or her work and residence is basically influenced by how far this person can lead a monoecious life obliged by his or her circumstances and personal cultural heritage. Leading a double life was not typical of the ironworks' colony. It was due to the lack of double life's condition in the first place, and not to the wage system, which satisfied all demands. Although all buildings in the colony had a bigger or a smaller garden, they could afford activity only in leasure time. In spite of the fact that workers in the ironworks claimed agriculture,[14] they could not do it without appropriate field.

Contrary to them, miners in Rudabánya could do, and they exactly did it. Leading a double life was a well-known phenomenon from the beginning of large-scale mining. Land on the village boundaries, in relatively large quantities, but – to tell the truth – in slight quality, was at the disposal of those who would have liked to farm. In addition to this, like in the ironworks' colony, each house of the colony had a smaller or a bigger garden. This double life was so typical, that the number of unskilled workers working in the mine decreased considerably during the time of agricultural work. This number ran from 26 to 28 per cent of the workers in some periods.[15] This lifestyle, of course, had a deep effect on the attitude to the company, and through it, to the industrial environment.

This contrast between the inhabitants of the two colonies manifests explicitly. While the majority of the interviewed workers in Rudabánya (67.4 per cent) said: 'It's possible to live without the mine, I will scratch about for living somehow ... The factory has no meaning for us any more', most of the interviewed workers of the ironworks (79.8 per cent)

trusted in the rising of iron production in Diósgyőr. 'That iron is needed sooner or later and we will be ready to work' – said one of my subjects in Diósgyőr. While in Rudabánya the model to be followed was the heritage of the peasant ancestors, and some kind of entrepreneurial behaviour, in the ironworks' colony it was working in the ironworks and in heavy industry in the first place.

There was a typical difference in the respect of the company's property till the change of the regime. Economic and political changes affected catastrophically the inhabitants of both settlements. The reduction of workplaces began after a long and painful death agony. However, the hopeless picture of the future brought to the surface different forms of behaviour in the two colonies.

Private individuals carried away spontaneously the means of production of heavy industry as well as the buildings and the equipment in the colony of Rudabánya to a greater degree than in that of the ironworks. While all of my subjects in the ironworks spoke disapprovingly of the misappropriation of communal and company wealth, I could experience exactly the opposite reaction among my subjects from Rudabánya. They regarded 'a skilful person' who could put more company wealth to his own use, and gave the mark of 'not a real man' and 'a helpless person' who was not able to, or who did not want to take part in this process.[16]

This kind of criteria of the property's respect is determined both by antecedents and the events of the recent past. Among industrial workers who cultivated the land as well, it was accepted that anybody was allowed to occupy the land which was not farmed, cut down, ploughed, which was obviously without owner's care. The proprietorship or the tenantship of the land passed to the occupier without any complication. It was a real good working process – the negligent owner took this kind of change natural.[17] Owing to the fast increase in the number of inhabitants, the morals of the settlement became thinner and thinner. People, who hardly knew each other and who did not consider Rudabánya as their mother country, were not controlled by the moral power of the community. This process could not arise in the ironworks' colony. The natural fluctuation of the closed colony was not able to change the cohesion of the community. The cultural institution system of sanctioning, when it worked appropriately, could keep the freshers back.

Figure 4. A part of a street in the colony in Rudabánya, in 1999. (Copyright, József R. Nagy)

It is really an important factor in keeping collective memory, and in forming public mentality, how industrial constructions were integrated in the local symbol systems, and how far they remained as icons in them. Of course, it is important, how far and in what condition a person can see these kinds of buildings day after day. It would be easy to find a difference between metallurgy's extrovert building complexes, which can be seen by everybody, and the introvert objects of mining under the ground, invisible, or visible just for a few people. This has also a strong effect by all means on a person's attitude to the industrial environment. But this is much less important than factors like losing the elements of the symbol system formed during decades, their disappearance without any mark, or their slow destruction.

This kind of destruction ensued in the colony and the workplace of both settlements. But while there was 'something' from which they could lose elements considered as symbols in Diósgyőr, it was not so in Rudabánya. So the destruction of the few symbols above the ground, primarily the chimney of the ore preparation plant, or the ore crushing works, but we can think about the disappearance of the greeting 'Good luck' from schools as well, all these undermined the basis of the whole symbol system. All of my subjects' attitude, who made declaration, was the same as that of one of them: 'I know, I'm home again, when I catch the sight of the chimney in the window of the train or the bus. The factory chimney means Rudabánya. Since the chimney disappeared there has been nothing to go by.'

There are several ongoing processes which influence mentality nowadays as well. The interest of the outside world in industrial monuments is one of them. This interest makes the inhabitants aware of the significance and the importance of their own values. But, while the interest coming from the outside world, thanks to the researches carried out in the ironworks' colony, is permanent, it is sporadic in Rudabánya. However, on the one hand this kind of interest influences the mentality of both settlements' inhabitants significantly, and on the other hand people living there are susceptible to this interest. This is proved by the fact, that the series of prehistorical findings could become public icons, thanks, among others, to outside interest.

Another influential factor is any visible effort made to protect the industrial environment. That is protection and care, even if it goes only in an administrative way. The majority (70.9 per cent) in the ironworks' colony answered to my question about how they knew that certain industrial constructions and the colony as well represented architectural value, saying that the primary sources of information were the central measures.[18] The rate of the answers to this question was practically zero in Rudabánya. The majority (83.9 per cent) answered to the counter question, what was the cause why those buildings were not valuable, with one of my subjects' words: 'Nobody takes care of these buildings ... they belong to nobody, everybody does whatever they want.' The situation was worsened by rebuilding valuable constructions and making them characterless or sometimes pulling them down. This represented and represents a model to be followed to also by individuals.

Slum process also arises as an important factor in forming opinions both in the ironworks and in Rudabánya. But the attitude to them differs in the two places. Buildings, which were mainly built in the earliest time in the colony in Rudabánya, are identified with dirty holes and gipsies' houses by the majority (89.7 per cent). The picture of life on a low living standard without comfort is associated with these houses. The interviewed people tried to keep themselves distant from these buildings, and not to make any common cause with their mentality.

Contrary to this, the inhabitants of the ironworks' colony differentiated between the population of certain spoiling streets and the buildings, and they did not identify slum process with the colony's houses. This can also be due to the fact that there are many buildings rebuilt traditionally that suited both the community's and the central regulation's requirements.

Conclusion

We can say as a summary that the examined workers' colonies carried the seeds of the present condition in themselves at their birth, and they blossomed out during their function, golden age, and decline. We cannot praise or reprove people today for their attitude to the industrial environment by picking out one segment from the past, or another from the present. Making the whole complete with that, this event has not finished yet, but it is changing nowadays as well with significant flexibility, and I add that it is an adjustable process, which was proved by the results.

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